

FitzroviaNews



Fitzrovia News is produced by residents and volunteers and distributed free to all businesses and residential addresses in Fitzrovia

Issue 126 Autumn 2012

Business district goes ahead in face of huge opposition

- Council ignored residents included in BID area
- Leader of Camden failed to brief local councillors

Fitzrovia’s special character is in danger of being destroyed by a decision to create a new commercial district in the heart of the neighbourhood, say residents and community groups. The area’s lively balance of businesses and homes is being shifted towards a more commercially orientated nature after a ballot of large business in July decided in favour of creating a business improvement district (BID).

The ballot was announced in early June and the new commercial district came into operation in August after 72 businesses in the Camden part of Fitzrovia voted in favour of it.

The Fitzrovia Partnership BID will raise money to market the central part of the neighbourhood as a retail, eating and office destination, and improve the trading environment. It will

run for a five year term after which there will be another ballot to decide whether to renew it. The Fitzrovia Partnership is being led by Arup, a global firm of engineers based in Fitzrovia, and Derwent London a major landowner in the neighbourhood.

Residents are angry because there was no public consultation and critics of the BID say it will intensify commercial activity to the detriment of those living in the neighbourhood. There are also concerns the BID will drive up rents and push small independent businesses out of Fitzrovia.

In response to the BID announcement a group of residents wrote an open letter to the leader of Camden Council Sarah Hayward complaining about the lack of a public consultation about the business district and asking the council to use its power to veto the BID.

“Residents and local groups have over the years been proactive in engaging with the Council to develop positive policies for this area and most recently working with the Council and local landowners to produce a Fitzrovia Area Action Plan. Against this background it is astonishing that the Council has not chosen to discuss the BID proposal with us.

“The mixed-use character of Fitzrovia with the many small



Lunchtime diners have been entertained this summer by performers in Fitzroy Square Gardens. This was oriental dancer Naime. Opera, circus, poetry, and music have also been featured.

businesses and residents makes it unsuitable for a conventional BID. A point illustrated by the fact that only about 230 large businesses are eligible to vote in the ballot but more than 1200 businesses and more than 2,500 residents are totally excluded

from the process, hardly compatible with the Council’s commitment to democracy and engaging with local residents,” they wrote.

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News in brief

The man who brought central London to a standstill by threatening to **blow up a Fitzrovia office block** was jailed for six years in July. Michael Green, who stood as a **BNP** candidate for Stevenage at the last General Election, had entered the **Tottenham Court Road** office in April and took four hostages and said he would destroy the building.

A **Royal Mail Enquiry Office** is planned for a site at Colingwood House, 101 **New Cavendish Street**. Royal Mail submitted a planning application to **Westminster Council** for the office in July and intend to close the current enquiry office at **Rathbone Place** and redevelop the site in a deal agreed with **Great Portland Estates**. The new office would serve 12,000 households and 14,000 businesses in W1 and WC1 and open from 7 am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 7am to 2pm on Saturdays for customers to collect mail and use their personal locked boxes.

A former **public loo** could become a cafe after **Westminster Council** gave planning permission during the summer to convert the disused underground public toilet in **Foley Street**.

The owners of the former **Capricorn Club** in **Goodge Street** have applied to vary their premises licence to knock down the private booths within the club and reconfigure bar area and toilets.

Residents accuse **Westminster Council** and **Exemplar** the developers of **Fitzroy Place** of passing the buck being passed on road repairs in **Cleveland Street**.

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Issue 126 Autumn 2012
Published 4 September 2012

Fitzrovia News is produced quarterly by the Fitzrovia Community Newspaper Group, and published by the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association fitzrovia.org.uk (registered charity no. 1111649) 39 Tottenham Street, London, W1T 4RX ISSN: 0967-1404

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Printed by:
Sharman & Co Ltd,
Newark Road,
Peterborough PE1 5TD
sharmanandco.co.uk

Public editorial
meetings are held at
7 pm, first Tuesday of
every month at
Fitzrovia
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Noise and nuisance is a concern

People have been driven out of the area because they say the interests of business are being put exclusively above those of residents. There has been a steady increase in licence applications over the last year and the issue of alcohol consumption is becoming a concern.

And they accuse Camden and Westminster councils of taking little action to enforce rules to prevent noise in the middle of the night, other nuisances, and blocking of the pavement by street drinkers.

One was actually evicted after objecting to an extension of hours to a licensed restaurant which was disturbing her sleep, and her flat taken over by the restaurant owner.

And another lasted only three months after being subjected to loud noise until at least 4 am every night.

One resident, who has since moved back into a quieter part of the area, showed a seven-

minute video to the last Fitzrovia News editorial meeting, to explain why he was driven out originally.

What was most frustrating he said was the "malaise among officers in Camden" when confronted with the evidence. "They were very unwilling to confront [business] miscreants despite infringements of planning and licensing regulations.

"We showed them videos of parties going on until 6am when the licence was to 4am, and huge groups of people on the pavement outside at 2 or 3am when the council officers themselves had said they could have only five people outside at a time. Rubbish is put out at 4am and collected loudly at 7am.

The video also showed people urinating in doorways, verbal abuse, and collapsing in the street.

"Yet the council staff just regarded the residents as a nuisance.

"I gave up after three months and moved, and four others in the same street moved out shortly afterwards."

Worse, he said, one young woman was evicted after complaining about the noise. "She was evicted after seven years as a flawless tenant after objecting to a licence extension application. She offered a 75 per cent rent rise to stay."

He showed Fitzrovia News an email from this young woman which said her landlord had said "it's not an issue of rent from me, they have to keep [the restaurant owner] happy in the interest of business".

She contacted her local councillor who agreed it was "shocking" but "not always an easy route to prove."

Westminster Council took action against one public house because of patrons blocking the pavement but the premises concerned was by no means the worst offender.

The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, which responds to licensing consultations in the Westminster part of Fitzrovia, has recently heard from a number of people with concern about customers standing on the pavements outside pubs and blocking the pavement, and the sheer volume of people causing noise late into the evening.

One pensioner said he felt intimidated by so many people drinking outside his front door.

"It cannot be right that they are such a nuisance to the neighbourhood and such a danger to local residents or that the right of way should be obstructed and that local residents should have to cross over the road to get by the crowd, or are in danger of being hit by on-coming traffic."

Send your letters to Fitzrovia News, 39 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RX, or email news@fitzrovia.org.uk

Awkward questions posed by a beggar in church

Seldom a day goes by around here when someone doesn't ask for money. Most follow the soft route to your wallet through narratives of illness, bereavement, bad luck, bad upbringing or bad vibes. Others come straight out with it, sometimes asking euphemistically for what's called 'change,' whilst the bolder, more desperate ones just say, 'Gis us ten quid.' I don't

blame anyone for inventing or embroidering any personal story they can, or even making the whole thing up.

In the street you can slip past, but caught in the aisle, with the altar of Almighty God glittering in the background, is an altogether different and more troubling place. And this was the background to a two-day encounter recently.

Coming into the Church he looked at first like one of the many tourist visitors we often get – jeans and a t-shirt, backpack slung over the shoulder, hair this side of wild, looking around and taking in the place. 'Is it time for prayer?' 'Yes.' Then he says, 'Would you like me to pray with you?' How could I refuse? Yet I hesitated long enough to discourage him. 'I'm waiting for someone else to come,' I said, which was true,

though in fact they never turned up. There was a pause while I fussed over the books and he, looking directly at me, said, 'Do you help the poor in this Church?' I had barely begun to stammer through some kind of unsatisfactory reply when I realized that there was a sub-text to this question, 'Will you help me?' and another sub-text, 'Will you give me some money.' The answer to the last question was 'No,' and to the second question, 'I would like to, but have no idea how,' but it was the first question that really struck home.

I thought I'd got off lightly until the same person appeared the next night at the same time in a repeat scene of the night before, except this time his question was even more pointed: 'Will you help the poor tonight?' He could tell by my face what my answer was, and I could tell by his face what he thought of me and us. I've not seen him again. The mind reels with poignant, ancient texts like 'And who is my neighbour?' and, 'If you give to one of the least of these,' and, 'the poor you have always with you.' All of us – even the most hard-hearted – must grapple with our conscience over our friends in the streets. Underneath all our reasoning, the level of human need is acute, and seems to be growing yet again month-by-month. At some point in our lives, we must be generous, which is why I am only too happy to share this question with you.

Rev Alan Carr, St Giles church

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BBC stars switch channel to Fitzrovia

By GUY O'CONNELL

Thousands of BBC staff are heading to Fitzrovia in one of the biggest influx of office workers seen in our area in decades. Broadcasting House was built in the 1930s and became the famous face of the BBC, with many early stars living and socialising nearby.

Over the years, the broadcaster spread to sites across the capital including Television Centre in White City, and Fitzrovia became home to the best-known voices in radio. BBC types have long been spotted in pubs, restaurants, and shops and long queues of fans can often be seen outside the headquarters of Radio One on Clipstone Street.

When Terry Wogan signed off from his breakfast show on Radio 2 a photo of him on Hallam Street made the national papers. Hundreds more photographs hang on the walls of restaurants nearby showing stars over the years.

But now the number of media workers is set to expand dramatically in one of the biggest changes in years. Some



Kenneth Williams' picture in Effes Turkish restaurant, and Barbara Windsor with Kostas at Sergio's Italian restaurant in Great Titchfield Street



Englebert Humperdinck with Kostas at Sergio's restaurant

of the biggest stars in TV are moving into the newly-expanded building on Portland Place to join the radioheads who are already working there. Over the next few months, Fiona Bruce, Jeremy Paxman, Huw Edwards and radio news presenters too will relocate from West London and TV Centre is being sold off.

In all, the move will bring thousands more office workers to Fitzrovia and should offer a new market for some businesses whilst residents closest to the new building will swap long months of construction noise for busier streets and pavements.

From the five floor newly-built glass and marble office block of Fitzrovia News, we sought out some views from BBC people and restaurateurs.

"I'm really looking forward to going back to Broadcasting House where I presented Woman's Hour for many years," said Martha Kearney, host of the World At One on Radio 4 and Newsnight Review on BBC 2.

"It will be great to catch up with lots of old colleagues but I am worried that I will end up a lot poorer given all the lovely shops, restaurants and pubs nearby."

At nearby Sergios on Great Titchfield Street, they've seen many stars come and go. "Dionne Warwick came in last week, and for many years Anna Wing who played Lou Beale in Eastenders became a family friend," says manager Kostas Georgiou. "I'm very happy the BBC are returning in force, they were our customers before they went to White City. My grandfather used to serve them and many saw me as a little boy here."

Like the nearby Efes restaurant, Sergios is decorated with the signed photos of the stars. "My favourite is Englebert Humperdinck - he is very loyal and has become a friend. The celebs like to be treated just like anyone else, so we're cheeky with them, and they come back."

At the family-run Efes, they've been serving Fitzrovia for thirty nine years. It was known as a place where ITN and BBC newsreaders would sit at adjacent tables - fierce rivals on the screen, but friends in food.

"There's a historic link to the BBC. We are like the mother place for them," said one waiter. "We felt the loss of the BBC as customers and for years they've been talking about moving back. If the time really has come this year, we will always have a welcome for them here."

But some staffers at the broadcasting giant are sad to leave the famous old TV Centre. "My own personal view," said Evan Davis of Today and Dragons' Den "is that White City beats the West End now that Westfield exists... [but] when I reacquaint myself with life in the West End, I'll see new golden opportunities there."

For years residents have lived side by side with the BBC, and now it's expanded on our doorstep. One local put it this way: "We'll soon learn if bigger means better and if they end up as six thousand good neighbours or as those rather annoying ones who think they're above everybody else."

Here at FN we're always ready to help out with the news if they've not got any at the BBC, and for the price of a small drink, our writers can be lured into the many pubs and restaurants of our home turf to discuss things.

... continued from front page

The road surface has collapsed after the traffic of 32 tonne lorries entering and exiting the building site. Water floods the road after heavy rain and causing a hazard to pedestrians. "Exemplar and WCC are bouncing the responsibility around like a yoyo", said one resident. There are also concerns about pedestrian safety from the narrowed carriage-way in **Cleveland Street** and **Riding House Street**.

A passport belonging to a national of **The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** was lost in Fitzrovia over the summer months. If found please hand to local police or return to Jordan Embassy, 6 Upper Phillimore Gardens, London W8 7HA

Our source tells us that the **Cavendish Safer Neighbourhood Team** is required to deal with more and more duties outside of their area. The **Police** team is supposed to cover the Westminster side of Fitzrovia and part of Marylebone. However they are increasingly bogged down with all the CCTV enquiries and called upon to help police large events including concerts, carnivals and the **Olympics** and **Paralympics**. Our source expresses frustration and blames cutbacks to the other teams dedicated to deal with these other roles and sympathises with the public who expect them to be routinely patrolling their area.

Meanwhile Police consultative groups are under threat by the **Mayor of London**. The **Camden Community Police Consultative Group**, a community-driven organisation made up of over 50 local groups, fears **Boris Johnson** will carry out his proposal to scrap borough-based community engagement groups and replace each of them with a panel of eight people, one of whom will be a councillor and one will be a young person. There is no mention of how these people would be chosen and there are fears that they will be political appointees.

Wainbridge Capital Limited has acquired the long leasehold interests in two office buildings on **Alfred Place**. The existing buildings, at 31-32 and 33-34, which were constructed in the 1950s. Wainbridge intends to secure a planning consent to demolish the existing buildings and replace them with a major office redevelopment.

Residents living nearby the construction site on Howland Street have complained about **noise** from vehicles arriving before 8am.

The summer evenings and the large number of **people gathering on the pavements** outside **public houses** have

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Thumbs down for erection in pole dancing club



Is a strip club an appropriate place to erect a war memorial to the dead? That is the question posed in the latest newsletter of the Camden History Society.

The memorial recording the names of men, who worked for Shoolbred's furniture and department store at 151-162 Tottenham Court Road and died in the first world war, has recently been rediscovered.

It was found in the store room of Harrods, who took over the store in 1931.

They now wish to relocate the memorial somewhere appropriate and been advised by the War Memorials Trust it should be on or near the firm's old premises.

This turns out to be now occupied by the Spearmint Rhino Club, where erotic pole dancers perform.

Kipper has it covered



Kipper Williams, the local cartoonist who has contributed to Fitzrovia News for 19 years, was featured in a full page article of a recent Evening Standard (above). His latest cartoon for us is above that.

The Harrods archivist, Sebastian Wormell, does not think this would be an appropriate site for the memorial.

The society has suggested

two nearby sites where Shoolbred's also had premises - Midford Place (between Maple Street and Grafton Way) and 262-270 Euston Road.

Community Centre opens

By News Reporters

The Fitzrovia Community Centre in Foley Street was officially launched with an opening ceremony on 28 June, with a tape being cut by Sarah Hayward, leader of Camden council.

"The new hospital, which funded it, opened nearly a decade ago, so its gestation has been a long time," she declared. Camden was providing grant funding for three years, she added, and Westminster would finance the children's centre.

Edward Turner, chair of the centre's board of trustees, said: "A lot of people have put a lot of time into this enormous achievement.

"Three things are important to us: inspiration, inclusion, and integration.

"We aim to inspire people who live here to work to allow business and individuals to thrive together; inclusion of the haves and have nots, and everybody to come here and meet; linking the different voices so the centre becomes a natural magnetic hub."

David Whittleton Group Chief Operating Officer of Arup and chair of The Fitzrovia Partnership also spoke. "I'm very pleased to be here on behalf of all my Arup colleagues at the new community centre," he said.



Pictured at the tape cutting are (left to right): Sarah Hayward, Edward Turner, and Dr Cyril Nemeth (deputy mayor of Westminster). Earlier Dr Nemeth planted a tree in nearby Berners Street (below).



A variety of activities on offer

The Community Centre will host a variety of activities and services.

Councillor Adam Harrison of Bloomsbury Ward in Camden will hold his surgeries from 6pm to 7pm on the last Friday of every month.

West End Children's Centre offers "stay and play" drop-in sessions free of charge for children under 5 years old on Tuesdays 10.30am to 12.30pm and Thursdays 1pm to 3pm. There are sessions for babies on Mondays from 1.30pm until 3pm. There is also advice on family therapy and related services available. Contact Andy Robson for full details 020 7439 1578.

There will be **live comedy** poetry and spoken performance plus open mic spots for 'locals'; on the second Friday of the

month: (14 Sept, 12 Oct, 9 Nov); 6:30pm Minimum age to attend is 16 and charge is £7.50

West End School of Theatre Arts are an independent performing arts school that offer training in singing, dance and drama taught by professionals on Saturday mornings during term time. 09:30 – 11:00 for children aged from four to seven years; and 10:00 – 13:00 for six to 18-year-olds. Session prices start at £142.50 a term, some concessions may be available.

Italian language courses are on offer. Italian culture, food and people using everyday expressions and simple phrases, courses of 20 lessons start on 17 September.

There **computer classes** providing tuition in Microsoft Office and other applications. Laptops will be provided.

Courses run over two weeks: one day per week at two hours per session), and are available at all levels. Minimum age is 16 years, no prior knowledge required and course fees are £40.

Society Speakers are a not for profit club for people to practice **public speaking**. Sessions are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month at 7pm, and finish at 9pm.

Members and guests need to be 18 or over. It's free to come along as a guest to see what we do. Membership is £40 for 6 months membership.

The **Dynamic Pilates** class is a training regime that combines athletic strength and conditioning training with pilates and cardio-vascular training. Sessions last 55 minutes. Minimum participant age is 16. Introductory offer for £11.00 with additional discounts on block bookings. Drop in classes are £22 per session.

Ashanga and Hatha yoga. Beginners to advanced welcome. Prices from £10 per class. Free trial class for all newbies.

Zumba African dance and exercise. Cost is £6 per person.

Fitzrovia Community Centre, John Astor House, Foley Street, London W1W 6DN
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Edward Turner is a man with a plan for corporate governance

By Lulu Rumsey

The recently inaugurated Fitzrovia Community Centre is a welcome addition to Fitzrovia's wonderfully varied cultural landscape. I met with the organisation's chairman Edward Turner to learn more about the bright future Fitzrovia has in store.

"We're still getting ourselves together as an organisation," he admits, and as such the centre is currently more preoccupied with administrative beginnings.

"But we do have a vision to preserve the character of Fitzrovia and inspire the integration of a fully inclusive community. We want to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the area. The centre will promote a range of health, recreational and social opportunities which strengthen social links and break down barriers within and between communities," says Edward.

"The centre can promote cultural and historical events so that people don't lose sight of the roots of Fitzrovia. We recognize that there are multiple stakeholders in this community; it is really important that everyone, without exception, feels at home here. We are a community centre for all", Edward firmly states.

The centre recognizes the array of community organisations already in existence in Fitzrovia and intends to work alongside them. On this issue Edward is realistic: "You have no power when you are divided. When you unite and find common cause, you become very powerful".

