

FitzroviaNews



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

Issue 122 Autumn 2011

Battle to stop Mayor overturning local democracy to gain Crossrail cash, page 3

Council and police cautioned after nuisance bar is given licence

By News reporters

Residents in Goodge Street have criticised the police and a council licensing committee after a bar, which had previously been used as a brothel and continues to be a focus for vice activity, has been allowed to reopen.

Councillors were initially reluctant to grant a new licence to the notorious premises but caved in after legal arguments which pointed out that without police objections they could not

refuse the application. Camden's licensing committee granted the licence in July subject to conditions.

The club had gained an international reputation after it was reported that Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood started an affair with a 20-year-old woman after meeting her at the bar in 2008.

Vice activity built up outside the club and continued after its closure. Men were seen either to hang around outside the door to the club or to sit in cars and then approach potential customers arriving at the bar.

In their objections to the licence committee on behalf of residents councillors Adam Harrison and Millena Nuti stated that the activity outside the club was a great nuisance for people living there.

Although the activity of the pimps and touts had decreased since the club was raided and closed in 2009 it was still causing a nuisance.

Residents groups agreed with Camden's former police licensing officer Robert Dear who said in 2009 that the premises should not open again as a licensed venue.

The application to reopen has been accepted because the new applicants, Annup Saggarr and son Rishi, have been judged to be unconnected to the previous managers. This is despite the fact that as owners of the venue, the Saggars received rent from the previous managers. The applicants said they never visited the venue when it was the Capricorn Club and had no reason to doubt the previous managers who paid rents on time.

The applicants said they planned to let the premises to new managers, transferring the licence. The police would be consulted on any transfer and could object if unhappy with the new licensee.

However residents living near to the bar have said they



A mechanical digger strikes a water main on Cleveland Street during work to lay cabling. See "Running water everywhere" page 4.

are "dismayed" at the decision to allow the licence.

"Why should those of us living along Goodge Street have to put up with this? The council have been duped and the police complacent," say the residents who want to remain anonymous.

After the club was finally raided in 2009 Camden Council said they had taken "swift action" and would not "not hesitate to suspend a premises licence if necessary".

But these words were laughed at by many of Fitzrovia's residents. The Council had been repeat offenders with regard to this basement bar. In 2008 the council renewed its licence even though the

police had objected, a Channel 4 documentary had shown film of one of its reporters being offered sex for £250 at the club.

A Fitzrovia resident made a Freedom of Information request to Camden Council whose statutory duty is to monitor and enforce licensing. The Council did not inspect the club once during the two years that it was regularly exposed as a brothel.

Camden's current police licensing officer PC Gerry McGann told Fitzrovia News that he had told the new licence holder of the bar that the police would not tolerate any breach of the licence conditions. PC McGann said that any vice activity seen by the public should be reported to the police.



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The Police and Camden Council have let us down

We are dismayed that the former Capricorn Club in Goodge Street is now to reopen following the granting of a new licence by Camden Council.

We are told that the police were satisfied that "no person who was employed as a member of the management team or as a director when the premises was the subject of a police investigation which led to the closure in December 2009 shall have any involvement in the business or financial interest therein" and therefore decided not oppose the application.

A licence has been given despite the outside of the premises continuing to be a focus for vice activity. The same pimps, drivers and cars that have worked with the club since before 2009 have continued to loiter in the street outside the club. Despite the police and council being aware of this they

chose to grant a licence for the club to reopen.

Now, since the licence has been granted, we have noticed an increased amount of activity. Drivers sit in their cars with engines running adding to the nuisance.

We are astonished at Camden Council's decision to allow the club to reopen particularly as the applicant has stated that he intends to transfer the licence to another party. No condition has been attached to the licence to require the activity outside the club to be dispersed, yet this is our main cause for concern.

Why should those of us living along Goodge Street have to put up with this? The council have been duped and the police complacent. In who's interest are they acting?

Names and addresses withheld

Private tenants need support

As a private tenant I was recently in deep trouble with my landlord applying to double my rent. So I went to the Law Centre in Kentish Town. They couldn't help me. They advised me to go to Housing at Camden Council. They couldn't help me.

Through a friend I found Camden Federation of Private Tenants, who gave me a great deal of help over the phone.