For now though the centre is focused on its beginnings, and developing a strong foundation that will ensure it is able to achieve its vision.

"It's not something that will happen overnight; it's a process," he admits. "Our focus at the moment is getting policies in place, building up a user base, assessing the needs of the community and, of course, ultimately balancing the needs of the community with staying financially solvent."

The grant which the Fitzrovia Community Centre currently receives from Camden will expire by 2015, a fate that is presumably of considerable concern. Edward is quick to point out that Camden's £45,000 annual assistance actually accounts only for 25 percent of the centre's running costs, and as such he is prepared for the steps that need to be taken in the near future. Along with the income generated by users of the centre he hopes to secure private sector funding. "I want businesses and institutions to have a social agenda that includes us", he stresses.

On the issue of funds Edward holds no resentment towards this government's spending policies, saying frankly, "it's an economic reality". He is candid about the avenues towards private funding open to the centre, which other social institutions lack the option of, and optimistic in their acquisition.

On the issue of the new business improvement district (BID) Edward proffers a balanced perspective. Acknowledging its alarm to residents, he assures us that a BID is not incompatible with the centre's vision: "It hinges on execution to ensure that it represents all voices," says Edward.

This is where the Fitzrovia Community Centre offers a forum for voices from both business and residents to be heard. "As with any change a community faces, some will welcome it and others will be disadvantaged. The important thing is to make sure that the voices on each side command equal weight and have a fair hearing. That's a role for the community centre," he says.

The Fitzrovia Partnership BID company will be welcome in the new centre, as indeed any representative of Fitzrovia will be. "Big businesses are very well resourced," Edward explains, "and we need a healthy dialogue with them to help arrive at those objectives that are beneficial to us all. We really do want to work with all the institutions here".

A resident of the area for more than ten years, Edward Turner has a long history in corporate governance for charitable causes. Formerly involved with the AIDs Treatment Project and Dignity and Dying, he professes, "my experience in those organisations has had a very strong impact on the way that I've approached the role of chair."

His mantra is that if you sort out the corporate governance properly, the organisation will run itself. At the heart of his role with the Fitzrovia Community Centre lies a passionate, hands-on dedication to developing its capability of achieving its goals. "I like the fact that it is a work in progress; I can see it will be possible to make it very effective — that was the appeal to me".

Under Edward's guidance the Fitzrovia Community Centre promises to have a powerful legacy for the area. By cementing its distinctive social, cultural and historical identity the centre will allow Fitzrovia to weather the changes it faces.

"London is ultimately a collection of villages. This one is unique and we need to preserve it," he said.

Bloomsbury ward councillors' surgeries

6:00 - 7:00pm first Friday of the month at

Fitzrovia Community Centre, Foley Street, W1W 6DN

6:00 - 7:00pm second and fourth Fridays of the month at

Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1N 1AB

Third Friday of the month is a 'roving surgery'. Get in touch if you would like us to conduct the surgery at your street or building.

Adam Harrison, Milena Nuti, and Abdul Quadir

Contact 020 7974 3111 or adam.harrison@camden.gov.uk

milena.nuti@camden.gov.uk abdul.quadir@camden.gov.uk

Mixed results for tenants in rent dispute and buildings could be sold off

In a case that rumbled on for nearly half a year, two tenants in Cleveland Residences won their rent tribunal case against UCLH Charity. Their rents will now remain protected. However, one other tenant lost his protected rent status.

Other tenants face an uncertain future after the landlords announced over the summer that they are considering selling properties.

In a letter sent to all the tenants, Peter Burroughs of UCLH Charity explained that they were considering selling the flats in Cleveland Street and New Cavendish Street, and had had a "number of unsolicited offers from investment companies, none of which we have accepted".

Some tenants were alarmed after people called claiming to be the new landlords and saying they wanted the tenants to leave.

Mr Burroughs apologised to tenants, who had strangers knock on their doors and telephone them, and said that these people had no authority to do this.

UCLH Charity has at the time of Fitzrovia News going to press not yet made any further statement about the sale of their residential properties.

However we believe that the sale of Emerson Bainbridge House in Cleveland Street may have been completed, according to one source.

Oldest building on Goodge Street could be given listed status

Developers' plans to demolish a Georgian building on Goodge Street were scuppered at the last minute when Camden Council announced that English Heritage had intervened.

Two applications to demolish the building were to be considered by Camden's planning committee and the council's own planning officers had recommended plans to demolish most of what is the oldest building on the street. 1-3 Goodge Street is currently empty and the owners had wanted to redevelop the building along with its neighbours on a site that is on the corner with Tottenham Court Road.

However, Roger Freeman, chairing the Development Control Committee held on 23 July, said that the application would not be considered until after the proposal to list the building had been decided. This is likely to take several months.

The news came in the same week that architectural historian Dan Cruickshank had visited Fitzrovia for a photo opportunity to support local campaigners in their efforts to save the building which is in the Charlotte Street Conservation area.

Cruickshank had also written to Camden's planners urging them to reject an application to demolish the building which has many original Georgian interior features.

Cruickshank said that he has long been an admirer of the terraces in and around Goodge Street. "Many of these buildings, particularly in Goodge Street itself, have been much undervalued."



Dan Cruickshank (centre in doorway) visits Fitzrovia to support local residents who are campaigning to save 1-3 Goodge Street from demolition.

According to Cruickshank, 1-3 Goodge Street is "of particular architectural and historic significance". The historian who is a recognised expert on Georgian architecture writes in praise of the building which was part of an eighteenth-century development undertaken by Francis and William Goodge with the builder and architect Jacob Leroux.

Cruickshank judges the exterior of the building to be built in 1780 and describes the brickwork "as largely original although much patched and repaired".

But most of his attention concerns the interior of the building which is under threat of total demolition.

"It should be the aim of all with an interest in, or control

over, the Goodge Street area to protect, recover and enhance its important architectural and historic character. And this character is formed not just by the surviving elevations but also by early and interesting interior details and plan-forms. It is obvious that historic buildings are more than just facades, more than just stage sets," he writes.

The campaign to save the building had been led by the Charlotte Street Association. Camden Council also received submissions in support of retaining the building from the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, Howard House & Cleveland Street (north) Neighbourhood Watch.

Shop changes

Shops restaurants closed



Bombay Palace Express (Indian wraps takeaway) 51 Goodge Street

Dough Masters (wraps/cafe)

20 Charlotte Street

Pain de Jour (sandwiches cafe)

27 Goodge Street

Wrap it up (wraps) 31b Goodge St.

Fitzroy Patisserie

(Cafe)

126 Tottenham

Court Road

Ping Pong

(Dim-Sum) 48 Newman Street



Polka Gelato

(ice cream) 45

Fitzroy Street

corner Warren

Street

Back to Basics (seafood restaurant)

21a Foley Street

Shops restaurants opened

Lima (Peruvian restaurant)

31 Rathbone Place

Pinnacle Cars (minicabs)

35 Riding House Street

Ted Baker's Grooming Room

(male grooming) 20 Charlotte Street

Cote Restaurant 5 Charlotte Street

Ladbroke's (betting shop) 116

Tottenham Court Road

Yaki (Japanese bakery) 53 Goodge

Street

Cloud 9 (bike shop) 38 Store Street



Moretto (Italian deli)

11 Mortimer Street

Caffe Nero

126 Tottenham Court Road

Salt'n'spice (Indian cuisine)

64 Grafton Way

Bubbledogs (hot dogs and cham-

pagne) 70 Charlotte Street

Wahaca (Mexican street food and

deli) 19-23 Charlotte Street

Mural artist Mick Jones dies

Mick Jones, artist and activist, died in August at the age of 68. With Simon Barber he created the Fitzrovia Mural, one of London's best known, which looks out onto Whitfield Gardens. The artwork was voted number one in Time Out's 2006 list of top ten London murals.

Mick was the son of trade union leader Jack Jones and he left clues to his politics in his work — spot the hammer and sickle in the Fitzrovia Mural.

Mick was also a sculptor and he produced a clenched fist as an award for services to working men and women who put their jobs on the line in furthering the cause of workers' rights. His other famous murals include the TGWU (now Unite) mural on the ceiling in their centre in Eastbourne depicting workers at their various trades. And the Hackney Peace Mural. He also did a ceiling mural at the Liverpool unemployed centre.

Fitzrovia Area Action Plan

A planning document to help meet the challenge of balancing the residential and commercial needs in Fitzrovia will reach an important stage towards the end of this year.

From February to April 2012, community groups, residents, landowners and businesses in Fitzrovia were invited to comment on the working draft of the plan. Later this year the council will formally consider the comments received and the updated draft. If the updated plan is agreed, there will be a further round of consultation, followed by a Public Examination by an independent planning inspector.

Some additional consultation is currently taking place for some revisions of the "master-planning principles".

The document The are full details on Camden's website:

<http://bit.ly/FitzroviaAAP>

Continued from page 3...

been a source of complaint for many residents. There are also concerns about public safety because people are forced to walk in the road when they find the footway blocked. Both Camden and Westminster councils have been taking action against **landlords** who are not properly controlling the numbers of people standing on the pavements. There is also concern about the number of new **licence applications** in both Camden and Westminster parts of Fitzrovia as either new or existing businesses apply to serve alcohol.

There were complaints about noise from the **mosque** on the corner of **Goodge Street** and **Charlotte Street**. During **Ramadan** many residents were annoyed with the very high volume level from the loudspeakers relaying prayers.

The **Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association Gallery** will be open on the last Thursday of the month joining the **Fitzrovia Lates** group of **late night gallery openings**. The occasional gallery at **39 Tottenham Street** which will display community **art, textiles and photography** will be open one evening a month from 6pm to 9pm until November. Admission free.

Soundings the group charged with finding out what people really think of **Derwent London** have made themselves pretty unpopular themselves. **Elephant Amenity Network** has submitted a letter of complaint to Soundings who have been managing the consultations for **Lend Lease's** regeneration of the **Elephant and Castle**. The letter asks that the serious misrepresentation of the amount of **affordable housing** that was presented at the consultation be taken into account at the planning committee stage.

Westminster City Council has been criticised by charities in the borough after it signed a contract to deliver its voluntary sector infrastructure support with a company which is connected to the **international arms trade**. The **Business & Enterprise Group** which is based in the north east of England won the contract from the council in July after out-bidding rivals in a competitive tendering process.

There will be a "restrain the train" fete at St James's Garden, Cardington Street on 22 September, 1-5 pm. Organised by Euston Against HS2.

The **Marylebone Association** and the **Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association** have joined forces to create a **neighbourhood forum** to cover an area extending from

Continues on page 9...

Business district goes ahead in face of huge opposition

Continued from front page

Camden's cabinet member for regeneration and growth Valerie Leach replied to the residents on behalf of the council rejecting calls to veto the BID. She declined to comment on the absence of any consultation and said the council was allowing the ballot to take place and for the businesses to decide.

"Having reviewed the BID proposal we are allowing the ballot to take place because nothing in the proposal is materially in conflict with council policy," said councillor Leach.

Residents also felt the timing of the creation of the BID was done to minimise adverse publicity and opposition. It all took place between the Queen's Diamond Jubilee weekend and the opening of the Olympic Games leading critics to suggest that the plans had been sneaked out under the cloak of two major public celebrations.

Persons unknown put up stickers and sprayed graffiti saying "No BID in Fitzrovia". The graffiti drew the attention of local writer and actor Griff Rhys Jones who wrote to *Fitzrovia News* condemning the graffiti but also the BID proposal.

"I am not in favour of the BID, but I am even less in favour of a series of yellow spray paint stencils which have been appearing in the area", he wrote.

What is the BID?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a public-private partnership which enables businesses to generate additional funding to re-invest in the local area to improve the public realm, and make the area more profitable for business.

Under these arrangements, business ratepayers agree to contribute a small additional levy on their business rate bill to finance a BID. In order to go ahead with the renewal of the BID, agreement is needed from business ratepayers through a formal voting process, which is required to be conducted by the Returning Officer for Elections for the London Borough of Camden.

The BID levy will be compulsory on all businesses with a rateable value over £100,000 in the BID area. The levy will be 1 per-cent of rateable value.

A new commercial district (see map) will be managed by The Fitzrovia Partnership who say they will establish an effective business voice in Fitzrovia, increase footfall and visitors, reduce business costs, position Charlotte Street as one of London's leading eating destinations, use private security to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and establish a business-led view of the district's future development in context with the Fitzrovia Area Action

"The spread of graffiti, of whatever kind, is universally seen as a measure of urban decay. It is precisely this sort of 'decay' that the BID is seeking to prove exists in this district. It does not help anybody. It adds ammunition to the BID and would seem to prove that there is some form of inner city slump in the area that needs correcting by 'business interests'," he wrote.

Local councillors were also surprised to hear of the BID proposal. Bloomsbury ward councillor Adam Harrison said he was not told of plans to hold a ballot for a BID and only learned about it when *Fitzrovia News* contacted him.

In July *Fitzrovia News* submitted two freedom of information (FOI) requests to the council asking about the decision-making process leading up to allowing The Fitzrovia Partnership to hold a ballot for the BID. We asked what information was provided by The Fitzrovia Partnership and which elected members of the council were consulted.

It seems very little was actually recorded about the decision-making process with meetings not being minuted and so the information trail is not very clear. But one thing is certain: the leader of Camden Council Sarah Hayward was involved in allowing Arup and Derwent



London to lay the foundations to create a new commercial district in Fitzrovia.

In 2011 The Fitzrovia Partnership published a "business engagement" brochure. In this brochure which we obtained via a FOI request from Camden it states: "Elected officials and community groups will be included in the engagement programme designed to inform the evolution of the Partnership". The brochure outlined plans for the creation of a business improvement district and a likely timetable for its creation.

Yet this brochure was only distributed to 229 of the largest businesses in the neighbourhood. *Fitzrovia News* had never seen it before and neither had small business owners, residents or our local councillors.

This is confirmed by the "consultation summary" produced by The Fitzrovia

Partnership and given to Camden ahead of the ballot. This document, which we also obtained under a FOI request, states: "As part of our wider communication we have met Cllr Sarah Hayward, Rachel Stopard (Director) and Alison Griffin (Assistant Director) at Camden to overview our ambitions. In addition we have communicated with our three ward Councillors, Adam Harrison, Milena Nuti and Abdul Quadir, a meeting having been arranged for June 2012."

But the June meeting with local councillors was *after* the BID proposal had been announced.

In a comment to *Fitzrovia News* councillor Adam Harrison said he knew nothing about the proposed ballot at the end of May but only suspected that a ballot was forthcoming (as did a number of residents). He stated that Sarah Hayward had mentioned to him about the possibility of a BID proposal. Adam told us: "Sarah had mentioned to me [in May 2012] that she thought the Partnership were putting plans in place to propose a BID. That is why I therefore thought that a BID might form part of the discussion. I was surprised at how quickly after the Partnership's contact with me that the BID ballot opened, and remain disappointed at the lack of wider consultation with the

community."

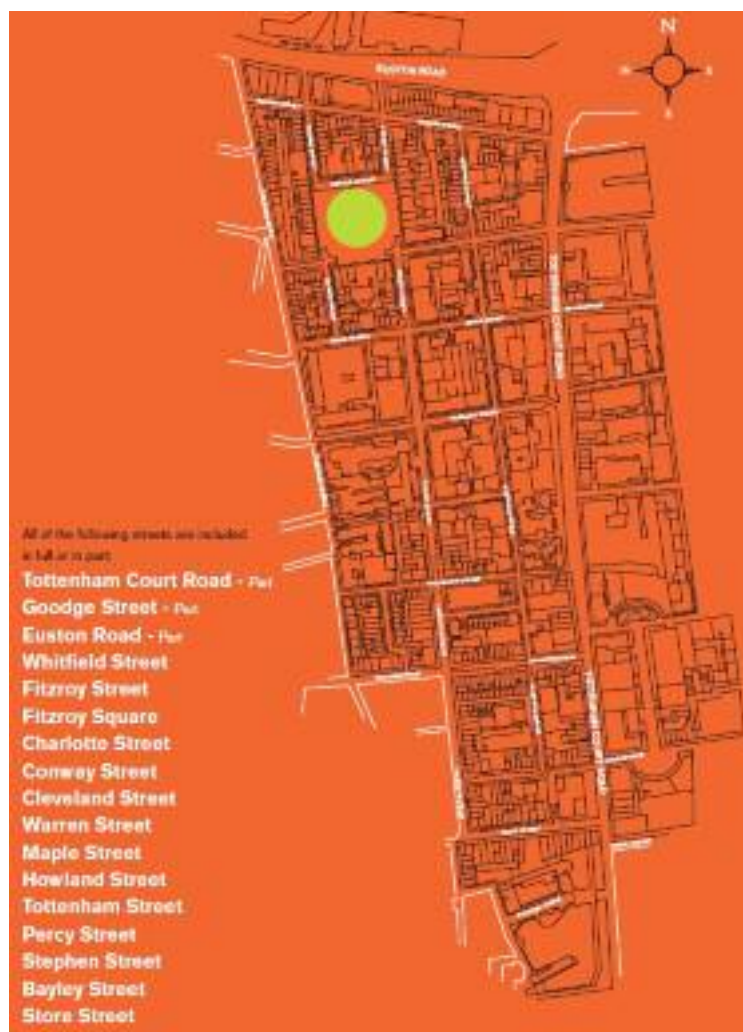
However, it is clear from the FOI responses that Sarah Hayward failed to tell Adam Harrison exactly what was taking place and how far the proposals to develop the BID had progressed. This lack of information and no consultation left residents and small businesses uninformed, unable to develop an effective campaign to prevent the BID going ahead, or have a say in its structure.

Camden have now admitted that the lack of consultation was unsatisfactory. Councillor Valerie Leach, Cabinet member for regeneration and growth said in a statement via Camden's press office:

"It is clear to me that the level of consultation and engagement carried out by the Fitzrovia Partnership was not ideal."

"When the Council was told of the timetable for the ballot in April we became aware that the partnership had not consulted with ward councillors. This is something officers should have ensured that the partnership had carried out and I have raised this with them. The cabinet member at that time asked the partnership to make sure that it consulted with ward councillors."

"Camden Council has a history of full, open and transparent consultation with residents and businesses and we believe that this is a model that the Fitzrovia Partnership should follow in the future as, in this case, the consultation at all levels could have been better, regardless of the fact that, in theory, a business improvement district is able, technically, to set up on its own without engagement with the local authority. This is something that I will be raising with the partnership as we develop our relationship with them," said councillor Leach.



Plan.

The BID will raise around £1,000,000 annually and they hope to raise an additional £500,000 through public funding, commercial income and property contributions.

For more information see

fitzroviapartnership.com
and
<http://bit.ly/FitzroviaBID>

Who are The Fitzrovia Partnership?

The Fitzrovia Partnership were formed in 2009 by developer and landowner Derwent London. Their board of directors is made up of representatives of Arup, Derwent London, Make, the City of London and The Doctors Laboratory.

The chairman of the board is David Whittleton. He is Group Chief Operating Officer of Arup who are based in Fitzroy Street. Arup are a multinational firm and are involved in the redesign of Euston Station for HS2.

Derwent are represented on the board by Simon Silver. They own a lot of property in Fitzrovia. They also have a stake in building the Crossrail station at Tottenham Court Road.

Make are represented by Sean Affleck. They have their architectural practice in Whitfield Street and were set up

by architect Ken Shuttleworth in 2004. They have worked closely with both Arup and Derwent London on projects.

The City of London are represented by Colin Wilcox. They own a large amount of property in Tottenham Court Road and Store Street.

The Doctors Laboratory are based in Whitfield Street and they are represented on The Fitzrovia Partnership board by David Byrne.

A seat on the board of The Fitzrovia Partnership is reserved for a representative of Camden Council.

Gary Reeves a former CEO of the New West End Company (and neighbouring BID) is the company secretary of The Partnership. He runs his own consultancy from Grantham, Lincolnshire.

We need to fight this undemocratic attempt to manipulate Fitzrovia into something it is not

By Griff Rhys Jones

There are several considerations involved in this business improvement district (BID).

First off I am totally in favour of private enterprise and business getting involved with and looking after their parish. But I am wary of this initiative because of what may become unintended consequences (or indeed intended consequences) that help one sort of business (the property letting business) but will cause problems to smaller businesses and the large and wholly integrated residential population of the district.

To begin with, one is bemused to find, looking at the BID map, that it includes residential areas. It seems to take no account of diversity of the district. I was startled to see my own house and neighbours included. Er... I don't want to be part of your business area, thanks. Our interests are not for greater footfall and improved business facilities thank you.

And why don't I get a say if I am so blatantly included? Surely this is undemocratic?

We are confronting policy. This is part of a wider issue. It represents a misreading of the future needs of inner cities and central urban areas, which is enshrined in the latest planning proposals from Government. This is the wider context. The big issue.

New outline planning proposals were put forward earlier this year (These were the ones that the National Trust and the CPRE made a successful fuss about). Most of the noise was about green belt and the countryside. In truth, for urban areas, these documents focussed on "neighbourhood planning".

Basically it goes like this. First proposition – "Every area will need to absorb its share of the growth that we all need to see happen." (This is because the current government are obsessed with the notion that the best way out of recession is through construction. It has far more to do with economic regeneration than providing houses for first time buyers, I am afraid.)

The second proposition is – "This will be achieved by having a neighbourhood action plan."

Thus "the locals" will decide where they put this required new building, and all this new exciting construction stuff which will bring back the boom years

again. This is what they mean by "localism".

The trouble is it doesn't really include the actual locals very much; that is you and I, or the people who live in an area. If you look at the small print in the new legislation you will see that the emphasis throughout the document, when it talks about cities, is on "retail" and the "business community". Commercial development is seen as the only way to save city centres. Everything must be done to encourage "retail". And the interests of the "business community" are seen as paramount and must have an effect on that local plan.

The BID is an overblown expression of this philosophy. Overblown, because, as we have all discovered, in order to have a say at all on this "regeneration" of the area you have to be a business with a rateable value of £100,000 and in order to feature on the board you have to pay £10,000 or over. This is a very old fashioned view of political power. It represents a return to eighteenth century property rights oligarchy.

Now we have a local plan put together for the Council. It is called "The Fitzrovia Area Action Plan". That "action" is the key word. It implies that something must be done. Must it? It is a generally sound document. It recognises, albeit in a slightly perverse way, that Fitzrovia is rather special. It points out that the district is full of small shops and businesses. It points to the limited residential population, the huge influx of commuter workers and the high proportion of temporary and migrant residents. It seemingly fails to understand the context however. This is not because of bad planning. And its real concentration is on "opportunities". It has scoured this place, which it already recognises as being densely populated and crowded for potential areas and sites where they could fulfil the demands for more building, more density, more "commerciality".

Fitzrovia is pure inner-city London. Jonathan Meades is not the first to point out that there is a European feel to this part of town. We have still a mixture of work places and living places, institutional places, art places, entertainment places, and some mad people who live in the middle of all of this in house and flat places. But they are all most-



"I regularly point to London as a place that avoided these disasters, and Fitzrovia as a place that essentially qualifies as almost perfect inner city."

ly small places. Small houses and flats too.

Fitzrovia is already incredibly densely used. But, you know, it has been so since 1800. It is the centre of London and we are hugger-mugger in an old fashioned unplanned way. Some of the pious observations of the Action Plan seem to ignore the fact that we are where we are because we were once cheap and because we are so central. I bought my admittedly huge house for a bargain price fifteen years ago. My friends thought I was mad. I worried for the sake of my children. This is not an inner suburb like St John's Wood. This is the inner city. That makes its demands and achievements even more remarkable. And its requirements more specific.

I never made a better decision than to live here. I feel safer here than I did when I lived in Islington or Clerkenwell. The streets and squares can be very quiet. And I felt blessed. Above all, the shops, except on the main thoroughfares, are quirky small, lively and unobtrusive. They do not dominate. Retail is not king here. It is part of the

court, the balance is right.

But, note please, this is not a run down or deprived area. This is crucial. BIDs, an American invention, were designed to help depressed city-centres. I know what a depressed city-centre looks like. I am president of Civic Voice. I go around cities ruined by Seventies zoning, the urge to bring in major shopping centres and their attendant traffic and car parks, the drive to increase footfall and stick up rents, so that small shops are banished. Huge faceless buildings are thrown up that ignore the street, and often the street patterns, but house giant corporations (we have a few in Fitzrovia, but relatively small ones so far) needing gigantic access roads. Nobody loves these planned future cities of yesterday. The place becomes a howling, alienating desert at six o'clock, patrolled by security guards and feckless gangs.

In fact, I regularly point to London as a place that avoided these disasters, and Fitzrovia as a place that essentially qualifies as almost perfect inner city. We are between Oxford Street and the Euston Road, yet we have a

"I don't want to see rents raised and small businesses driven out."

human scale. We have variety and diversity. There is ever-greater pressure to share this with more people trying to move in. Even pop stars and movie stars now. So we need to be saved? Says who?

Walk out into Tottenham Court Road. Yes, that could do with tidying up, but why? Basically, because of a previous cack-handed attempt to "improve" London. The idea was to drive a six lane highway down to the centre of London – hence Centre Point. Half the street was cleared back. Where it has been cleared at the bottom it has provided some of the blank super office ghastliness which I have already mentioned.

To the north, around the junction of the Tottenham Court Road and Euston Road, there is a more recent and gigantic area of "improvement" – fantastic modern sleek buildings, built to respond to the "transport hub", seen by Sixties futurists as the Corbusian solution to the great Wren's woes, and resulting in our bitty and silly capital development of scattered high rise creeping up over noisy traffic intersections on increasingly redundant ring roads.

And where do the workers in these improved areas seek solace. In Fitzrovia itself. Nobody goes for a walk on the North of the Euston Road, in the environs of those carefully improved and meticulously planned "open areas". They come for a stroll down Charlotte Street instead.

So I fear the BID. I don't want to see the place made "better for business". There is the right amount of business here. The coming and going is based on market forces. There are not huge great monolithic buildings – yet. But those "opportunities" detailed in the Action Plan lurk.

I don't want to see rents raised and the small businesses driven out. Many of these, like French's Bookshop, have fled the increased rates in Covent Garden or Soho. There is no more eclectic selection of small shops in London. Yes, you have to seek them out, but a flute shop, a sculpture supply shop, a play bookshop, a toy museum, a

Continues on next page

We need to fight this undemocratic attempt to manipulate Fitzrovia

continued from previous page

framing shop, a disco supply shop and many, many more. You want Whistles and Kooples and Prada and Paul Smith to come here and "improve" this area like they have improved Westbourne Grove or "improved" Covent Garden? Er, no. You can be soulless clone upmarket as well as soulless clone downmarket, you know.

At a time when retail is beginning to falter, (when we may be entering a new age of either Westfield superstores or further internet shopping), we don't require Fitzrovia, where people inhabit a place twenty-four-seven, to give way to unlettable and out of date monster outlets. Some complain they can't run shops in the spaces that Fitzrovia supplies.

OK. Let them go elsewhere and "regenerate" other less appealing areas. Those small shops are being used.

The worst sin, and we see it happening here, is facade-ism. Taking a series of old buildings, keeping the frontage and building massive units in the back of it. This way huger shops can be introduced by stealth. The huger shops kick up the rents. The high rents are used as an excuse to put pressure on the smaller shops.

In conclusion, business is one answer here. It is not the only answer. This process is undemocratic. We have evolved into this wonderful mix. Nobody willed it. It was not achieved by planning and will not be moved on by holistic one-sided "vision". This is a crowded and specific place. One size does not fit all. What the government thinks will suit Leeds does not suit Fitzrovia, manifestly does not. And what a big property firm thinks will suit its letting programme will not suit the other residents.

Retail is in decline and residential occupation ought to be encouraged – to be green, close to work, using public transport, self-contained and fighting the donut effect. Fitzrovia is not in any sense in decay. It doesn't need urgent regeneration. In fact, Fitzrovia has been on a successful upward curve for some time. It is just more gritty and less up market ghetto-ised than say parts of Notting Hill Gate. Good.

I am afraid that some of the people involved in this BID give the impression that they have arrived here precisely to exploit that upward curve, but seem to be saying its not going fast enough for them. Well maybe

not for them. But it is moving fast enough for those of us who are not spending our time looking only at our balance sheets.

We need to fight this undemocratic attempt to manipulate Fitzrovia into something it is not. And most of all we need to point out that the reason that there is so little open green space in Fitzrovia is because it is a proper "quartier" – a city district, like you find in New York or Paris or Genoa – already very crowded, already very pressurised, already lively, mixed, full and functioning.

It does not and should not be scheduled, planned or visioned to take yet more. It is dense and active enough. If it needs improvement, let it be gradual.

The worst things in this area are those brought about by big organisations. What on earth would we be doing letting these people call the shots?

A longer version of this article was published on our website in July.
<http://wp.mel/puay0-1OW>

Another version was published in the Evening Standard in August.
<http://bit.ly/GRJ-in-ES>

An old friend turns up in Romford Market

Our news editor spotted this sign over the summer at a stall in Romford market.

Ras Prince Monolulu (1881 St Croix, Danish West Indies - 14 February 1965 Middlesex Hospital, London), whose real name was Peter Carl McKay, was something of an institution on the British horse racing scene from the 1920s until the time of his death. He was a racing tipster and one of his best known phrases was the cry "I gotta horse!"

Prince Monolulu lived at 55 Howland Street from 1924 until the war and then at 83-85 Cleveland Street, next to The Tower Tavern, for the rest of his life.

The Tower Tavern was run from 1979 to 1991 by Billy Smyth who had met Prince Monolulu several times from 1959 onwards, so he decorated the pub with memorabilia of the tipster.

Then Billy took over the Yorkshire Grey on the corner of Maple Street and Fitzroy Street and changed its name to the Prince Monolulu in his honour



(as reported in Fitzrovia News in December 1991).

A year later Monolulu's grandson, musician Joe McKay, spotted the pub and told his father and uncles about it. So a surprise visit was arranged to the pub of Monolulu's three sons who had all been born in Howland Street - Peter in 1924, Ronald in 1932, and Raymond in 1935 (as reported in Fitzrovia News in September 1992). Sadly the pub changed its name in 2002 and the colourful portrait sign of him taken down.

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Public Meeting

The Fitzrovia Business Improvement District (BID)

A meeting to address the concerns that Camden Council have allowed a new commercial district to be created in the neighbourhood without any public consultation. Come along and find out what has happened and what can be done about it.

7pm Tuesday 25 September 2012
at Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street,
London W1T 4RX

Fitzrovia Lates

Late night gallery openings on the last Thursday of every month

Participating Galleries

ART FIRST // BARTHA CONTEMPORARY // CARROLL/FLETCHER // COLE // DERWENT LONDON // ENGLAND & CO // FITZROVIA NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION GALLERY // FRED MANN // GALLERY DIFFERENT // GALLERY LIBBY SELLERS // GALLERY VELA // HAUNCH OF VENISON // JOSH LILLEY GALLERY // MARGARET STREET GALLERY // MUMMERY + SCHNELLE // NANCY VICTOR // NETTIE HORN // NEWMAN STREET GALLERY // THE PIPER GALLERY // PARADISE ROW // REBECCA HOSSACK ART GALLERY // REGINA GALLERY // ROOK & RAVEN // ROSENFELD PORCINI // SCREAM // TIWANI CONTEMPORARY // TJ BOULTING //

FitzroviaLates.co.uk
[@FitzroviaLates](https://twitter.com/FitzroviaLates)

Mary still painting at 90

By MIKE PENTELOW

Local artist Mary Banham celebrated her 90th birthday at the end of July, and is still painting.

She has had to scale down from producing large six foot square pictures, however, since a heart attack two years ago confined her to a wheelchair. Before that she had an artificial leg and crutches from the age of 34 after the amputation of a cancerous leg.

Before the heart attack she produced huge acrylic paintings, mainly of the skies and clouds in the fens, in her large Ely studio.

Now she has to scale down her pictures, drawing with pastel and charcoal in her flat in Paramount Court, University Street, off Tottenham Court Road.

She moved into this flat in 1989 partly because it had a parking space for the disabled, and partly because she was very fond of the area which she knew



ABOVE: Mary with one of her paintings in her University Street flat.

LEFT: At the birthday party (from the left) Mary's grandson Oliver, Mary, great-granddaughter Lucy, and daughter Debby. Picture by son Ben.

well, having worked for the Royal Institute of British Architects for many years, and her late husband Reyner, the architectural author, was a University of London professor for 12 years.

"My daughter Debby, as a teenager, was one of the squatters in Tolmers Square Village in

the early 1970s with her two-year-old son Oliver, who also went to the Whitfield Street nursery," recalled Mary. [Debby is on the right in the picture of the 90th birthday party, and Oliver is on the left].

And Mary's son, Ben, who worked in information technology for 25 years, was a frequent

visitor to computer shops in Tottenham Court Road, running one for a short while at number 54.

During the war Mary attended Camberwell School of Art which, because of the bombing, was moved to Northampton. "We had a great time shocking the provincials," she laughed, "but we always seemed to be in London during the worst of the bombing."

In 1944 she qualified as a teacher in London and went to work in Norwich where she met her husband.

Her leg was amputated in 1956 when Debby was three and Ben was one. "They could then ignore what I said and run away because I couldn't catch them," smiled Mary. "Debby was very cross at me having only one leg, but Ben could not remember me with two."

EXHIBITION

As her husband published many books on architecture she illustrated many of them, and then other publications, and looked after the RIBA drawings collection. In 1974 she put on an exhibition about the Festival of Britain. "Roy Strong, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, was so impressed by it that in 1976 he used it to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the festival, as the last time everyone came together rather than being terribly competitive."

She also remembers fondly the counterculture movement of the 1970s, including the widespread support of the Tolmers squat from local shops, businesses, students and residents.

After moving into Paramount Court she was immediately elected on to the Charlotte Street Association committee in 1989 and served on it until buying the Ely study 13 years ago.

"I have done a variety of subjects, abstract and non-abstract," she said. "Up until now I have liked pastel but been afraid of it, so it will be good to push myself with it now. I also like charcoal which is very dramatic."

Mystery pigeon fancier meets chicken eating birds

By Our Cuckoo Correspondent
GUY O'CONNEL

Office workers and residents mingle for a snack lunch at Whitfield Gardens, the popular space just off Tottenham Court Road. It's a rare quiet zone for the stressed human but it's also for the birds.

"There's a man comes and

feeds the pigeons then walks off. He empties a bag and then rushes away." Say Becky and her colleague Emily. "It's disgusting. There was a dead one lying here the other day where we're trying to eat lunch. Then there was one trapped in a bag and people were trying to get it out and it was flapping mad. I hate them."

Other readers have spotted a man with a bag who loves the birds. One resident tells the story of the birder being followed by his own Fitzrovia flock of feathered friends. Not everyone shares the love.

For John sitting nearby just inches from a whole flock and himself perched dangerously under a tree it's a similar story.

"They're dirty and they should be controlled. I wouldn't kill them but someone should think about keeping the numbers down." John who works nearby and comes from Greece tells FN that there's a similar problem back home. "It's universal in big cities." Sitting where he is, under the branches used as home by the birds, I beat a hasty retreat in case I became a target.

"I give them KFC to be honest," says Laura who's visiting from elsewhere in London.

"They ate it all up! They like it, I don't mind them." (FN wonders if chicken-eating pigeons are a first for the bird world.)

"I would feed them but I'm just having a soft drink right now", says Heile who's taking a break on the benches. "I like them."



Laura



Heile

Nearby Michael who's working in London from France says "As long as they don't s**t on me, I can deal with it. I would not feed them, but I wouldn't kill them either."

Take our pigeon poll: I fancy pigeons / Sorry I'm not that way inclined.



Becky and Emily



John from Greece

Continued from page 5...

Cleveland Street to Edgware Road. The Forum also has representatives of landowners and businesses who have come together to serve an area that is being called **Marylebone Central**. The Forum has now submitted an application for Westminster Council to consider it for Neighbourhood Forum status under the **Localism Act**.

Amenity societies in neighbouring **Soho** have also submitted a Neighbourhood Forum application to Westminster Council.

An area called **Bloomsbury Village**, south of the British Museum, is being considered for Neighbourhood Forum status by **Camden Council**.

Owners of **Hogarth Studios** at corner of **Charlotte Street** and **Tottenham Street** propose redeveloping the building for residential and retail. The plans would mean changes on Tottenham Street and the creation of a new retail unit on the ground floor and basement on the corner of Tottenham and Charlotte streets.

A planning application to demolish **74 Charlotte Street** and leaving the facade and redevelop the rear of the building was rejected by **Camden Council** in July. The former **Swiss Club** and **Charlotte Street Blues Bar**, a Georgian building, is not listed but objectors successfully argued it is a valuable heritage asset. Planning officers had also incorrectly described the building in their report as nineteenth century when it is in fact eighteenth century.

An application to open a **Costa Coffee** shop in Warren Street was also rejected at the meeting in August.

Plans by **Derwent London** to fill in the **arcade** at **Central Cross** Tottenham Court Road with more retail units were approved by the planning committee despite objections by residents and **The Twentieth Century Society**.

A hotel in place of the **NCP car park** in Adeline Place off **Tottenham Court Road** could go ahead if planning permission is given. But the Bloomsbury Association are concerned that the **173 bed hotel** in a deep basement underneath an existing hotel will be an over-development of the site bringing the total number of hotel rooms to 850. There are many hotels nearby and they are concerned about the intensification of the night-time economy around the site, increased noise, and the visual impact on the surrounding conservation area, in particular **Bedford Square**.

Max Bygraves, died 31 August, entertained at **Goodge Street Station** during the **Blitz** in the 1940s.