Yet this organisation may now have to close at the end of the year due to loss of funding from Camden Council. Please give your support to this organisation by visiting: www.cfpt.org.uk.

Fiona Green

Bloomsbury ward councillors' surgeries

6.00-7.00pm on the first and third Fridays of the month at
Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX
And on the second and fourth Fridays of the month at
Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1N 1AB

Adam Harrison, Milena Nuti, and Abdul Quadir : 020 7974 3111
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Swimming Pool closure

The 52 Club swimming pool had to close this August due to deterioration of the fabric of the pool building. The amount of money needed to make it safe is currently not available; UCLH Trust is not in a position to confirm when the pool will be opening in the near future.

In my opinion, this wonderful building should not be closed but should become a listed building and maintained for use. The 52 Club enjoys a membership of 1500. It offers a range of facilities to the NHS Trusts in the area and to the residents of Fitzrovia. It is run by a team of really friendly staff.

In 1974, when the Board of Governors of UCH acquired the lease of Bonham Carter House the opportunity arose to provide all the staff with unrivalled facilities for a Sports and Social Club.

This was possible because the previous owners of the building, Bourne and Hollingsworth of Oxford Street, had in the 1920s designed and built it for their live-in staff, a

residence which was unique for staff welfare. The recreational facilities included a swimming pool, various games rooms in the basement, a ballroom and library.

Investment over more recent years has maintained its art deco character. In the early 1990s the collapse of part of the ceiling of the swimming pool led to an expensive programme of repairs. The resulting 1920s style pool with polished metal and new lighting proved well worth while. The BBC have used it for fashion shows and legend has it that a scene from Dr Who was once shot in the pool. In 2005, the newly tiled pool was complemented by new saunas.

I am sure I shall not be the only person who will miss this great facility in Fitzrovia and hope the Management Committee and Trustees of UCLH Charity are successful in securing the necessary funding to repair this great asset to our community.

Ann Goodburn

Boris should not overrule local democracy

So local democracy — including more than a handful of fairly intelligent well informed people — can not be trusted even to make criticisms of a plan which flies in the face of nearly every element of planning policy. This is truly shocking (Mayor calls in Saatchi block, p3 this issue).

Without trying to exonerate Boris himself, I suspect this intervention is the work of some crony hack who is either in the pocket of the developers or simply clueless about the development. The development of the block has nothing to do with Saatchi or the advertising world.

And is there a shortage of office space at this time when

businesses everywhere are going under?

Nobody can object to enhancing existing offices or, usually, to increasing their size if the increase is not to the detriment of other people such as residents.

Also this Derwent plan clearly is a detriment, for very little gain on the office side. Surely this can not be the case that Boris now at the eleventh hour overrules not just local democracy but the elected Council which was scathing in its rejection of the plan.

Terence Doyle
Charlotte Street

Pub couple were grandparents of international footballer

Fitzrovia News has tracked down a relation of the couple who ran the George & Dragon pub in Cleveland Street over 60 years ago, who were pictured in the last issue.

The picture of Alf and Lou Mancini was supplied by a local resident who wanted it passed to any close relation of the couple.

Their grandson is Terry Mancini, the retired international footballer who played for the Republic of Ireland when Jackie Charlton was manager, and was also captain of Arsenal, and played for Watford, and Queens Park Rangers.

The picture of his grandparents has been passed on to Terry, who has thanked the paper and the lady who supplied it.



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Neighbours support riot-hit business

By GUY O'CONNELL

A Fitzrovia businessman has described the moment a mob smashed into his restaurant during the London riots as customers looked on in shock. Lords Indian Cuisine on the corner of Warren Street and Whitfield Street was serving dinner as usual on Monday 8 August.

"I was downstairs, and all I heard at first were footsteps" said Wakir, who recently refurbished the local favourite. "Then more and more people started arriving and my colleague pressed the alarm buzzer at about 10.45."

As a handful of customers sat in disbelief, a mob of around thirty mostly young men tore into the bar area.

"They were all races, black asian and white. They had their faces covered and they grabbed the till and the bottles behind the bar. We thought that was it and a group of about thirty of them then started to move off towards Great Portland Street. But then they threw the bottles at the windows, and smashed the glass. I was afraid for our customers, and at first the police said they were too busy with the fires and riots everywhere else to come and help."