Cyprus and EU President drops by for a fish supper



The president of Cyprus, Demetris Christofias, dropped in for cod and chips at Gigs Greek restaurant in Tottenham Street, after attending the Olympics opening ceremony the previous night.

He is also currently the president of the European Union and was accompanied by security staff and officials in limousines.

He enjoyed his meal so much that he returned three days later (after finding it fully booked the previous day), with 17 others including the ambassador to the Cyprus High Commission, the Commander in Chief of the army, cabinet ministers and their wives. This time he plumped for a souvlaki kebab mix. Both meals were washed down with Keo beer.



Ruth calls last orders at The One Tun

"I will greatly miss the welcoming community of Fitzrovia," said Ruth Harris (pictured left), who is leaving as manager of The One Tun pub in Goodge Street after six years.

"It is the friendly people and the characters which make it, and the heart and soul of the village, as I call it, remain the same despite the changes, and that is why I love it."

Ruth, who has an excellent jazz singing voice, could often be heard at the karaoke nights which she introduced to the pub.

Another change she introduced was to screen cricket and rugby on television as well as football, and this has also attracted quite a following.

She finished at The One Tun at the end of August and starts at her new pub, the King's Head in Roehampton near Putney, in October.

Street parties then and now...

This street party (right) took place in Hanson Street back in 1945 to celebrate VE Day (the end of the war in Europe).

The woman standing on the far right is Hilda Mogilner (whose grandmother Nancy Lazarovitch had run the kosher butcher at number 18 in the street from 1938 to 1941, when it was taken over by Marks Lazarovitch who ran it until 1970). A picture tile of a bull's head from these days can still be seen on the wall. Hilda's daughter, Rosalyn, is the little girl pictured in the front, second right, with Shirley Temple ringlets. The picture was sent in by Hilda's niece, Linda Cohen of East Finchley.

Other traders in Hanson Street in 1945 (which in those days went all the way up to Carburton Street before Holcroft Court was built in 1966): Harry Rees, another kosher butcher (at 30), Atlas Food Products, bakery (32&34), Latimer House Boys Hostel, which became the Middlesex Hospital Institute of Clinical Research & Experimental Medicine in the 1950s (40-48), A Bennett & Co, wholesale cabinet makers (68), J D Beardmore, architectural iron founders (76), Frederick Myles, shopkeeper (80), the Lord Nelson public house, licensed to Harry Williams (92), Gladys Harper, fruiterer (1), Sarah Epstein, shopkeeper (5), Fanny Lasserson, confectioner (7), Hershel Harris, bootmaker (27), Barnett Shapiro, foreign provision director (29), The Ship public house, licensed to E J Rose & Co (31), B Levine, confectioner (33), Meawick & Co, upholstery manufacturers (63a), Chas Brooks, boot and shoe repairer to the trade (77), Edward Pearce



The kosher butcher sign that still exists at 18 Hanson Street.

(fruiterer), and Leib Rosenkrantz (hairdresser).

The cosmopolitan nature of the street was further shown by Poll Hy, a Chandler at No. 80, and H Khan at No 77, in 1936.

Are there any descendants of any of these traders still living in Hanson Street? If so, do let us know (contact details on page 2).



This year's Jubilee party in Charlotte Place celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the rain.

Poetry Corner

By JOHN THEODOR FISHER

INEFFECTIVE AID

As the dwindling drizzle
Of international aid
Trickles and drips ineffectively
into parched Africa
Thirsted and hungered,
pot-bellied little Africans
Struggle in vain.
Their little graves a testament
to the cynical nature of an
Impoverished system called aid.
In the name of God -
Do better.

RESIST

Resist terror now
Tranquility and joy reigns
Tomorrow sorted.

Service to mankind
unstinting, freely given
Gongs and bells follow.

Tomorrow is now
A record of yesterday
In clear broad detail.

UNTIMELY DEMISE

Death arrives too soon
Weeping parents howl in grief
A bairn laid to rest.

A MOST DISTRESSING DREAM

In a most distressing dream
A coterie of Monetarist Monsters
Are feasting at a Banquet
Serving single-mothers and their
Hapless offspring as well as a
Long line of disabled, dead-eyed,
Denizens of despair.
Woke up drenched and screaming
like Munch's man. Gasping for air.
A very distressing dream indeed.

**Send your poems to us for publication.
Contact details on page 2.**

Local life saver

Many people owe their lives to Shiv, who runs the chemist on the corner of Great Titchfield Street and Riding House Street. And not just because of the valuable medications that he dispenses.

Shiv (real name Kirit Patel) saved someone who had been stabbed, with his skills in emergency first aid. A staff member from Efe's nearby Turkish restaurant was stabbed when carrying takings to the bank in February 1990. He staggered to Shiv's and an ambulance was called, but was delayed by a punctured tyre so a second one was despatched. Shiv's emergency first aid was crucial in keeping him alive during the delay.

Another customer, Lou Myers, who lived in Hanson Street for many years, only went for regular blood tests on the insistence of Shiv. "They found something that they were able to catch early and the treatment saved my life," Lou told Fitzrovia News.

Shiv was born in Kenya of Indian descent and came to



Britain in 1973 to study at Liverpool School of Pharmacy. He chose this as he was a fanatical Liverpool football fan, and his son has followed his example and calls his house "Anfield".

After that Shiv came to Great Titchfield Street over 25 years ago, specialising in healthcare, vitamins, make-up, hair, grooming products, and electronic items. He is known to locals for his friendly advice and knowledge.

One amusing misunderstanding nearly led to an inappropriate remedy however. "Once a foreign visitor came in asking for inserts," he explained. "I thought he wanted cushion inserts for his shoes. But he was looking for suppositories!"

He added: "Fitzrovia is an easy place to be friendly and part of the local community."

A big cricket fan he lives in Purley (with his wife and three grown up children) so supports Surrey county cricket club, and of course the Kenyan national cricket team."

Bravery of nurse recognised with plaque on her home

The bravery of a Middlesex Hospital nurse has been honoured by the unveiling of a plaque at John Astor House nurses' home, 3 Foley Street, where she lived from 1929 until 1969.

Sister Dorothy Thomas (1905-1989) was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal by King George V and Queen Mary in 1934 in front of a large crowd in the hospital forecourt, in Mortimer Street. This can be seen in a brief newsreel clip on the web (britishpathe.com/video/brave-nurse-honoured).

She was the theatre superintendent on January 26 of that year when a large oxygen cylinder in the anaesthetic room exploded as it was turned on. Flames leapt 15 feet across the theatre, which was immediately cleared by staff and nurses for fear of further explosions.

Sister Thomas stopped behind until all were clear, then removed the ether from the anaesthetic room, and shut the doors to minimise any blast.

Then she thought it was her duty to avert the wrecking of the theatre, so bravely re-entered the



room, ran up to the cylinder and turned it off by the tap below the valve.

The flames had been so fierce that part of the steel collar on the oxygen cylinder had melted away. When all was safe she called her staff back to clear the debris, and the theatre was soon operational again.



Left: Sister Dorothy Thomas after receiving her medal in 1934 (Getty Images) and, above, the new plaque at her home.

Her bravery averted serious damage to the hospital's main operating theatre and she was praised by her colleagues and patients. With quiet modesty she said it was just part of her duties.

For this selfless act in preventing a catastrophe she was awarded the OBE and then the Empire Gallantry Medal. During the war this became the George Cross (which she received from George VI at Buckingham Palace in 1942).

The City of Westminster green plaque to her at John Astor House was unveiled in May by the council chairman, Richard Murley.

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The Service is also open to carers living in the area.

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association
39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX
Tel: 020 7580 4576
Contact: Barbara Jacobson
E-mail: olderfitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk





Festival pioneer Terry Burke dies

The man who coined the phrase "the people live here festival" for the first Fitzrovia Festival has died, aged 75.

Terry Burke (pictured) moved into 31 Goodge Street (from Rathbone Street next to the Newman Arms) with his first wife, Gill, and sons Tom and Tim in 1963. Having done his national service in the navy as a non-swimmer, he became a journalist and worked at the time in the Labour Party press office under Harold Wilson. Then he moved into public relations where his skills were also harnessed by the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, of which he was a founder member in the early 1970s. His phrase "the people live here" caught on and embodied the association's spirit. He was also very involved in the Charlotte Street Association.

He did not mind getting his hands dirty, either, and was one of those who manually cleared all the rubble from the site at the top of Whitfield Street to make way for the Warren play area in the mid 1970s.

"He was a very active member of the local Labour Party and was a friend of Frank Dobson who was then a councillor," recalled Ron Gauld. "Terry told Frank about a tenant being harassed by his landlord, a restaurant owner in Charlotte Place, who had boarded up his toilet. Frank visited the landlord and got him to unboard it straight away."

"When we were organising the Fitzrovia Festival in 1973, which was the first to be held in a city main street, Terry made up the 'people live here' slogan, which being a journalist came easily to him and was used on the iconic poster (pictured above).

"He was a great campaigner for the locality and keeping it as a residential area with affordable housing."

In 1975 he became a mature student, taking a social science degree, mainly in economics, at the Polytechnic of Central



London (since renamed the University of Westminster) in Wells Street. "His economics was based on his experiences locally," said Ron. "And his involvement in local politics covering economics and local affairs, helped him get a job teaching business studies in the polytechnic after passing his degree. He also got a first MSc in economics at Birkbeck."

"Appropriately for a socialist he died on May Day and one of the last books he was reading before he died in hospital was Capital by Karl Marx."

"Terry was very sociable, gregarious, lively, bouncy and had a great sense of humour."

He spent 23 happy years teaching and, after separating from Gill in the early 1980s, got together with Sheila Maddock, who also taught at the Polytechnic, and they bought a house in Rye (once lived in by author Henry James) where they moved full-time on retirement in 2004. Here he became involved with the University of the Third Age and local history and politics.

By BARBARA EWING

Hundreds of people, from both inside Fitzrovia and out of it, will have eaten in, and often walked past, the wonderful fish restaurant Back to Basics in Foley Street. And many of those passing people, like me, must have waved to – and always received a cheery wave back from – Dorota Karpowicz, the tall, blonde, smiling Polish waitress who has worked there for many years.

She had a particular knack of making people feel welcome, a bit as though Back to Basics was her own home and when she put the warm bread and the savoury butters on the table, it felt as if she had cooked and mixed them herself (well, maybe she had).

Artist Yvonne leaves a legacy of photographs

Fitzrovia owes a debt of gratitude to Yvonne McLean for her care for the community and for the area, through her work with the Charlotte Street Association and the Fitzrovia Festival, and for creating a photographic archive that stretches back to the early 1970s.

Born in New Zealand, Yvonne died in hospital at Exeter on August 13th aged 84, after a short illness. When she was a child she moved with her parents to West Wickham, and from here she eventually attended Bromley Art School. After that she left to begin a career in art and design that brought her in the late 1950s to a room at 29 Percy Street, and later to a flat at 31 Percy Street with her sister Anne.



Yvonne's work with design groups introduced her to the theatre world, and she helped

create the décor for the Gilbert and Sullivan Pub in Covent Garden and for the Adeline Genee theatre in East Grinstead.

Then in 1982 came the break with Percy Street. Yvonne moved to Padstow in Cornwall, where the local theatre provided an outlet for her skills as a scenery and costume designer. She will be greatly missed.
ROLAND COLLINS

Sue Blundell adds: we were lucky to have seen Yvonne earlier this year and to have been given her archive. If anyone would like to have a look at it, please contact me through the News. I have the happiest possible memories of Yvonne and the part she played in Fitzrovia for many years.

Leo was a star tailor



Leo White, a master tailor and friend of the neighbourhood, died on 27 July 2012 at St John's Wood Hospice. He had a business on Foley Street.

Tadas Kazakevicius, who took the picture, remembers Leo saying "Can I carry on reading a newspaper while you photograph me?" when asked if he could do his portrait. "Should I look at the camera?"

Tadas wrote on his website which featured his picture: "Leo is the star of Fitzrovia. Every restaurant cafe and I believe every person around knows him because he's a professional men's tailor and he's done it for the last 50 years. He has his own tailoring place and still works there every day."

Leo White photographed in Hanson Street, by Tadas Kazakevicius in 2011

Popular Polish waitress much missed

One day a couple of months ago she was not there any more. So I went inside to ask the other Polish waitresses why she was taking such a long holiday – although I knew she often went back to Poland for a long weekend, or sometimes a week. And I found out that she was dead. She had gone home to Poland for one of those short breaks, and she had been killed in a car crash. She was only 41 years old.

I have found Foley Street different, without Dorota's smiling face always there. She had worked in the restaurant for about fourteen years. She was married to her loved Gregory and they had settled amongst a very small, inter-related Polish community in Brent Cross – most of whom seemed to work

at "Back to Basics."

Dorota and Gregory had two sons – one was being educated in Poland, and one in England. One day Gregory, who was a builder, was involved in a Polish fight of some kind and had his skull smashed in. He gradually recovered but he could no longer work full-time because he had become subject to epileptic fits. So smiling Dorota, who never, ever complained, became the full-time supporter of her family whom she loved. And while she was doing that she added to the general joy of Foley Street as well.

She is much missed by Gregory and their sons and her extended family of course. They might like to know that she is also missed by many people in



Fitzrovia, who knew her smile and her welcome, but probably did not know her story, or all of it.

The Dining Detective

Gaylord Restaurant, 79-81 Mortimer Street.

I feel as if I should headline this Indian Restaurant FIVE POUNDS A PRAWN!

In a way this is a very positive review by the Dining Detective, but once again I think it is very expensive to eat here except for a very special occasion. Alas, unlike some newspaper food reviewers, I do not get paid to eat, so my pocket has been taking a bit of a battering in the interests of finding good places in the area – and I have lived in Fitzrovia for so long that I do remember being able to eat out very reasonably at very many excellent restaurants (including the Gaylord).

The restaurant has been in Mortimer Street since 1966 and has had quite a few make-overs in this time. And as reported in the Fitzrovia News (Autumn 2009) another version of the Gaylord could be found even earlier in Whitfield Street. According to Stephen Fry on QI it was the first restaurant of which there is written evidence that Tandoori was served (a 1966 advert in the London Palladium theatre programme!). He said the restaurant was also credited with producing the first Chicken Tikka Masala, improvised for a Scottish customer.

It is, anyway, in 2012, a very good restaurant without doubt: when I visited recently very few of the diners were not Indian – a good sign for an Indian restaurant. There are many waiters, and assistants and managers who make you feel welcome and ask you how you are enjoying your meal and fill your wine-glass at regular intervals. And if you ask one of them to leave the bottle activity to your own discretion, another passing waiter will very soon be there to start pouring again.

There are many interesting-looking starters for around £7.50-£8.50: samosas, little



PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWER:
Above the Newnham Arms in Rathbone Street.

kebabs, pancakes, scallops. We had Mixed Vegetable Pakora, a less crispy but extremely tasty version of tempura vegetables which was £9.50 and (the only dish that perhaps slightly disappointed all evening) Dilli Ki Aloo Tikki: potato cakes stuffed with lentils and spices which was a bit soggy and not very inviting. The mains were the aforementioned prawns: Tandoori King Prawns, which cost £20 and consisted of a plate with four delicious prawns on it. And a good version of Chicken Tikka Masala, with perhaps its interesting history, at £14. One Indian icecream, kulfi, was £5 and a bottle of good Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon was 19.90.

All the extras were expensive: a bowl of steamed rice £4.50. A parata £3.75. A naan £4.00. Mint tea with a tiny sprig of mint floating on the top £3.50. All these, plus an added service charge of 12.5% meant that once again a not-over-ambitious meal for two cost over £100 and for the Dining Detective at least that is not, on the whole, affordable.

Next time I will endeavour to review a restaurant that is just as good, but much less expensive. In this 'new' Fitzrovia, where new-to-the-area, rich architects instruct us on walls that 'CREATIVITY LIVES' (while they build underground car parks and eleven-story blocks of luxury flats amid the Fitzrovia that we know and love), do wish me luck!



Word on the street

Diamond geezer

As we celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at the Duke of York in Charlotte Place it emerged there was another 60th anniversary to celebrate.

Customer, Dave Peart, was born on March 9, 1952, just over a month after Her Majesty ascended to the throne on February 6 of that year (the reason the celebrations were in June was because that was the date of her coronation in the following year).

Dave (below, flanked by two friends) was proudly shown as a babe in arms round the pub by his mother, Lucy, who still lives



Comical cleric

Do other readers think the Rev Alan Carr (pictured reading are esteemed organ) resembles the comedian of the same name (minus the clerical title)?

This Alan Carr is the Associate Rector of St-Giles-in-the-Fields parish (which encompasses south east Fitzrovia).

He certainly displayed a sense of humour during our recent chat over a cuppa char outside the Bay Leaf cafe in Tottenham Street. When asked about his lookalike he stated: "I usually say there are three Alan Carrs - one who made millions helping people to stop smoking only to die of lung cancer himself, one who is the comedian, and me, who doesn't smoke and is funnier than the second (which isn't true!)."

Giant stuffed bear

Does anyone know what happened to the seven-foot high stuffed bear at 64-67 Tottenham Court Road on the corner of Goodge Street (which used to be Catesby's house furnishes shop back in the late 1940s)?

My old friend, Brian Keats, born in Huntley Street 77 years ago, an ex-dealer (don't ask), reckons it must be worth at least £10,000, but has no record of it being sold. If you know anything please get in touch with the paper (contact details on page 2).

Brian recalls buying a sofa there on hire purchase. One day he got a letter from the owner, Brian Catesby (a descendant of the Gunpowder Plot family) which sparked off some verbal fireworks. He said he had not received the latest payment. Our Brian pointed out that was because he had finally paid off the debt!

Celebrity watch

My brother Percy spotted David Mitchell, looking in the King & Queen in Foley Street, and his comic partner Robert Webb outside the Blue Posts in Newman Street a few days later.

Beryl on air

If proof were ever needed that the Fitz News can put you on the path to fame, witness Beryl Ritchie. Our recent profile of her and her star role in the music business was spotted by a BBC producer.

She was interviewed at some length on Radio 4's Saturday Live programme about her career and fight for better deals for women.

Word has it that Beryl, from the small town of Adrossan in Ayrshire, was worried that she sounded too posh and her family back home would think she'd got above herself. She needn't have worried, for then she was interviewed by her hometown rag The Adrossan and Saltcoats Herald.

Apparently she had a hard time explaining to the young reporter what vinyl records were. But her proud family bought copies by the dozen.

Cock and bull story



The above self-portrait of artist Michael Rothenstein, with a large cock in his hands, was bought for a snip at just 10p by me from Holborn Library.

Imagine my joy to read on the back that it was photographed by John Freeman, of 74 Newman Street, in 1982.

Rothenstein (1908-1993) had his first show at the Warren Gallery in 1931 and later became well known as one of the country's most experimental printmakers. He also illustrated several books including the first UK edition of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" in 1937. His father was William Rothenstein (1872-1945) who was taught at Slade art school, 62 Gower Street, and was a founder member of the Fitzroy Street Group, which met at 8 and then 19 Fitzroy Street from 1907 to 1911.

Charlotte Street



Picture puzzle

How well do you know Fitzrovia's landscape? Can you identify where the picture above was taken? The answer is below the Sherlock Homes picture at the top of this page.



Cartoon by Jayne Davis

Griff's giggles

Actor's blueprint for his career

By BRIAN JARMAN

Versatility could be Griff Rhys Jones' middle name, if he wasn't already using one in that Welsh single-barrelled kind of way.

Comedian, actor, TV presenter, producer, director, writer, King of West End farce - he's always up for a new challenge. Who else could you imagine playing both Charley's Aunt and Fagin?

And when I meet him for lunch in a new cafe on Warren Street, near his home on Fitzroy Square, there are of course many moments of schoolboy giggles.

The son of a Welsh doctor, he spent his early years in Cardiff until the family moved to Essex.

"I was a back of the class person," he says. "What made me funny was that I liked being around funny people. I like clowns."

One of his first stage appearances was as First Witch in a school production of Macbeth alongside his classmate, the writer Douglas Adams.

Then it was up to Cambridge to read History and English and work with the famed Footlights Club, appearing in and directing many productions. A job as trainee radio producer at the BBC introduced him to

Fitzrovia. It was a love affair that was to develop into a thirty-five year relationship.

"I was brought up in suburban Essex and for me London was an exciting place, a remote place," he says. "I always wanted to live in central London. I never wanted to live in a middle-class ghetto."

And it was then he realised that people did live in the area - not just BBC people and actors like his friend David Jason whom he was producing and who had a flat in Cleveland Street - but a wide diversity of

let's return to the career which made him such a familiar presence on our stages and screens.

It was in those early years at the BBC that Griff went along to the Paris Studios in Lower Regent Street to see his hero Frankie Howerd record his radio show. He was with his colleagues Rory McGrath, Clive Anderson and Jimmy Mulville, who went on to co-found the famous Hat Trick production company and produce Griff and Mel Smith in Alas Smith and Jones.

be off-the-cuff. He'd ring me at two o'clock in the morning the night before the show and say that he wasn't going to do any of the monologues - he hated them - and so we'd all have to get in and start all over again."

But despite all this, Griff says, "It was my favourite year," referring to the Peter O'Toole film in which he plays an ageing, drunken film star working with a young writer for a TV show in New York.

He went on to have a few minor roles in the first series of Not The Nine O'Clock News with comedians such as Rowan Atkinson and Pamela Anderson. It broke new ground in TV comedy which, says Griff, was in the doldrums after the success of Monty Python. But after the pilot, which was according to Griff 'a bit of a disaster,' the first series was only a moderate success.

Griff felt it needed more editorial rigour.

"There was quite a bit of rambling", he says. "I was there saying, 'Why don't we cut it there?' That was my role. So the second series was a huge success and that was down to me. Can you put that in inverted commas or something to indicate there's a bit of irony there?"

In 1981 Griff and Mel Smith set up Talkback, one of the most successful production companies in British television which would go on to make classics such as The Day Today, Smack The Pony, and Da Ali G Show.

They'd move into old offices in Newman Street and Percy Street, restoring them as they



Frankie Howerd

went along and winning awards for doing so.

Then they bought an old factory in Clerkenwell, and Griff puts up his hands to starting the gentrification or yuppification of the area.

He was the driving force behind the acclaimed renovation of the Hackney Empire, and through this got the job presenting the BBC series Restoration, in which viewers voted for the old buildings they wanted to see rescued and done up.

Meanwhile Griff had brought his house in Fitzroy Square and moved his family in. His friends thought he was mad.

"We're the pioneers of what life is going to be like for the rest of the 21st century."

"I used to wake up in the middle of the night worrying about bringing my children here. But then I'd look out of my window onto Fitzroy Square and it was the quietest place I'd lived in my life."

He mentions the novel Saturday by his neighbour Ian McEwan which, he points out, is about the paranoia of inner-city living. He's amazed that people still think of Fitzrovia as a rough place.

Instead he lauds the mix of small shops and businesses, houses and flats, pubs and restaurants, the old and the new, the quiet streets. It's not 'glossed up', he says, but like a 'quartier' in a European city, and the last thing he thinks we need is a grand plan. He points to development to the north of Euston Road which he describes as sterile.



Honey & Co in Warren Street. Rachel leans against the doorframe of one of Griff Rhys Jones' favourite places in Fitzrovia.

people who chose to come to live here.

He fell easily into Fitzrovia's pub culture (he's since given up alcohol) and remembers sessions in The Stag, The Yorkshire Grey, and The George.

"The George was called The Glue Pot by the conductor of the BBC orchestra because that's where the brass section used to go and he could never get them out of there."

"How much has the area changed in those 35 years? Not much. What a triumphant achievement".

This is why Griff is against the proposed Business Improvement District (BID) and the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, which he has already criticised in these pages. It is here that the giggles turn into gravitas.

As President of Civic Voice, which aims to conserve and preserve the character of our neighbourhoods, he fears such grand plans are undemocratic and serve big business and retail interests rather than those of the people who live and work here.

But more of that later. First

The producer was taken ill, so Griff stepped in.

"The scales fell from my eyes", he says. "I loved Frank but he was quite a difficult person to work with. He was very naughty and could be lazy and blamed his laziness on anybody else. He was exhausting."

"He had twenty-year-olds writing those extensive monologues which were supposed to



"I used to wake up in the middle of the night worrying about bringing my children here. But then I'd look out of my window onto Fitzroy Square and it was the quietest place I'd lived in my life."



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and gravitas

and Fitzrovia

"I'm not against planning or vision, but I am against what appears to be the consensus building up among the Mayor and big business that what this place needs is a shake-up for action and improvement.

"This is a perfect city centre. You need to be more like this place – you don't want to try to create an area which has all the life taken out of it.

"It's really important that we realise that the act of preservation of what works is about reducing or watching out-of-scale improvements to an area which actually serve other interests than the interests of what makes the place attractive.

"We're the pioneers of what life is going to be like for the rest of the 21st century."

The Business Improvement District (BID) plan embraces only those businesses which have a rateable value of £100,000 and to sit on the board you have to pay £10,000 or more. For Griff, this smacks of a return to property-owning oligarchy.

He waves his arms around the Middle-Eastern restaurant called Honey where we're having a delicious lunch.

"I fear that places like this, which is a wonderful addition to Warren Street, will not be included in the debate. The owner has no knowledge of it. It should be held up as the epitome of central London."

As to his own future, he also eschews grand plans. He looks for things he will enjoy, like the series he did about the

Pembrokeshire farm he bought and renovated with his architect son.

He's exploring options including more comedy in the theatre.

"What I really enjoy is making people piss themselves," he says.

But his problem, he insists, is that he finds it difficult to say no. I ask him about the BBC programmes Losing It, in which he explored his own anger management problems. Is he really such an angry person?

"I wish I'd never made that programme," he says. "It makes me so cross."

And at this point we both dissolve into schoolboy giggles.



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25 galleries open late at night in new initiative which is catching on

Art Fare

by CLIVE JENNINGS

Fitzrovia Lates is a new initiative that offers art lovers the opportunity to engage in a little late night perusing and purchasing at local participating galleries, to 9pm on the last Thursday of each month.

Over 25 galleries are now involved, with the idea gathering momentum since its launch in June. Elizabeth Flanagan of Haunch of Venison Gallery, which initiated and administers the project, reports a very positive response from both visitors and galleries. In addition to late opening, there will be a programme of talks by artists, performances and curator tours. Fitzrovia Lates is a collaborative effort that echoes successful late gallery opening schemes in other parts of London, and can be seen as a first step in uniting our local art houses. More information, including listings, maps and special event details can be found at www.fitzroviaates.co.uk.

Entering into the spirit of Fitzrovia Lates, on Thursday 26 July, T J Boulting on Riding House Street presented a performance by Ian Giles that involved participants scaling a very scary climbing wall in the gallery's cavernous main room, accompanied by an inspired and improvised, live backing from a raucous combo on electric guitar and drums. Music of a more soothing variety was on offer at Libby Sellers in Berners Street, when Andrew Matthews-Owen performed "Middlegame" a new composition for piano by Hannah Kendall, specially commissioned to reflect and interpret the exhibition "Games", a selection of ingenious and exquisitely crafted chess sets by invited artists, inspired by a 1944 exhibition in New York, organised by chess enthusiasts Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst and accompanied by a special score by John Cage.

The summer months have seen several Fitzrovia galleries pushing out the boundaries, during this traditionally quiet



Nancy Victor in Charlotte Place have turned their gallery into a cardboard courgette production line for a month.

period. At the end of July, Gallery Vela in Langham Street hosted Festivela: an ambitious and exhausting schedule of ten exhibitions by ten artists over ten days. Content included painters, performance and installation artists and filmmakers. Nancy Victor Gallery in Charlotte Place turned their gallery into a cardboard courgette production line for a month with a 3D Print Installation by Helen Murgatroyd that consisted of 2800 cardboard toilet roll centres being transformed in courgettes by a series of five "painting stations" worthy of the great Heath Robinson.

Curwen & New Academy in Windmill Street, Fitzrovia's longest established gallery, reacted robustly to the possibility of closure or a move, due to increased property overheads, by organising a very successful live and online auction, that has secured their position for now. Escalating commercial rents in Fitzrovia are a constant problem for the art community. While Diemar Noble, Twist and Yannick galleries have all closed recently, it is easy to see why galleries chose to move here from the East End, as rents are still attractive for such a central location.

A report by property compa-

ny Cushman & Wakefield in 2011 showed retail rents in the City fringes area at £42.50 per square foot, very adjacent to the £47.50 quoted for Fitzrovia, and a quick check of agents' details revealed shops being let for up to £100 per sq ft in Spitalfields. While Modern Art, who are often credited with starting the current gallery boom when they moved here in 2008 from Vyner Street in Bethnal Green, are to move to Clerkenwell later in the year, bemoaning the proliferation of galleries in Artcastle Street, Fred Gallery are moving in from their current Vyner Street location, bemoaning the property prices there – so take your choice!

This edition's quick fire gallery interviews, below, feature two established galleries who have chosen to move to Fitzrovia from other areas of London associated with art: Art First, previously in Cork Street and England & Co. previously in Westbourne Grove.

Benjamin Rhodes, Art First, 21 Eastcastle Street

FN: How long has the gallery been open?

BR: Art First had been in 1st floor premises in Cork Street since 1994, and moved to Fitzrovia in 2009.

FN: What attracted you to Fitzrovia?

BR: Our search concentrated on Fitzrovia as an environment conducive to our business, a "creative quarter" and geographically convenient for our existing clientele, who would only find a small radius around the Bond Street area safe and simple to find. Eastcastle Street is perfect in this respect.

FN: Who are the directors and what are their backgrounds?

BR: Clare Cooper, who started this business, has a background in art history and in promoting living artists. Benjamin Rhodes began life on Cork Street after postgraduate research in art history. He has had his own

gallery businesses before joining this business in 2005. Matt Incledon has a recent degree in Fine Art from Guildhall and has exhibited his work.

FN: What is your policy on choice of artists?

BR: Our artists form an eclectic group that has evolved out of personal tastes and relationships. We are confident that artists exhibiting with the gallery meet our rigorous criteria in terms of sincerity, intellectual integrity and artistic honesty.

FN: Any forthcoming highlights of interest?

BR: Two upcoming shows in particular highlight our strengths: Jill Mason shows her newly large-scale paintings in the main space in October/November. In November we show new work by Louis Khehla Maqhubela, a South African who exiled himself in the 70's, having grown up sharing a school desk with Hugh Masekela.

FN: Around 10% of London galleries are now in Fitzrovia, do you see it increasing and becoming an internationally famous art gallery area?

BR: It's nice for Fitzrovia to fill up, but it will only continue whilst landlords are reasonable in their demands. It takes a relatively few minutes to walk from Great Portland Street station to St. James's Park. That encompasses several "gallery" worlds, and that is as it should be.

FN: Any information of interest about the building?

BR: There remains a completely unnecessary and redundant 'protection zone' for the fashion wholesale industry (who no longer need these premises in most cases) in this area, as part of Westminster's planning regulations. This meant that we were originally rejected for 'change of use' and very nearly gave up, but finally found the help of local councillor Frixos Tombolis who supported our appeal at committee.

Jane England, England & Co, 90-94 Great Portland Street

FN: How long has the gallery been open?

JE: The gallery first opened in late 1987 in Notting Hill, moved to a larger space in Westbourne Grove in 1999 and then to Fitzrovia, in April this year.

FN: What attracted you to Fitzrovia?

JE: We decided that it was time to move the gallery to the centre of London, and Fitzrovia appealed to us as being very central yet having its own individual character and history - a real neighbourhood in the midst of the city.

FN: Who are the directors and what are their backgrounds?

JE: Jane England is the director/curator. An Australian expatriate who has lived in London for many years, she is an art historian who has also practised and exhibited as a photographer. Her co-director is her husband, Peter Gordon-Stables who has a background in photography.

FN: What is your policy on choice of artists?

JE: We have an independent and individual identity that reflects our eclectic, historically aware, research-based curatorial approach. There is no specific stylistic or generational specialisation and from the beginning, the gallery programme has alternated between contemporary art and explorations of relatively recent art history.

FN: Any forthcoming highlights?

JE: Our autumn programme starts at the end of September with an exhibition of video, film, photography and performance: 'Screen Practice'. In November we will be showing the work of the pioneering British abstract artist Paule Vézelay, who worked in Paris in the 1930s and later back in England, culminating with a major retrospective at the Tate in 1983.

Full listings on back page.

Rosetti's turbulent life in the area

By FIONA GREEN

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood - whose huge exhibition is coming to Tate Britain in September - originated in Fitzrovia.

Immediately opposite the Strand Union Workhouse at 47 Cleveland Street, in this building the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood was informally begun.

Originally the studio of Holman Hunt. Dante Gabriel Rossetti joined him there in 1848.

Rossetti had been born in nearby Hallam Street (called Charlotte Street at the time) - but the relationship suffered a serious setback when Hunt fell into arrears with the rent and so Rossetti, also convalescing from a suicide attempt, moved on to 27 Newman Street nearby with Ford Maddox Brown.

An excellent book is the 1977 version 'The PreRaphaelites' by Tim Hilton, art critic, published by OUP, part written while lodging with us at Tottenham Street.



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Anti-apartheid secret addresses revealed

By MIKE PENTELOW

London's most secret address in the clandestine war against apartheid has been revealed by Ronnie Kasrils, who organised the smuggling of material into South Africa in the 1960s and 70s.

The address was 25 Newman Street, W1 (near the corner of a back alley, Newman Passage, which leads through to Rathbone Street) which he revisited on a guided walk around Goodge Street on July 7.

It was here that he trained anti-apartheid activists how to smuggle in leaflets in false bot-tomed suitcases, and make explosive devices to scatter them into the air in South Africa.

The experiences of several of these activists are recalled in a new book called "London Recruits, The Secret War Against Apartheid", edited by Ken Keable, with an introduction by Ronnie.

"In this book many of the recruits tried to describe where I took them," said Ronnie. "But none of them got it right, because I did not want them to know the address for security reasons.

"So I took them through lots of back alleys, such as Percy Passage, and Newman Passage, after dark."

He pointed to the back entrance to 25 Newman Street, which is in Newman Passage, with an "Ancient Lights" sign on the wall, where the annexe to the office extended.

Recruits to the cause would first be met by him outside such places as the Dominion Theatre at the bottom of Tottenham Court Road, then taken for a drink in pubs such as the Rising Sun, on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Windmill Street, the Newman Arms, on the corner of Rathbone Street and Newman Passage, or the Prince of Wales Feathers in Warren Street.

Then they would be taken to 25 Newman Street. "The annex was ideal for our purpose as it was very secluded and the area was deserted in the evening," he said.

The office was being used entirely without the knowledge of its occupants, accountants Felton & Partners. Ronnie was able to gain access at night because Barry Feinberg, another South African exile, was working on a different floor in the same building, and was able to supply a key.

"Here was where we prepared them for trips to South Africa," he said. "The false bot-tomed suitcases were very heavy, about 5 kg empty. We

taught them how to take precautions to make sure they were not being followed by various counter surveillance methods, and how to assemble various gadgets such as the leaflet bombs. These were baskets with a small amount of gunpowder and a simple clock device. Once the circuit was completed it would explode and throw the leaflets as high as these buildings.

"We also made miniaturised tape recordings which were put in boxes and then chained to railings for making street broadcasts. We put imitation booby traps on them to stop the police tampering with them.

"One of our recruits, Eddie Adams, placed one above ground on railings by a garage. When it went off a former Rhodesian policeman stopped his car to listen to it. He reported to the Cape press that he had never seen crowds so excited by it in all his career. So it was very successful.

"The recruits did not know it, but we synchronised it so that several went off at the same time in all the main cities and ports. We had tremendous results from this."

Ronnie praised the courage of those who undertook these clandestine missions. "They were prepared to be our secret agents and smugglers knowing how dangerous it was, as they would be tortured and imprisoned if caught," he said.

"Sean Hosey, an Irish comrade, for instance, was smuggling over false identity documents for a freedom fighter who had got into South Africa. Unknown to us this freedom fighter had been captured and tortured to give away addresses. So the police wrote to us pretending to be him asking for assistance. Sean went to a house in a village near Durban and gave the code words. He was met by the barrel of a revolver, was tortured and spent five years in prison.

"Alex Moumbaris, a Greek comrade, was also caught. When a ship sent to pick up guerrillas had engine problems he went to pick them up elsewhere. The police captured him and his pregnant wife. She was French so was deported. He got a 12 year prison sentence, but escaped after seven.

"So the people who undertook this work knew the risks but did it in an absolutely committed way. That is why Thabo Mbeki invited the recruits to his 70th birthday in South Africa this year and made them guests of honour."

Another previously unknown address, revealed by Ronnie, was 24 Goodge Street, which was the secret address of the South African Communist Party in exile. "Yasuf Dadoo, the chairman of the party, had his office on the very top floor," said Ronnie. "The stairs were very creaky going up there, but I still recognise the window sill where we had a window box. This was where we prepared literature and recordings for radio broadcasts. Joe Slovo was also in this office [which was above the New Punjab and later the Neel Kamal Indian restaurant in those days].

"Yusuf liked his beer and enjoyed a couple of pints after work in the Valiant Trooper pub [now renamed the Fitzrovia] a couple of doors away. There was a gas explosion in the pub in the 1970s, but it was nothing to do with us. Goodge Street was very mouldy and seedy in those days."

Just across the road at 29 Goodge Street, he continued, was the only public address of the South African Communist Party, which was there for 29 to 30 years, after being banned in 1950. "The office was on the first floor, where Brian Bunting ran the African Communist quarterly journal, which was printed in the German Democratic Republic and distributed from here. We smuggled articles in



Ronnie Kasrils outside 25 Newman Street

minaturised form into South Africa by posting them from different areas in London.