The top end of Whitfield Street is a typical corner of Fitzrovia - flats and houses sit side by side with small businesses. Wakir said scores of people living nearby came at once to offer help and protection. "Loads of neighbours came and offered help. There were brooms and offers of support from all around. We know our neighbours here very well, they're very friendly."

The next day, police and carpenters were quick to arrive, and Wakir says the support from investigators has been good since then.

"We plan to stay here of course, Police should be given more powers to discipline these kids, and it may well be that we get some shutters put up too."

Lords Indian Cuisine deliver free all over Fitzrovia and the restaurant is open for business at all the usual times, with a special bookings-only service on Sundays.

It's thought that the mob assembled from not far away, and anyone with information or with CCTV images can contact the police.

There were similar incidents involving a group of masked men near Great Portland Street tube station on the same evening. Portland Food and Wine had tills stolen and windows broken. The Green Man pub and Tesco Metro also had theft and damage.

Mayor of London will be challenged over Saatchi block intervention

By Linus Rees

The Mayor of London announced in June that he will determine a planning application to redevelop the Saatchi & Saatchi building in Fitzrovia and could overturn the decision made by Camden Council in May to refuse planning permission. The Mayor will use powers gained in 2008 which enables him to intervene on strategically important development sites.

A hearing will take place this month and campaign group the Charlotte Street Association (CSA) will argue the case for refusing planning permission.

The intervention by the Mayor comes after a decision by Camden Council to refuse permission for Derwent London plc to redevelop the site in Charlotte Street with a scheme which would increase the floor space by nearly 70 percent, add extra storeys and include new retail and restaurant uses. And importantly for the Mayor, the development would also provide a £1.6m contribution towards Crossrail.

The Crossrail contribution means that less housing, social housing and virtually no open space would be provided on the site because of viability issues.

Councillor Tom Neumark, who chairs Camden's planning committee, said: "We threw out

this plan because it lacked affordable homes and open space and faced serious objections from people living there. It did not fit our policy. The Mayor insisted on taking the maximum contribution from the developers for Crossrail which means the developer could offer little else," said Mr Neumark.

The Mayor will now consider the application and conservation area consent in more detail and decide whether planning permission should be granted.

However, Mr Johnson said he believed the plans would significantly "contribute to the competitiveness of London's wider economy."

Ahead of the hearing the Charlotte Street Association (CSA) has made representation outlining their concerns about the proposed development. Max Neufeld secretary of the CSA describes how the Mayor is ignoring other planning policies of the London Plan.

"Nowhere in the [London] Plan is there any policy which ranks financial contributions to Crossrail as having priority over other strategic policies in the Plan. Given that viability is a central consideration, any wish to maximise the Crossrail contribution will inevitably create a situation where other strategic policies designed to sustain existing and future residential communities are sacrificed," writes Neufeld in a letter to the Greater London Authority.

The sheer size of the proposed development is "totally alien to Fitzrovia and would be extremely damaging, and it does not accord with the London Plan" in a number of ways.

National planning guidance requires developments to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The planning application by Derwent London also does not conform to a range of planning policies with regard to mix of uses. Camden's Local Development Framework states that increases in commercial floorspace should be matched by an equivalent area of residential use. Derwent's plans only provide 53 percent of the required residential.

With regard to housing units, the proposals offer only 27 percent of the target for affordable housing: 15 homes instead of 55 including only one family-sized affordable unit.

Neufeld states that affordable housing provision must also be seen in the context of Camden's central area south of the Euston Road. In the ten years up to 2009 there was a net loss of affordable housing.

Similarly, no new open space has been provided in Fitzrovia since Crabtree Fields in the mid-1980s, to match the needs generated by the large increases in commercial floor space since then. The almost total lack of open space in the development will put increased pressure on every other open space in an area identified as deficient. Only a derisory 231 square metres is offered, less than a tenth of what is required.

The site is also located in an area which has high deprivation levels with regard to housing, services and living environment.

Much of this deprivation is hidden behind the glossy facades of restaurants and bars promoted by the media.

The hearing will take place at City Hall, The Queens Walk, London SE1 2AA at 6.30pm on Monday 19 September 2011. See <http://bit.ly/saatchi-block> for up to date information

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Hours reduced for Greek restaurant after licence review

The Elysee restaurant in Percy Street had its opening hours reduced after councillors at a licence review hearing agreed with residents who complained it was causing a disturbance and a public nuisance.