"We had to be very careful of the security because the address was public. Sometimes there were some very strange people around, so we took precautions including physical support, but it was never needed luckily.

"Sonia Bunting ran the office all those years. Joe Matthews, of both the SACP and the ANC, was here as well." [The office was above a paint merchant called Maintenance (Hotels) Supplies Ltd].

Charlotte Place, off Goodge Street, was the next stop. "At number 3 was a little Greek restaurant [Peters and Andrew's]," said Ronnie, "and I had a standing bet with Joe Slovo, who supported Chelsea, over whether they came higher than my team Arsenal, for a meal here. For ten years in a row I sat there for a free lunch of kebabs and red wine."

Further along this alleyway, at 49 Rathbone Street, on the corner was where the African National Congress had an office on the first floor.

The office of the Anti-Apartheid Movement from 1964 to 1982 on two floors at 89 Charlotte Street was the final stop on the walk.

"This was the most successful solidarity movement the world has ever seen," said Ronnie. "It galvanised international solidarity, in a non-sectarian way that built as broad a movement as possible which attracted the support of a whole range of people and organisations, including trade unions and churches. Its work was phenomenal.

"The boycott movement was really outstanding." This included the opposition to rugby and cricket tours, and consumer boycotts of oranges and other South African produce.

"The victory over the seeming granite of apartheid was achieved with the support of the international community, which is something we should bear in mind in our struggles today," he concluded.



£5 off special offer

Fitzrovia News readers can purchase a limited number of "London Recruits, The Secret War Against Apartheid" for just £10.95 (rpi £15.95). Give your contact details to us (news@fitrovia.org.uk or 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX) to arrange payment and delivery or collection.

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FURTHER READING:

"London Recruits, The Secret War Against Apartheid", edited by Ken Keable (Merlin Press, 2012);

"Armed and Dangerous, From Undercover Struggle to Freedom", by Ronnie Kasrils (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2004);

"Time to Tell, An Activist's Story", by Barry Feinberg (STE Publishers, 2009).



Several of the London recruits were on the walk and posed with Ronnie in Goodge Street before a pint in the Fitzrovia. They are pictured (left to right): Pete Smith, Daniel Ahern, George Bridges, Mary Chamberlain, Norman Lucas, Ronnie Kasrils, Bob Newland, Bob Allen.

SUE BLUNDELL continues her series of Fitzrovia's Secret Families

The Prince, the gay brothel and his tragic love child

In its 200-year history Cleveland Street has been associated with all kinds of sexual boundary-crossing. The street took its name from the Duchess of Cleveland, a.k.a. Barbara Villiers, a long-term mistress of Charles II. And in 1889 a scandal erupted which linked it to another royal personage, Prince Albert Victor – popularly known as Prince Eddy – grandson of Queen Victoria and second-in-line to the British throne.

In July 1889 police officers raided premises at 19 Cleveland Street after they'd accidentally discovered that a number of Post Office telegraph boys were supplementing their incomes by working there in a male brothel. Sexual acts between men were illegal then, but none of the brothel's clients was ever prosecuted. One of them, Lord Arthur Somerset, Equerry to the Prince of Wales, fled to the Continent, as did the brothel-keeper, Charles Hammond. Henry James Fitzroy, Earl of Euston and a descendant of the Duchess of Cleveland, had been outed as a client by one of the boys, but when he was named in the North London Press he successfully sued its editor for libel. Meanwhile rumours were circulating that 26-year-old Prince Eddy, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, had also patronised the brothel. Were these started by one of the other clients to deflect attention away from his own activities? We'll probably never know the answer.

Eddy died of influenza in 1892 amid great public mourning, and his younger brother, the present queen's grandfather, eventually succeeded to the throne as George V. But Eddy's sex-life continued to generate a good deal of gossip, some of it focussing on the Prince's relationships with women. Eventually in 1976 Stephen Knight published his book *Jack the Ripper: the Final Solution*, in which he investigated a claim made by Joseph Gorman that the unsolved Ripper murders of 1888 had been carried out to silence the women who knew the true story of Gorman's mother's birth. The Cleveland Street brothel cover-up had been organised, it seems, to prevent discovery of a much bigger and



Prince Eddy



Annie Crook

more damaging cover-up in the previous year.

Gorman's tale went like this. His grandmother Annie Crook was introduced to Eddy while working as a model for the painter Walter Sickert, who'd been hired to give the Prince lessons in art. The two had an affair, were secretly married, and then in 1885 had a child together, Alice Margaret. The Prince settled his wife and daughter in lodgings at 6 Cleveland Street

(where John Pugh had a hair-dresser on the ground floor). When the child's existence was made known to the Queen and the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, the house was raided, and Annie was certified as insane by a royal physician Sir William Gull and incarcerated in a series of institutions. A friend of Annie's called Mary Jane Kelly had taken charge of Alice, but when she and some friends decided to blackmail the government they were eliminated by Gull in the East End Ripper murders (Gull's medical skills serving to explain how the Ripper had managed to carry out his expert mutilation of his victims). Alice escaped, and when she grew up she became Sickert's mistress. Joseph Gorman was their child, or so he claimed.

Knight knew there were some dodgy elements to this story, but eventually he was convinced. And so a massive conspiracy theory was born, involving a royal, a serial killer, and a possible heir to the throne – just the kind of shock-horror tale the British public loves. Nowadays most people, including myself, are sceptical about this particular 'secret family'. But just for the record: Annie Crook really existed, she had a child called Alice born in the Marylebone Workhouse, and she worked as an assistant in James Currier's confectionary shop at 22 Cleveland Street. No. 6 Cleveland Street must have been demolished when Cleveland Residences were built – can any reader tell me when that was?

The brothel story is true enough. There's a bit of controversy about the position of 19 Cleveland Street, but the most likely answer is that it was knocked down in the 1890s, and that its site is now marked by the giant hole which was once the Middlesex Hospital.



Love child Alice Margaret in later life



Jim Currie with a picture of L Ron Hubbard, with whom he played cards at 102-104 Whitfield Street along with Prince Monolulu.

Unforgettable characters: No 1

By JOHN AXON

Allow me to introduce Mr Jim Currie.

Jim was (and possibly still is) a Scotsman, a Taysider brought to the Capital as a three year old who, rather like that renowned Son of York, Benny Green, retained precisely nothing of his native tongue. Jim's early life remains a mystery, to me at least (so much for research) and that is somehow entirely fitting.

Jim had an extended military career, mostly due to the fact his three courts-martial added some four years to the usual two of National Service. Some years later, on holiday in Malta, he found himself billeted in the same hotel as the officer corps of his former regiment. He introduced himself to the current colonel, a stern yet amiable cove surrounded by his junior officers.

Jim: I was in your mob.

Colonel: Really? What rank?

Jim: (Cheerfully) Deserter!

Being possessed of a strong libertarian streak our hero held a healthy contempt for the forces of reaction, indeed for most of the state bureaucracies, in particular those concerned with the raising of revenue.

The usual pattern of his working day involved cleaning several offices followed by a bespoke window cleaning round before he entered his domain. The Northumberland Arms in Goodge Street.

Jim Currie was, quite simply the best barman in the area. Enconced behind the bar, armed only with a crate of light ale to be methodically self-administered and what remained of his daily purchase of 100 of Mr John Player's finest, he was truly ready to serve. Thus was the template set for many years.

His work behind the bar was

a picture of smooth expediency, the demeanour never changing, emollience personified. The term laid back is altogether too vertical to describe his running of the bar; he was practically horizontal in attitude. His droll commentary suiting the eclectic clientele as comfortably as might a Saville Row master tailor.

Standing about 5 foot 8 and perhaps 9 stone wet-through (Metrication? I prefer Imperial measures, particularly vodka) Jim cut a lithe, wiry, even gaunt figure when presenting his wares. Let us be honest here, I have seen more meat in Morrissey's fridge on a Monday morning.

But appearances often contradict expectation and a busy West End public house is no place for timidity when faced with sometimes thirstily aggressive customers.

Sportsmen, journalists, barristers (several of them), politicians and men of the cloth, none fazed Jim Currie.

He charmed the ancient Barrelhouse Blues pianist Champion Jack Dupree as they swapped tales of half forgotten boxing bouts, Dupree in Louisiana and Currie in Mississippi, and Currie in Shepton Mallet and Chelmsford nick - he got on with everyone.

Many of the best Currie stories are now superfluous, vanished within the moment and to attempt to rewrite most of them simply reduces their ephemeral meaning. What mattered was the time spent in a great pub, enjoying friends, atmosphere and a unique barman. It remains a fact that life is a series of pubs. Those lucky enough to remember the golden days of The Northumberland with Jim Currie in his pomp may especially agree.

NEXT ISSUE: Ray Lees, the wrestling professor.

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The Ministry of Supply

Florence starts upright and listens; in the dark she wonders if she dreamt it – she has dreamt many explosions over the years. She treads down the hall, not knowing what she will do if she confronts a burglar, but no one is in the living room – only moonlight falls through a broken window.

There is no disturbance on the street; she lets out a breath and hears how hard her heart is thumping. She wipes glass splinters from her armchair and sinks into it, gripping the arms as she tries to calm herself. The doctor warned her to avoid shock – tachycardia can be fatal. As though in her eighties she spent her days doing daredevil stunts on motorbikes.

She picks at a frayed seam. In her youth she was stalwart, despite the nausea, the dizziness, her skin yellowing from TNT exposure as anaemia set in. They couldn't make the bombs fast enough. Besides, it was nothing compared to the split open heads or blown off arms and legs that the nurses saw. She tried not to think about the fact that she was making the stuff that caused such damage. It was after the war, as London stabilized, that anaemia began to weaken her heart.

The landlord comes over at the end of the next day. He has slick, roving eyes as though always on the lookout for the latest sports car, a true child of Gucci-capitalism. He looks through the broken window and across the road to where everything but the facade of an old block of flats is being demolished.

'I'll send someone to fix it tomorrow,' he says.
'Tomorrow!'

A short story by
SUNITA SOLIAR

'I'll block it up with cardboard in the meantime.'

Florence pulls her arms over her chest, chilled from the cold air. She looks around at the cracked walls. 'And can they block up the holes?' she says. 'I keep seeing rats.' These are subsidized homes for nurses and veterans, and it is rare to get hold of the landlord, rarer still to see him in the flesh. She braces herself for a fight.

He looks out again at the demolition, the stealthy overhaul of this area. Further down the street, large, glass office blocks and art galleries are going up. He turns back to her

'If you don't get out we'll come round.'
The line goes dead. She clutches the phone for a long time... Her heart won't stop hammering

and says with spright, 'Of course! And we'll go over the walls with some paint.'

She is taken aback by his compliance. 'Thank you,' she says. 'One other thing – the lock on the front door's beginning to give.'

'I'll replace the door as well!'

At the end of the week Florence sits in the armchair and looks around the room with pleasure. She hasn't seen a single rat and the front door is sturdier. She savours a bite of a scone when the phone startles her. She gets up quickly – her phone hardly ever rings.

'Hello?'

A voice says, 'You have two weeks to get out.'

'Who is this? Hello?'

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'If you don't get out we'll come round.' The line goes dead. She clutches the phone for a long time before she is able to let go. Her heart won't stop hammering and she puts a hand to her mouth, where a crumb lingers.

The phone rings several more times in the day but each time she can only hear breathing over the line. She double checks that the front door is locked and closes all the windows; it only makes the ringing seem louder. She gets up six times in the night, convinced that there is someone in the house.

The next day she is making breakfast when the bell rings. The man at the door is young and wears tan shoes. 'Could I have a minute of your time?' he asks.

Florence holds the door open a crack. He has the pallor and smell of a man who lives on coffee and too little sleep. 'What do you want?' she says.

'I represent your landlord.' He steps closer and opens the front door so that Florence is forced backwards. He shuts the door behind him.

'It's bright in here,' he says,

Illustration by **CLIFFORD HARPER**

'This is supposed to be housing for veterans.'
'Supposed is a complicated word...

surveying the living room. 'Fresh.'

'It's better than before.'

He seems to swoop down on her. 'Which is why the rent has gone up.'

'Gone up? These flats are a charity!'

The man touches his face. 'From my initial assessment here, I'd say we're looking at around five-fifty a week.'

'This is supposed to be housing for veterans.'

'Supposed is a complicated word. Now, if you can't pay the guv'nor has the right to find private tenants.'

'Where do you expect me to go?'

He looks out of the window with feigned delicacy. 'We all get squeezed! I did my slog, slaving for an advertising company. And let me tell you, they suck you dry. I started leaving the office

at nine, then ten – eventually I thought I might as well sleep there...'

Florence wheezes. 'And all so you could sell more plasma T.V.s.'

'It wasn't about T.V.s! It was about avoiding the sack.' He straightens his tie. 'You should know about doing what you have to. In the war...'

'How dare you!'

'I heard you made bombs.'

'We did what was needed for London.'

'And so are we. We're making it better.'

'You're ravaging it.'

'Look,' the young man says. 'Can you pay or not?'

She splutters.

The man makes an awkward move of his arm. He says, 'If you could just sign this then.'

'Get out!' Florence says. 'Get out of my house or I'll call the police.'

He retracts the paper and folds it, replacing it in his jacket pocket. 'I'll come back,' he says, and steps into the hallway. He calls to her, 'But there's no point. It's already been sold.'

That night, she cannot rid herself of the man's presence – it seems to hang in the curtains and seep from the walls. She closes her eyes and presses her hand to her heart but she has not been able to calm it all afternoon. It'll be all right, she thinks. She's lived through worse. But the young man's face hovers behind her eyes, and her heart-beat is so strong that it seems to constrict her breath. She feels herself sinking as the pressure on her chest increases; she thrashes her arms as though to fight it off. And then, suddenly sleep comes. A bomb explodes and people are thrown from a tower. She tries to help the ones nearest to her but they recede. Then a little boy with a kite floats away and so she runs out of the city – her heart light and easy now – to where shrapnel turns into raindrops, hills grow under her feet, and the roads disappear.

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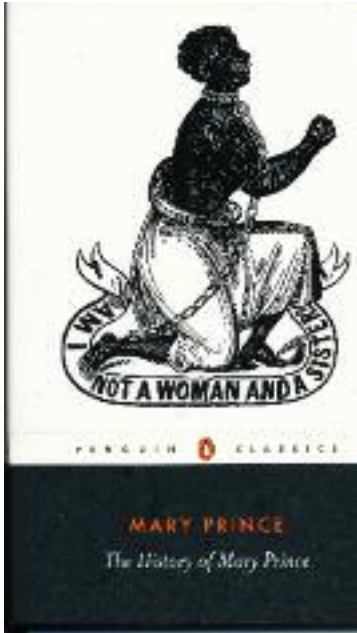
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The barbarous treatment of slaves was for the benefit of local gentry



By MIKE PENTELOW

The barbarous and cruel treatment of slaves, described by Mary Prince from her own experience, greatly helped the campaign for abolition.

She was working as a charwoman at 4 Keppel Street (opposite Store Street) in 1829 after fleeing her slave owner John Wood (1783-1836) of Leigh Street, Bloomsbury. Wood resolutely refused to grant her release to enable her to return to her husband in Antigua.

A petition was presented to parliament on her behalf in the same year but, after he falsely promised to help her, the petition was allowed to lie on the table, and she was never able to return to her husband.

Her life story was published in 1831 and exposed the horrors of slavery (the 2004 Penguin Classics edition of the book "The History of Mary Prince" is still in print).

She was born a slave in Bermuda in 1788, and at the age of 12 was separated from her mother and sisters to be sold like cattle to a new owner. She was frequently stripped naked, hung by the wrists and whipped until her flesh was opened up for the slightest offence. A preg-

nant slave whom she knew was tied to a tree and flogged until streaming with blood for allowing a cow to slip its rope. The slave had a miscarriage, then her body swelled, water burst out of her body and she died.

An old slave called Daniel had become lame in the hip so was slower at shovelling salt. He was stripped, whipped with a rod of rough briar until his skin was raw, then had a bucket of salt flung into the raw flesh as he writhed and screamed in agony. His wounds never healed and became full of maggots. Another old and infirm woman did not wheel her barrow fast enough so was severely beaten and flung into a cactus bush, causing her to die a few days later after her body swelled and festered.

Mary was forced to work in salt ponds, immersed in brine, causing blisters and boils which ate into her bones for long hours in scorching heat surrounded by mosquitoes. The master also sexually abused her so she was pleased when he sold her to John Wood who took her to Antigua.

WHIPPED

By then Mary was lame from untreated rheumatism but was forced by Wood and his wife to work long hours and was frequently whipped with a cat-o-nine-tails without justification. Once she was flogged in a cage for an argument over ownership of a pig, despite a magistrate later ruling in her favour.

When she married a carpenter called Daniel James, her master's wife was so enraged that she got her husband to horse-whip Mary. Mrs Wood said she would not allow a "nigger man" on her premises or allow his clothes to be washed in the same tub as hers. Eventually they allowed him to live in their yard.

In 1828 they moved to



Mary Prince. Illustration by Clifford Harper

London and took Mary with her. The law at the time meant slaves became technically free when in England, but slaves again on their return to the colonies unless released by their masters. On the voyage Mrs Wood warned Mary that she would continue to treat her as a slave.

When they arrived in London Mary's rheumatism seized her limbs swelling her body. A doctor said doing washing work would make her worse. Despite this Mrs Wood forced her to do even more washing, including heavy loads such as mattresses and bed clothes, and all for no payment. When she complained the couple threatened to throw her out, knowing she would have difficulty finding another home or job. On the fourth time they did this she took them at their word and left, going to the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Anti-Slavery Society for help.

SCARRED

They had her medically examined and found "the whole of the back part of her body is distinctly scarred, and, as it were, chequered, with the vestiges of severe floggings. Besides

this, there are many large scars on other parts of her person, exhibiting an appearance as if the flesh has been deeply cut, or lacerated with gashes, by some instrument wielded by most unmerciful hands."

She managed to get living-in work as a charwoman for Mrs Forsyth in Keppel Street, who treated her humanely and gave her a good reference.

EVICITION

The Anti-Slavery Society offered money to John Wood to release Mary so that she could return to her husband in Antigua without becoming enslaved again. Not only did he refuse but he ordered the eviction of her husband, and informed him falsely that Mary had taken up with another man.

Another former slave, Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797) wrote of his sufferings, which paved the way for abolition, while living at 73 Riding House Street, where he is commemorated by a green plaque.

When the slave trade in Britain was finally abolished in stages from 1833 it was not the slaves who received compensation for past mistreatment (indeed they continued as unpaid labour until 1838), but the slave owners who were generously recompensed for loss of their "property".

Several of these lived in and around Fitzrovia.

Louisa Maltby (1769-1841) of 23 Charlotte Street, for instance, received two payments of £3,333 and £1,686 in 1836 for her 273 slaves in Grenada. Earlier she had lived at 44 Charlotte Street from 1819 to 1829 with her husband Rowland (who had been an agent for a mistress of the Duke of York during a royal scandal in 1809).