As well as a group of residents, the licence review committee heard from a Camden environmental health officer, a planning enforcement officer who also raised concerns about the use of the restaurant.

The committee heard that after a recent refurbishment of the restaurant that the use of the premises had intensified. The planning enforcement team expressed concerns that the restaurant owners had carried out alterations to a listed build-

ing without proper consent.

Residents said they witnessed patrons of the restaurant staggering out in the early hours of the morning to vomit or urinate on neighbouring premises.

Bloomsbury ward councillor Adam Harrison said that the volume of music blaring out of the restaurant was unacceptable.

The restaurant received written support from some local businesses and residents. One letter of support came from a Greek Archbishop.

However, the objectors were delighted when councillors recognised the public nuisance caused by the restaurant and its patrons and decided to reduce the restaurant's hours and restrict noise.

Leonard ends 40 years of service at Goodge Street - but would like to stay on



Leonard Manuel has worked at the Tesco supermarket on Goodge Street since joining the company as a part-time worker to supplement his income while a student in the early 1970s, writes *Pete Whyatt*. Now he is to retire from the job he has done for 40 years. He took a break from stacking the shelves and helping customers to tell me about his life and the time he has spent on the shop floor.

Leonard was born in Pakistan to Roman Catholic parents who were from Goa, hence his Portuguese surname. He came to London to study and started working part-time in the Goodge Street store in 1971. After completing his studies in 1974 he went on to work full-time.

"The store has changed in so many ways since the 1970s," says Leonard. "Fruit and vegetables used to be stacked and displayed on the pavement in front of the shop and I weighed produce and served customers outside the shop. And we had a deli counter with spit roasted chickens."

In those days each item that came into the store had to be individually hand priced with a sticker and all deliveries had to be unloaded manually from the lorry. "We had a butchery department in the basement and I used to unload the trucks which meant carrying a whole pigs and sides of cattle over my shoulder into the shop," he recalls.

Leonard also remembers when Jack Cohen (founder of Tesco) used to be a regular customer; and so did his daughter the later infamous Dame Shirley Porter. She used to park her car on Goodge Street and nip in to shop. Leonard smiles at me and jokes about this. "I

should have asked her for a council flat because I was living in Bayswater at the time!" (Lady Porter was later involved in the "homes for votes scandal" in Westminster.)

Quite a few well-known people used to be regular customers in the store, including comedy actors Kenneth Williams and Hilda Baker, and scriptwriter Dennis Norden.

"I was the first Asian to work at that store," says Leonard proudly. "When I started most of the other staff were Irish and there was a time when all the cashiers were Chinese." Leonard speaks fondly of the old days. "We used to have a canteen with a cook who served up meals every day. Now it's just machines and a microwave. And we used to have pay increments for service and merit. Now all general assistant staff are paid the same."

During the refurbishment of the Goodge Street store, Leonard transferred to work at their Stroud Green branch where he was later offered a permanent job. "I nearly accepted, but I'd miss Goodge Street." He feels very loyal to the store he has spent most of his adult life in and has enjoyed getting to know people over the years and the daily commute into Fitzrovia.

"During my time working here I've seen 25 managers come and go and I've got to know many local people. I don't see as many old faces as I used to - as folks get older they find doing the shopping more difficult. I've never had time off through illness except for a kidney operation in 2005 and I've walked to work during tube and bus strikes."

As I chatted to Leonard at work he spotted a customer and her daughter who had moved out of Fitzrovia 10 years ago. She came over and said hello to Leonard and said her daughter was just home from university. Leonard turns to me and says: "The last time I saw her daughter she was in a pram."

Now he faces the prospect of retirement he has mixed views about his future. He would like to spend more time with his wife but he also enjoys the routine of work. "I don't know what future holds. I'm not really looking forward to retirement. I've got no hobbies. I would like to carry on working for Tesco part-time but not sure if they will allow me to."



King prawns and TV stars, the secrets of feeding Fitzrovia

By GUY O'CONNELL

For more than twenty years, Sergio's has been serving up its signature king prawns and cheeky service to locals and TV stars alike. Kostas Georgiou was sixteen when he started work in the family firm at the corner of Great Titchfield Street and Foley Street, and FN pulled up a chair on a busy Friday night to fill up on tips.