Eliza Parker (1775-1858) of 36 Portland Place (by the corner of New Cavendish Street) owned a large slave plantation in Jamaica,



George Hibbert (above) made a fortune from slavery and lived in a Portland Place mansion.

George Pennant (below) also lived in Portland Place from his slave owning profits.



and had an 18-year-old youth hanged for stealing a teapot from her in Portland Place in 1824. She later moved to 6 Albany Terrace, Marylebone Road (opposite where Great Portland Street station now is).

George Pennant (1760-1840) of 56 Portland Place was paid £15,000 in 1835 for 764 slaves in Jamaica. He also inherited Penrhyn Castle in North Wales.

But the biggest beneficiary was George Hibbert (1757-1837), also of Portland Place, who received £38,603 (a massive fortune in those days) for his 1,618 slaves in Jamaica. His mansion in Portland Place housed his 14 children, and his collection of priceless books (such as a bible signed by Martin Luther) and paintings (including Rembrandt, Rubens, and Leonardo da Vinci).

HORRIFIC

When University College London was founded in Gower Street in 1828 two of its founders were prominent campaigners for the abolition of slavery - Henry Brougham (1778-1868), a Whig MP, and Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838), who had seen the horrific violence of slavery when an assistant manager on a plantation in Jamaica. There is a memorial to him in Westminster Abbey, depicting a kneeling slave with the motto: "Am I not a Man and Brother?"

Irked by them the slave owners financed the setting up of a rival college, the Anglican Kings College.

Much of this information came from an exhibition on "The Slave Owners of Bloomsbury" which was shown at UCL until last January.



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Cobblers developed Chartism

By JESS OWEN

Chartistism was a significant factor in the consciousness of nineteenth century England. People from the part of London, we now know as Fitzrovia, straddling the parishes of Marylebone and St Pancras, made a significant, albeit scarcely noticed part in its development.

The movement began, it has been suggested, in the reforming vestry of Marylebone. But it can be just as cogently asserted that it was the legacy of the London Working Men's Association that precipitated the struggle for the Charter.

A common figure to both organisations was William



WILLIAM LOVETT had a bookshop at 183 Tottenham Court Road where he published the Charter (Getty Images)

Savage, a warehouseman of 45 Goodge Street (now Nonno Lino's). He was a vestryman at Marylebone, part of a radical group known as the 'Barlow Street Committee' that steered a radical agenda in parish affairs. Savage was also a leading member of the Mechanics Institute, whose premises were in Circus Street [Enford Street], just off the New [now, Marylebone] Road.

Savage played a short but significant role in the LWMA. He chaired one of its early meetings in July 1836. He was a signatory to several of its pamphlets and addresses, including the very first attempt to create a political 'International' between English and other European working class organisations. Savage was also a signatory to the first 'People's Charter' of May 1838.

Francis Place liked to claim responsibility for the drafting of this document; the distillation of radical demands over the previous fifty years. More truthfully, his role was one of mediating between whig reformers and veteran radicals. His one concrete 'achievement' was the deletion of a call for female suffrage, from the original document.

PRISON

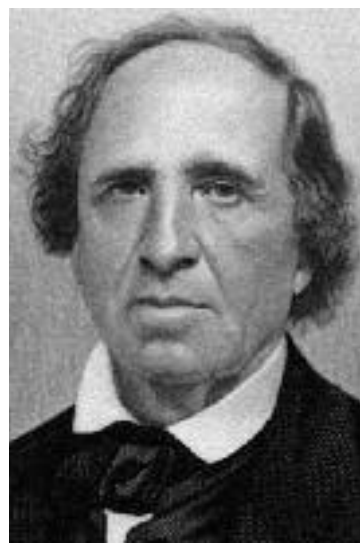
When William Lovett, former secretary of the LWMA, was released in 1840 from a prison sentence imposed for radical activity, he set up a bookshop at 183 Tottenham Court Road. From here he published the document that has generally been accepted as defining the Chartist movement Chartism: A New Organisation of The People.

As he later recalled: "Not possessing strength to work at the cabinet business, I was induced, on my return to town,

to open a small book-seller's shop in Tottenham Court Road, conceiving that to be a business by which I might earn my bread, and which my wife could manage, and by which I might have some time to devote to politics; but here I was again doomed to disappointment. But although I had not much business in my shop, I was kept busily engaged otherwise; for I was very soon elected a vestryman of St. Pancras, and soon after, one of the guardians of the poor."

From here he was instrumental in the organisation of the 'New Move' which, in the wake of the 1839 insurrections, sought to move Chartism towards a reformed society based on an educated working class.

In Fitzrovia, trades unionists played an important part in the development of the movement. Shoemakers, meeting in the King and Queen, Foley Street, organised themselves as the Somers Town branch of the Chartist movement. From here they sent delegates to the first convention of 1839. Two years later, James Andrew, a shoemaker of 1 George St [Gosfield Street], Foley Place [Langham Street] was amongst the Marylebone nominations for the Chartist Central Council, Dec 1841. By March 1842 it was reported in the Northern Star that: "A preliminary meeting of the Western Division of Ladies Shoemakers, will be held at the King and Queen, Foley Street ... for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of forming a Charter Association of the above trade." The meeting must have been successful for the Star reported in July that money had been raised amongst 'the ladies shoemakers, of [the] King and Queen, Foley-street'. By November of that year, the



JAMES ANDREW, a shoemaker of Gosfield Street (Getty Images)

meeting at Foley Street was being referred to as 'London shoemakers', suggesting that the 'Chartist' Trades Union assembling there was city-wide in its membership.

BEVERAGES

By July 1842 Chartist involvement in Fitzrovia was strong enough for H Crockford to open an establishment at No 3 Cleveland Street (since renumbered), on the corner of Foley Street, offering Chartist Beverages both wholesale and retail.

The pub [the King & Queen] remained a centre of Chartism throughout the decade, becoming, in 1848, The George Washington Brigade. Another group of Chartists were based at the Literary and Scientific Institution, Great Carlisle Street, Portman Market. In August of that year both groups organised lectures from Samuel Kydd. The former witnessed a talk on 'The Organisation of Labour', the latter heard about 'Wealth versus

Misery'.

It is quite likely that amongst their number was a man destined to become one of the more long standing Chartists. John Arnott was a shoemaker poet who was to act as treasurer for a number of important Victim Committees over the next ten years. His first verses were rejected but he persisted and for a brief period they regularly appeared in the Star. One of them was included in the 1956 Moscow Anthology of Chartist Poetry.

Associated to proclaim
The equal rights of man.
Progression's army! firm,
resolved,
On! forward lead the van.
Till mitres, thrones, misrule
and wrong,
Shall from this earth be
hurled.
And peace, goodwill, and
brotherhood,
Extend throughout the
world.

A SONG ADDRESSED TO
THE FRATERNAL DEMOCRATS

AIR—"AULD LANG SYNE"
Historians have regarded the period between 1843 and 1847 as years of Chartist decline. For activists such as Arnott, they were years of consolidation. He, and many others, laid the bedrocks of democratic organisation in England and its neighbours.

Arnott's efforts in Fitzrovia are an exemplar of this. He hosted social after social events at the Prince of Wales' Feathers, 8 Warren Street. In doing so, he kept together the principles and ideals of Chartists, which were becoming, increasingly diverse, as the popular press, pioneered by veterans of the Unstamped Wars, grasped the medium of print to propagate their views.

Robert Owen's co-operative venture in Charlotte Street

The great pioneer of the co-operative movement, Robert Owen (1771-1858), founded a new system of exchange based on labour notes in 1832. They were like bank notes but represented hours of work, producing goods or services, instead of pounds.

It was called the National Equitable Labour Exchange which moved to 14 Charlotte Street on May 1, 1833. It had started in Grays Inn Road and moved to Blackfriars Road before settling in Charlotte Street.

The Charlotte Street address is on the One Hour labour note pictured.

This picture is reproduced from the Working Class Movement Library newsletter, which reports: "Workers exchanged their goods for labour notes which were valued according to the time needed to produce items and which could



be used to buy other goods."

Charlotte Street operated as a depot where workers could exchange products they had made by means of these labour notes.

Owen's journal, Crisis, stated the exchanges were "the bridge over which society would pass to a new and better world" by fairly rewarding workers instead of just profiting from their labour.

He further explained it in a letter to The Times, published on October 5, 1832, saying the aim was "to enable all who have wealth which they wish to dispose of for other wealth, of equal value in the present estimation of society, to do so with the least loss of trouble, without moral degradation, and ultimately to effect all exchanges between the products of valuable services of any kind, in a

manner the most beneficial for all parties."

It was initially a financial success and several branches opened in such places as Birmingham and South London.

Women workers, mainly needlewomen and shoemakers, at the first exchange were paid at a lower rate than men, according to the TUC History Online, until they refused to sell their goods unless offered equal terms.

Further disputes followed over the value of products and the time taken to make them, and by the end of 1834 it was wound up and all branches closed.

Other labour notes are displayed in the Robert Owen Memorial Museum at his birthplace in Newtown, Powys, Wales.



ROBERT OWEN who had a vision of a better world. Getty Images

Artist and RAF war pilot Adrian Heath 20 years on

Local artist Adrian Heath died 20 years ago on September 18, 1992, and a biography of him has been published by Jane Rye to mark the occasion.

He died at the age of 72 while teaching in the south of France, as Fitzrovia News reported at the time.

"Completing his art studies at the Slade after the war - when he had served in the RAF and been shot down and ended in a prisoner of war camp - he moved to 22 Fitzroy Street in 1949," we reported.

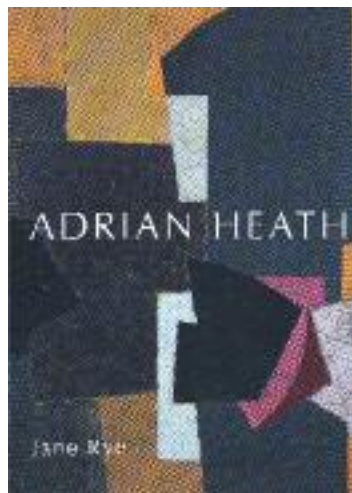
"He lived, painted and exhibited there with a group of like minded artists through the early 1950s, supplementing his income by teaching art and art history part-time at venues as varied as the then Regent Street Polytechnic, the City Lit, Lyons



Adrian Heath, and the biography of him, published by Lund Humphries which will be reviewed in a future issue.

Corner Houses, and Wormwood Scrubs.

"In 1957 he moved with his wife, Corinne, and two children, Damon and Clio, to 28 Charlotte



Street, where over the next decades they were hosts to many famous visitors from the art world, including Victor Passmore and Francis Bacon.

"Less well known to the general public than some of his contemporaries, Adrian Heath was an influential figure in the art world, both as a teacher and through the many distinguished posts he held.

"Locally, his concern at the threat to the Fitzrovia community posed by commercial development, led him in 1971 to serve as the first chairman of the Charlotte Street Association."



Drowned in beer

Eight people were drowned in over 3,000 gallons of porter after an explosion in this brewery at 268 Tottenham Court Road in 1814. The picture of Meux's Horseshoe Brewery (opened by Sir Henry Meux in 1809) was taken in about 1903.

It is included, along with a current one showing the Dominion Theatre on the same site, in a new book entitled *Bloomsbury & Fitzrovia Through Time*, by Brian Girling (Amberley Publishing, £14.99).

The brewery took its name from the Horseshoe Tavern which had been next door at 267 from as early as 1623. The brewery closed in 1922 and the pub in 1983.

Drinkers may also be interested in the picture in the book of the old British Queen pub, at 72 Huntley Street, on the corner of Chenies Mews opposite Capper Street, taken in about

1900, advertising Whitbread fine ales. It was there from about 1845 until 1926.

Many readers have told us about the large number of dairies (often with cows on the premises) which were in the area within living memory. Two are pictured in this book: Joseph Mill at 5 Torrington Place (when it was 23 Francis Street), with deliverers ready to dish out milk direct from the churn into customers' jugs, and Charles C Tubb at 43 Store Street, both around 1906.

Other fascinating insights are provided by pictures of the Schweizerbund Swiss Club at 74 Charlotte Street, about the same time, which was for the many Swiss hotel and restaurant workers in the area, and the brass foundry of Philip Wilkinson at 14-19 Tottenham Mews in 1910.

Re-humanising Money

The origins of money lie deep in the soil and culture of the societies in which they arose.

The English words 'capital', 'chattels' and 'cattle' have a common root. Similarly 'pecuniary' comes from the Latin word for cattle, pecus; while in Welsh the word da used as an adjective means 'good' but used as a noun means both 'cattle' and 'goods'. The words 'spend', 'expenditure', and 'pound' (as in sterling) all come from the Latin expendere meaning 'to weigh'. The words indicate something tangible, connected to the land and the goods in question.

There are other connections. The word to 'pay', we are told, is derived from the Latin pacare, meaning originally to pacify, appease, or make peace with - through the appropriate unit of value customarily acceptable to both sides.

Relationship is at the heart of all our dealings, including the financial; attempting to take the human out of our financial system has contributed to its downfall. Money was created to be a tool: in allowing it to become sufficient unto itself, to feed upon itself like a cancerous cell, we have let loose its destructive qualities.

Recent events have revealed the poverty of the current financial system, how money has been distanced from its source; how it no longer represents any kind of relationship. Beyond human scale, mechanised, money is increasingly for money's sake.

Over the last few decades, the way our society deals with money has become immensely complicated, operates on a vast scale and is increasingly intangi-

ble. Money has become more about money itself than about what it was there to facilitate. Money is now impersonal, and divorced from the goods and land that it once represented.

In the 1970s, the proportion of money that changed hands for work performed was vastly higher than that employed for speculative money. By 2011, the ratio had been dramatically reversed. Bankers now buy and sell not concrete products but expectation. The development of money away from its community base has been a large factor in what has gone wrong.

By trading money as an asset in and of itself without any underlying identity with a commodity or service Islamic governments consider it as undermining the basic interests of humanity. Value is only gained through a work ethic and not by trading money in a virtual world for its own sake.

In the midst of a financial crisis, there is now, belatedly, some recognition in the West of the need for money to be not froth or 'bubbles' but more real, more a reflection of the real wealth of the country, in land and production.

Money has become divorced too from personal relationships. For many, a bank manager that they know is a long-distant memory. Most damaging of all, perhaps, is the fact that money has become the sole criterion of wealth.

Adapted from Small Change, Big Deal: Money as if people mattered by Jennifer Kavanagh, published by John Hunt Publishing in June 2012.

Fun and hilarity in this romantic quest

"Charlotte Street", by Danny Wallace (published by Ebury Press).

"What if life's about the moments? What if you don't take that moment...and another moment never comes?" asks Devdatta Patel, Jason Priestly's flatmate, friend and video game enthusiast.

Such discussions crop up often during the course of this story - mainly when drink has been taken and we are introduced via Facebook to Jason's ex-girlfriend, Sarah, her friends and new beau Gary.

Jason discovers it's not the guilt these things induce - it is the feeling of shame which is destructive to his sense of self.

Newman Street, Goodge Street, the yellow Snappy Snaps shop and Percy Passage all give an authentic feel to the narrative. This is an area I am familiar with and it was lovely to find the late comedic poet Hovis Presley remembered in these pages. He used to come and stay when I lived in Cleveland Street. Charlotte Street is described beautifully. The image of the

By JULIA CUMMING

large trees and leafy boughs arching over the street waving away in the sun and rain is what I remember well. Many restaurants feature: Elena's, Palms of Goa and the Greek Dancing place to name a few. Dev remarks, "All the world's on Charlotte Street".

I have become curious after reading this book about the origin of Percy Passage - many times I have wandered up it. The wall tiles in Postman's Park also sparked my interest in finding out more about them and the peoples' heroic actions they record.

The story begins on Charlotte Street where Jason helps a woman gather up her strewn belongings and get into a taxi. In doing so she leaves behind a disposable camera which Jason retrieves. The reader then follows Jason and learns about his life as a teacher, now ex-teacher; with his girlfriend Sarah, now ex-girlfriend. Jason

writes for a newspaper as a general reviewer when he goes to events and restaurants he is sometimes asked to review and sometimes not. He has a strong urge to do something of value and to "make a difference" but spends time pondering on hope and hopelessness. It's as if he's being left behind by his contemporaries in terms of work, relationships and parenthood.

Jason's quest to find the woman he met in Charlotte Street because she might be "the one" takes us through his everyday life as he tries to decide whether to get the film developed to see if there are clues to the identity of Ms Charlotte Street. It's a romantic quest.

There is fun in this story and many hilarious situations - I'm only grateful that years ago we had only tongue and pen to contend with when too much drink had been taken. Now the immediacy of the internet Facebook and the like makes life far more treacherous in terms of the morning after - for all the world to see.

Check your lucky stars in our horoscope column

My mysterious answer to truth of astrology

People often ask me, in suspicious tones, "But do you really believe in astrology?" a question to which I have honed an appropriately mysterious (and evasive) answer.

Look at it like this: there is a pretty established method to reading horoscopes, and you don't necessarily need to 'believe' in it to apply the method.

That said, it is not too controversial to say that the moon has a direct effect on people, I hear rumors, for example, that the police put more boots on the street when full moon falls on a Friday or Saturday night, and that high security mental hospitals beef up security on a full moon. So it is really not a giant leap to imagine the effect of the more distant planets upon us, and so without further ado...

By **GEORGE BINNING**

Gemini



Starting on October 5, Jupiter's retrograde in Gemini may obscure the bigger picture, and when ruling planet Mercury also enters retrograde on November 7 things may not improve. November therefore will be a very bad time to travel, though you will be fine to go away for Christmas.

Cancer



As the full moon slips to the end of the month during this quarter, your daily routines will also shift. You will find vitality in new arrangements, and this may be a good time to kick old habits.

Leo



As Venus passes through Leo, it comes into opposition with the mysterious Neptune. Early September, particularly the 7th, will be a period of doubt, though your convictions will slowly improve in the coming months.

Aries



October 28 will be a significant day when your ruling planet Mars drifts into opposition with Jupiter's retrograde, dangerously close to a full moon in your sky. Beware of making quick, tough decisions around that time, as your philosophical sense of perspective may well be clouded.