"Fitzrovia is a village in the heart of the West End. I was born in the Middlesex Hospital, I went to school here, and I know everybody in this road," he says. Now 34, Kostas and his team are a familiar sight as you pass along the street. As he speaks, a waiter sings, and another joins in, laughing. For a venue that sports photos of the pop supremo Simon Cowell and the singer Lionel Ritchie among the star customers, this is a brave thing to do.

But Sergio's has the X Factor, even if our singing waiter does not. (He's having a go at "My Girl," and he won't be challenging the version by The Temptations any time soon.)

"The key to surviving here is friendliness and the food. I've seen others who don't know how to give both all the time, and they move on. We talk to our customers, we know what they like. My friends from school years ago, my teachers and all our regular customers are here all the time." He says.

"If I have to pick a favourite, it's Anna Wing." (the much-loved actress was featured in a recent FN.) "When I grew up, she came to my school plays, and when I see her now, she always asks me how I am, or how's the business. Years ago, you used to see more families around, the people you see in Fitzrovia now seem more trendy. It means we have not felt the

recession here, we're just as busy as last year."

The streets and pavements of the neighbourhood are crowded most nights, and hundreds of people are directly employed by the restaurant trade in our area of town.

"My family's been in the business here for three generations. My Mum and Dad - Andy and Chris - and my Grandparents too, they all ran restaurants. My Grandma still lives up the road. One of my family was the security guard at BHS on Oxford Street for 25 years. But it all started years ago with the Kostas Kebab House over the street, then we bought two restaurants that used to sit side by side: Montibello and Les Routiers, and that's when Sergio's was born."

When it comes to food, Fitzrovia can be fickle. Long time residents may well remember scores of favourite places that one day just close their doors. New names are arriving all the time, and competition is tight. Businesses are so keen for a slice of the action that they've been busy seeking change of use in former offices and cafes, even while other venues come up for rent.

"I really think it took off for us here when we invented our signature special the King Prawns with garlic, olive oil, chilli and spaghetti. We seemed to get busier after that. We've got regular workers and famous people here, and the customer has to feel it's a place where they can be honest with you."

As FN leaves, a man at the table in front plays the spoons. Now he really IS good. Whatever he says about his King Prawns, Kostas and his team have proved the hard way that they've hit our taste buds too.

Running water everywhere

There's been a lot disruption at Cleveland Residences while the flats are being refurbished, writes *Captain Gripper*.

One of my neighbours was locked out because the newly fitted lock to her flat door was faulty. My flat had no gas connection, no hot water and more importantly, no functioning toilet.

During the last week of

August they started digging up the road outside and struck the water main with the bucket from a mechanical digger causing quite a fountain for us to enjoy.

A week later we had water running through our ceilings, apparently from a faulty mains pipe inside our building.

And there's all the building noise. Some say it's been hell.

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Hard times ahead for Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association

Since 1975 the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association (FNA) has run the Neighbourhood Centre at the heart of our community in Tottenham Street. Over the past 36 years staff and volunteers have delivered a variety of services. The FNA have sought to relieve poverty, help those in need, respond to planning and licensing applications, and provide support for those who want to improve the quality of life and preserve the special character of our part of London.

This autumn the FNA had hoped to move from its current premises in Tottenham Street into the now completed Fitzrovia Community Centre in

Foley Street. The new offices and meeting rooms offered the chance to do more for the neighbourhood in a building that is both modern and fully accessible. They looked forward to sharing the new Community Centre with other charitable organisations.

Despite some modest fundraising successes over the past two years and the opportunity of new premises, the FNA now faces an uncertain future. The organisation relies on money from a number of sources but more than half its current income comes from Westminster City Council (£15,289) and Camden Council (£47,000). As a result of the gov-

ernment cuts to councils all over the UK, voluntary organisations like the FNA face the threat of greatly reduced funding.

Because of the government cuts to local councils this past year, more than half its income has been lost. There will be a number of consequences to this.

Firstly, there will be difficulty running the services currently delivered. These include the drop-in advice service which provides support for housing and welfare for all those who need it in Fitzrovia. Also the advice on housing and welfare, and community development work for the Bangladeshi community will be greatly affected. People who are poor and often socially isolated will suffer as a result.

Secondly, the organisation will not be able to pay to rent office and activity space in the new Fitzrovia Community Centre. But that's not all. This summer, in anticipation of moving into the Fitzrovia Community Centre, Camden Council took the decision to sell the current premises at Tottenham Street because they cannot afford to carry out substantial repairs to the building, especially to the upper residential parts and roof that are in poor condition. Thus as things stand at the moment the FNA cannot move into new premises and it cannot stay where it is.

This loss will also have wider implications for the life of the residential community in Fitzrovia.

The Fitzrovia News, Charlotte Street Association, Friends of Open Spaces Fitzrovia, Fitzrovia Play Association, and several local residents' associations use the premises. Their work, done entirely by volunteers, is vital to protect open spaces, residential amenity and affordable housing under constant threat from commercial development.

Trustees, staff and volunteers of the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association now face a very worrying few months ahead. The trustees of the charity will have to make very difficult decisions about the future of the organisation. Along with staff and volunteers they will try to ensure that both Westminster and Camden continue to provide some funding, as well as exploring other funding possibilities.

In this time of uncertainty your support is more important than ever. There will be an annual general meeting at 7pm on Thursday 13 October at the Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square.

Please try to attend this meeting, and write to your councillors with your concerns about the future of this important community resource.

Greening of Fitzrovia streets continues



By Denise Julien

There is plenty of evidence to show that people feel better in green spaces. But trees can also contribute to storm-water management, absorb traffic noise, and provide shade which helps to reduce skin cancer. Trees are the lungs of our city, and have a calming effect on our neighbourhoods.

Approximately 280 trees have been planted in Marylebone since 2008 by the W1W Tree initiative. Their aim is to plant a further 220 trees by 2012 in time for the Olympics.

In April this year celebrity gardener Alan Titchmarsh completed the greening of Bolsover Street by planting an Elm tree. He said "Our children will never see a full grown Elm Tree in the same way that we did, but hopefully, thanks to work like this, our grandchildren will." These new Elm trees are resistant to Dutch Elms disease which depleted our stock in the 1960s with bark-boring beetles.

In June Professor Lord Winston was guest of honour for the tree ceremony in New Cavendish Street. He said "Trees

do so much silently. One tree will use about two to four kilos of carbon per year. 49 of these trees will mitigate against one person's entire carbon footprint".

Now the W1W initiative aims to continue these efforts in East Marylebone and Fitzrovia. Holcroft Court is one of the areas in line for improvement. And, as this building is set back from the road, it provides a unique opportunity to create a green space that offers a healthier and more productive communal space.

In the past, trees were not really considered worthwhile. Now that opinion is changing. Trees increase the value of property by between five and 15 percent, and a mature tree by as much as 27 percent. Whilst giving character and a sense of place, trees are also the high-rise guardians of the urban environment. Plus there is also evidence that trees help to lower stress and illness levels. All these hidden benefits will not only help the present generation, they ensure that we have fulfilled our obligation to future generations.

About the new Fitzrovia Community Centre

The Fitzrovia Community Centre (FCC) was paid for out of planning gain (aka 106 money) from the building of University College London Hospital on Euston Road. The planning gain paid for the construction and start-up costs. The FCC will be managed by a registered charity (Fitzrovia Community Centre Ltd) and governed by a board of trustees. The building although in Westminster is in effect owned by Camden Council who will assign a lease to the Fitzrovia Community Centre Ltd.

The new Community Centre is about four-times the size of the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre. There could be a number of different charities and community groups sharing space in the building. The running costs of the Centre will be met from a mix of rental income, grants and other funding.

For more information contact the co-ordinator Helena Roden on 07980 181 847 or by email: helenaroden.fcct@yahoo.co.uk

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association Annual General Meeting

7pm, Thursday 13 October 2011,
Indian YMCA,
41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ
There will be food and drink.
All welcome

News in brief

The **Northumberland Arms** Goodge Street will be closed for refurbishment until March 2012.

A pie shop is to open on Rathbone Street as part of the **Newman Arms** pub. But is it really being called the Newman Legs?

Polka Galato is a new Ice cream shop on the corner of Warren and Fitzroy Streets.

Travellers handbag and luggage shop 114 Tottenham Court Road closed after many years in Fitzrovia.