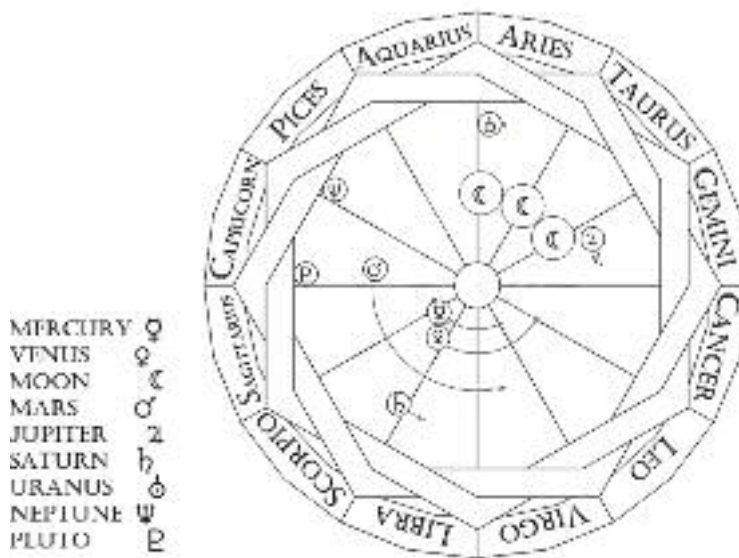
Taurus



Your desires will be tempered by Venus's relationship with Saturn in the coming months. Whilst they are squarely situated at the beginning of September, you may feel compelled to act on your true feelings to the detriment of worldly responsibilities; but on November 26 these planets align, and you will find a positive balance between the two.

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THE MOVEMENTS OF THE PLANETS SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2012



Illustrations: planets by George Binning; zodiac signs by Chris Tyler.

Virgo



September is the month to play to your strengths, with ruling planet Mercury racing through your sky, followed swiftly by Venus. You know what you're good at, and what you love, don't think too hard about it.

Libra



As Mercury leaves Libra it hits a sextile with Venus on October 17. This can only mean on thing: romantic opportunity! Don't miss out.

Scorpio



November 26 will be an important day. Venus crosses Saturn (see Taurus), and Mercury exits retrograde on the same day, all in Scorpio's house. Resources may be tight at present, but a change in fortune is imminent.

Sagittarius



The opposition of Mars and ruling planet Jupiter on October 28 is likely to be a trying day for Sagittarians as well. A trusted source of sound advice may be hard to contact, but don't worry this is a temporary set back.

Capricorn



Pluto leaves an extended retrograde on September 19. The transformative effects will be felt by all, but by Capricorns in particular. Keep an eye open for transition in authority on November 28.

Pisces



Neptune also starts to move forwards through the house of Pisces on November 11. A long standing worry will be resolved.

Aquarius



Your ruling planet Uranus hits a sextile with Pluto September 19. This promises to be a strange day, an opinion will be turned on it's head by an unexpected turn of events. This is no time for dogma.

Ten years ago



Muhammad Ali at the Agra restaurant in Whitfield Street with his friend who owned it. Does anyone recognise the friend?

Muhammad Ali visited the area

A book about world champion boxer Muhammad Ali was published, and illustrated in Fitzrovia News with a picture of him outside the Agra restaurant at 135 Whitfield Street.

He had visited the restaurant, run by a friend of his (also in the picture), on the eve of his famous fight with Henry Cooper, which took place at Wembley on June 18, 1963.

The book was called "Muhammad Ali: The Glory Years" by Felix Dennis (who started his publishing empire in Goodge Street) and Don Atyeo.

Also reviewed was "The Trespass", a novel set in the area during the cholera epidemic of 1849, by local author Barbara Ewing; "Anthem for Youth" by Jon Stallworthy about 12 soldier poets of the first world war (including Isaac Rosenberg who was an art student at Slade in Gower Street); and "Marylebone, Archive Photographic Series", by Brian Girling (with a picture of the Lyons Corner House at 10-16 Oxford Street, where Jack Tratsart shot his father and sister in 1945).

(From Fitzrovia News, December 2002. There was no issue for September 2002)

More changing pub signs of the times

Three more pubs have changed their signs since our last issue (when we reported five).

One is for the better: The Court at 108 Tottenham Court Road has introduced a pictorial hanging sign, for the first time since its days as the Roebuck and the Flintlock & Firkin.

The other two have done the opposite, replacing historic pictorial signs with just lettering of symbols.

These are The Hope at 15 Tottenham Street, and the Northumberland Arms in Goodge Street, which has been renamed The Draft House (and has a sign with just three cut-out glasses).



A full colour poster with all Fitzrovia's pub signs (before these changes) is available from Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre at 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX. Price £5 each A2 size, and two for £5 A3 size.



WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email news@fitzrovia.org.uk by November 19 for December 2012 issue, and put "Listings" in the subject box.

ART GALLERIES

Alison Jacques Gallery, 18 Berners St (alisonjacquesgallery.com):

Alessandro Raho, Sept 7-Oct 6. Ian Kiaer, Oct 10-Nov 10.

Arch One, 12 Percy St (archonepictureframing.co.uk): Various artists, ongoing.

Art First, 21 Eastcastle St (artfirst.co.uk): Bridget Macdonald (Arcadia) + Guler Ates (Threshold), Sept 6 to Oct 6. Jill Mason (Zeros and Tens) + Yujung Chang, Oct 11 to Nov 10. Lois Maghubela (New Work), Nov 14 to Dec 20. (Compendium II), until Feb 1.

Arup Phase 2, 8 Fitzroy St (arup.com/phase2): **Bartha Contemporary**, 25 Margaret St (barthacontemporary.com): Frank Gerritz, Sept 28 to Nov 10. Anna Dickinson, Nov 15-24. Kate Shepherd, Nov 30 to Feb 2.

Black Arts Company, 73 Great Titchfield St (theblackarts.org): Check website for details

Building Centre, Store St (building-centre.co.uk) 60 Buildings 60 years, to Sept 13. Played in London, to Sept 8.

Caroll/Fletcher, 56-57 Eastcastle St (carrollfletcher.com): Natascha Sadr Haghighian, to Sept 22.

Cole, 3-4a Little Portland St (cole-contemporary.com): Krister Klassman, Sept to Oct. Ian Homerston, Oct to Nov. Neil Rumming, Nov to Dec.

Coningsby Gallery/Debut Art, 30 Tottenham St (coningsbygallery.com): Vicky Drosos (Irregular Linearity), Sept 10-22.

Contemporary Applied Arts, 2 Percy St (caa.org.uk): Check website for details.

Curwen Gallery, 34 Windmill St (curwengallery.com): Thirza Kotzen (The Space Between) + various artists (Rejuvenation), Sept 6-29.

David Roberts Foundation, 111 Great Titchfield St (davidrobertsart-foundation.com): Relocated to Mornington Crescent.

Derwent London Gallery, 43 Whitfield St (derwentlondon.com): Designing an Echo, Sept 27 to Nov 24.

Gallery Different, 14 Percy St (gallerydifferent.co.uk): Check website for details.

England & Co, 90-92 Great Portland St (englandgallery.com): Check website for details

Exposure, 22-23 Little Portland St (exposure.net): Check website for details.

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association Gallery, 39 Tottenham Street W1. 6pm to 9pm last Thursday of the month. Various.

Framers Gallery, 36 Windmill St (theframersgallery.co.uk): Rupert Cefai (Tiers of Truth), Oct 1-13. Prints from Babington, Oct 15-20.

Jack Inc. (Alter Ego), Oct 22 to Nov 3. Printmakers Council, Nov 19-24.

Gallery at 94, 94 Cleveland St (galleryat94.com): Check website for details

Getty Images Gallery, 46 Eastcastle St (gettyimagesgallery.com): Londoners at Play, until Sept 25.

Hanmi Gallery, 30 Maple St (hanmiguerry.co.uk): Check website for details.

Haunch of Venison, 51 Eastcastle St (haunchofvenison.com): Giuseppe Penone, Sept 6 to Oct 5. Justin Mortimer, Oct 12 to Nov 10. Isca Greenfield-Sanders, Nov 30 to Jan 13.



The West Central Community Games open on September 8 at Alfred Place (off Store Street) at noon and close at 5pm. Many sporting, art and craft events take place here and in surrounding areas.

Gallery Libby Sellers, 41 Berners St (libbysellers.com): Hot Tools, Sept 6-29. M/M [Paris] (Carpetalogue), Oct 10 to Dec 15.

Josh Lilley, 44-46 Riding House St (joshlilleygallery.com): Anissa Mack, Anna Betze + others (Fabric Show), Sept 6 to Oct 4.

Laure Genillard, 2 Hanway Place (lauregenillard.com): Check website for details.

Lazarides Gallery, 11 Rathbone Place (lazinc.com): Check website for details.

Margaret Street Gallery, 63 Margaret St (margaretstreetgallery.com): Dorothy Bohm (Seeing and Feeling), to Sept 29. Night of film curated by Helen Benigson, Oct 8 week. Marcus Doyle (Salton Sea Series), from Oct 23.

Modern Art, 23-25 Eastcastle St (modernart.net): Clare Woods (The Bad Neighbour), to Sept 28. David Noonan, Oct 10 to Nov 10.

Mummery+Schnelle, 83 Great Titchfield St (mummeryschnelle.com): Rosario López, Miguel Ángel Rojas, Fernell Franco (Essence of Place), Sept 28 to Nov 10.

Nancy Victor, 6 Charlotte Place (nancyvictor.com): Mark Hayward, to Sept 7. Zeus (Pop Up Show), Sept 7-28.

National Print Gallery, 56 Maple St (nationalprintgallery.com): Check website for details

Nettie Horn, 17A Riding House St (nettiehorn.com): A Kassen, Sept 7 to Oct 14.

Paradise Row, 74 Newman St (paradiserow.com): Moments of Reprieve, to Sept 22.

Pilar Corrias, 54 Eastcastle St (pilarcorrias.com): Rirkrit Tiravanija (Untitled 2012), to Sept 28.

The Piper Gallery, 18 Newman St (thepipergallery.com): Francis West (Voyages), Sept 7 to Oct 6. Tess Jaray (Mapping the Unseeable), Oct 10 to Nov 9. Abstract Painting from 1970s, Nov 16 to Dec 15.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (1), 2a Conway St (r-h-g.co.uk): Abigail McLellan, Oct 29 to Dec 1.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (2) 28 Charlotte St (r-h-g.co.uk): Karen Nichol, to Sep 8. Alexandra Milton (feathers and Fur), Sep 10 to 29.

Regina Gallery, 22 Eastcastle St (reginagallery.com): Egor Koshelev (Underground Monuments / Astrohipster Domine), Sep 7 to Oct 6.

Rollo Gallery, 51 Cleveland St (rolloart.com): Check website for details.

Rook and Raven, 7/8 Rathbone Place (rookandraven.co.uk): Jaybo Monk (Game Lapse), to Sep 5.

Rosenfeld Porcini, 37 Rathbone St (rosenfeldporcini.com): Mehran Elminia (Revealing Harmonies), to Sep 20. The Continuation of Romance: Painting – An Interrupted Discourse, Sep 28 to Dec 8.

Store Street Gallery, 32 Store St (storestreetgallery.com): Michael Lukasiwicz, Nov 9-24. Point 35,

Nov 30 to Dec 29.

Tiwani Contemporary, 16 Little Portland St (tiwani.co.uk): Mary Evans (Cut and Paste), Sep 14 to Oct 20.

T J Boulting, 59 Riding House St (tjboulting.com): Boo Saville (The World, The Flesh and The Devil), Sep 5 to Oct 4.

Gallery Vela, 38 Langham St (galleryvela.com): John Tiney, Sep 7 to Oct 13.

Whisper Gallery, 27-28 Eastcastle St (whisperfineart.co.uk): Check website for details.

Woolff Gallery, 89 Charlotte St (woolffgallery.co.uk): Check website for details.

LIVE MUSIC

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org): La Suite Bipolar, Venezuelan jazz band, Sept 12, 7.30. World Music Festival, Sept 17-22, 7.30. Argentine tenor Fernando Messulam and Italian soprano Robert Mancinelli, Sept 28, 7.30.

The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): Future Rock, every Friday night. Lunchtime jazz with The Storyville All Stars, Sept 13, 11.30-2.30. Fabulous Lounge Swingers, Sept 15. Rhys Williams, Sept 19. The Law Rocks Round 3, Sept 20. Stompin' at the 100 Club Special, Sept 24. Tuesday Blues, Sept 25. Twisted Wheel, Sep 26. Northern Soul All-Nighter, Sept 29. Home Grown Rock, Sept 30.

UCL Chamber Music Club, Haldane Room, Main Campus, Gower St (ucl.ac.uk/chamber-music): Concert on theme of Autumn, Oct 4, 5.30. Songs on the theme of Love, Oct 16, 5.30. Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata, Oct 31, 7pm.

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Caitlin Moran, Sept 14. Rob Goodman, Sept 17. John Shuttleworth, Sept 22. Stonewall Comedy Gala, Sept 24. Laugh Till It Hurts, Sept 26. Joe Brand, Sept 28. Andy Fairweather Low, Sept 29. Bright Club (UCL lecturers' stand up comedy), Oct 24.

Dominion Theatre, 269 Tottenham Court Rd (dominiontheatre.co.uk): We Will Rock You, Queen musical, ongoing.

London Palladium, Argyll St (the-london-palladium.com): Tommy Steele in "Scrooge" from October 24 until January 5.

RADA, Malet St, opposite Birkbeck College (rada.ac.uk):

GBS Theatre: Possessed, about "herd intoxication" in the name of religion, political ideals or ethnic cleansing, until Sept 8.

Rada Studios, 16 Chenies St (rada.ac.uk): Three Muses Double Bill, until Sept 6, 6.45. Classic Cuts -

The Canterbury Tales (8.20) and Richard III (7pm), until Sept 7. Rada At Home, music, song and theatrical entertainment, Sept 27 and Nov 29, 7pm. Other events can be booked through the BBC Ticket office (bbc.co.uk/tickets).

CINEMA/FILM

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org):

Neoliberalism and the Chilean Social Movement, short films, Sept 7, 7.30.

Green Man, 36 Riding House St: London Animation Club (londonanimationclub.com) first Tuesday of month.

Odeon, 30 Tottenham Court Road: Weekly film details from odeon.co.uk or 08712 244007.

Screen @ Rada, Malet St, opposite Birkbeck College (rada.ac.uk): London Chinese Independent Film Festival, Sept 15-29. The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time, Sept 16, 2.30. The Last of the Haussmans, Oct 31, 7pm.

UCL Petrie Museum, Malet Place (ucl.ac.uk): The Mummy, starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Oct 31, 6.30.

LIVE COMEDY

College Arms, 18 Store St: Mondays at 8pm.

Fitzroy Tavern, 16 Charlotte St: Wednesdays at 7.30pm in basement.

Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: Improvisation on Thursdays, 8.30pm, and stand-up on Saturdays, 7.30pm upstairs.

POETRY

All Saints, Margaret St: Poetry Tea, Sept 29, 3pm, £6, phone 7637 8456.

UCL Petrie Museum, Malet Place: Al Saddiq Al Raddi, New Poetry and Farewell. Sudanese poet presents his poems, translated into English by Sarah Maquire, Oct 11, 6.30.

KARAOKE

TCR Bar, 182 Tottenham Court Rd: Live mike for singers to live backing band, Thursdays, 7pm.

One Tun, 58 Goodge St: Last Saturday of month.

PUB QUIZZES

Carpenter's Arms, 68 Whitfield St: Every Tuesday, 6.30, Belle Bar.

One Tun, 58 Goodge St: Every Tuesday, 8pm.

Prince of Wales Feathers, 8 Warren St: Every Monday, 7pm.

EXHIBITIONS

British Museum, Great Russell St (britishmuseum.org): Shakespeare, staging the world, until Nov 25. The horse, from Arabia to Royal Ascot, until Sept 30. North American Landscape, Kew at the British Museum, until Nov 25.

Grant Museum of Zoology, 21 University St (ucl.ac.uk/museums/zoology):

Weird and Wonderful Wildlife, Family Activity Day, Oct 20-21, 1-5. Tooth and Claw, Killer Carnivores, Oct 29 to Nov 3, 1-5.

Royal Institute of British Architects, Gallery One, 66 Portland Place (architecture.com): Design Stories, 2012 Olympics, until Sept 25. After the Party, The Legacy of Celebration, until Nov 27. King's Cross, Regenerating a London land-

mark, until Oct 21.

UCL (ucl.ac.uk):

Art Museum, South Cloisters, Gower St: One Day in the City, life in London over the centuries, until Dec 14. **Main Library**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: A Capital City, London events and anniversaries, until Nov 16. **North Lodge**, Main Campus, Gower St: Celebrating Strindberg's centenary, the Red Room at UCL, Sept 22 to Oct 21.

Petrie Museum, Malet Place: Fit Bodies - Statues, Athletes and Power, until Dec 20. **Slade Research Centre**, Woburn Square: Work by Fine Art students entering second year, Oct 3-5, 8-12.

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Rd (wellcomecollection.org): Superhuman, exploring human enhancement, until Oct 16. Welcome Image Awards, until Dec 31.

TALKS

Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Author

Salman Rushdie talks with David Aaronovitch about living with a death sentence, Sept 27.

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org): Free The Cuban 5, Sept 15, 2pm.

UCL (ucl.ac.uk): Lunch Hour Lectures (1.15-1.55), Darwin Theatre, Gower St, entrance in Malet Place: Snails in art, Oct 9. Geographies of art and cosmopolitan politics in London 1919-1939, Oct 11. To boldly go, exploration, Oct 16. Yam ceremonies in Papua New Guinea, Oct 18. Latest news from the energy frontier, Oct 23. Why patients don't take their medicines, Oct 25. What is modern slavery? Oct 30.

Other UCL talk venues: **Art Museum**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Old London Bridge, Recovery from Disaster, by David Jones, Oct 9, 1pm. Romantic Poets, by Greg Dart, Oct 23, 1pm. Poetry and the Thames, by Mark Ford, Oct 30, 1pm.

Chadwick Theatre, Gower St: Witnessing the Holocaust, Polish Diaries from Occupied Warsaw, 1939-45, Oct 22, 6.45. **Cruciform Lecture Theatre 1**, Gower St:

Transport and the Olympic Legacy - Driving Innovation, Sept 11, 6.30. The Long Legacy, London 2062, Sept 13, 6.30. The Biologic Basis of Obesity, Prof Jeffrey Friedman, Oct 2,

5.25. **Grant Museum of Zoology**, 21 University St: Naughty Nature, The Seven Deadly Sins, Oct 20, 6pm. **JZ Young Theatre**, Anatomy Building,

Gower St: Freshwater Biodiversity in the UK, status, threats and conservation concerns, Sept 20, 10-5. **Petrie Museum**, Malet Place: Building the Body, by Marilyn Luscombe, Sept 13,

6.30. African Hair Combs, Sept 26, 6.30. The Mummy's Curse, Gothic Books of Ancient Egypt, Oct 20, 6pm. **South Wing Council Room**,

Wilkins Building, Gower St: The origins of speech, by Dr James Steele, UCL Institute of Archeology, Oct 11, 5.30.

Sohemian Society, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: Legendary record producer Joy Boyd, £3, Sept 17, 7.30.

Other Events

Grant Museum of Zoology, 21 University St: Witches and Lizards, Halloween at the Grant. Evening drinks reception with ghoulish exhibits. Oct 31, 6-8.

UCL Wilkins Building, Gower St (ucl.ac.uk): Open House London 2012, Sept 22, 9-1.