Cafe owners and restaurateurs are now bleating about too many of their kind in Fitzrovia. There are concerns from cafe owners in Tottenham Street that a Pod hot food takeaway is to open without planning consent. A planning application to change a former lighting shop on the corner of Warren Street and Whitfield Street to a restaurant is currently pending.

Bertorellis Restaurant 19-23 Charlotte Street closed since March bought by MARC rumoured to be opening under direction of a celebrity chef (We're not saying who)

Charlotte Street Blues Bar and the upper floors recently sold for £3.7M.

Westminster City Council are currently considering a planning application for the redevelopment of the **Rathbone Place Mail Delivery Office**.

A planning application is expected to be submitted in September for a development on the **Middlesex Hospital** site. There will likely be many more car parking spaces than affordable housing units in the plans. Residents have also expressed disappointment that a promised "pocket development" with a parkland site, **vegetable gardens**, an orchard, an environmental education centre complete with horticultural workshop, and **zero-carbon affordable housing** turned out to be a hoax.

Demolition work has now started on the **Windeyer** building along Howland Street. An application to redevelop the site was given approval by Camden Council despite objections from **Cleveland Street** residents. **Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee** objected to the development which they described as looking like a big ice block.

Derwent London told their shareholders that they intend to redevelop the Network Building on Tottenham Court Road, increasing the office and retail

Continued on page 7

Father Fudge's funeral held at Westminster Cathedral



Father Alan James Fudge (pictured above) of St Charles Borromeo in Ogle Street, who has just died, was born in Bristol on 31st December 1940 during an air raid attack.

His funeral, attended by many locals, was at Westminster Cathedral.

In his early teens he was taken by a friend to a Jesuit Church in Bristol becoming an altar boy and he soon began to display his talent for music on the organ.

At 16 he became a Jesuit lay brother. The priests helped him to discover his calling to the priesthood, though not as a Jesuit. He retained a lifelong affection and gratitude towards the Jesuits.

After working for a time in the offices of a paper manufacturing company, in 1961, he left employment to continue his education. Alan was ordained priest in 1971. His first appointment was to the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Marylebone,

where he was also chaplain to St Mary's Hospital in Paddington.

In September 1977, he accepted his appointment as curate to the parish of St Charles Borromeo, Ogle Street, and as chaplain to the Middlesex Hospital. The parish had been due for closure. However in 1981, he became sole parish priest, continuing to serve the Middlesex, and other hospitals in the parish, as chaplain.

He reordered the church internally, installing, an octagonal baptismal font in which even adults could receive baptism by immersion. This was completed in 1984. Alan always took great care to maintain and renew the furnishings of the church, to make it welcoming as a place of prayer, and very often he was himself to be seen praying there.

Although Fr Alan had no assistant priest, he often gave hospitality to priests and seminarians from around the world who were studying and needed to stay in central London. In turn they assisted him in the work of the parish during their stays. Thanks to his hard-working Scottish housekeeper of many years, Sister Agnes, he was able invite friends and visitors, some staying for long periods.

Though by nature a very pri-



Father Fudge and the Pope.

vate person, and most comfortable with his family and close friends, his care for others was genuine, spontaneous and very deep. He consciously made himself available, virtually day and night, for those who required confession, spiritual direction or merely to talk at length about their troubles.

However, most people will remember Fr Alan for his dignified and beautiful celebration of the Liturgy, and his weekly homilies which related, to real events in the lives of his congregation. Many will also remember his weekly newsletters, in which he distilled the words of his homilies.

Many parishioners will remember Fr Alan as their catechist, and his First Communion classes, Confirmation, and Marriage courses presented over

30 years. Fr Alan was open to other initiatives: AA group meetings, an Angolan prayer group, occasional meetings of Youth 2000 and the weekly meetings of the charismatic prayer group Soul Food. They made use of the rooms in the crypt which was dug out and opened in 1990 - to accommodate other groups and courses - a project dearly loved by Alan, the second stage of this work is due to be completed next year.

He also had a long and amicable relationship with local pastors, religious leaders, and especially with the local synagogue.

Alan became ill in March and after treatment at UCH returned home to the presbytery where he died peacefully at 3am on 5 August.

(Vincent Harrington, from Saint Charles Borromeo Website)

Billy Morrissey's great yarns could cheer up anyone

By ANN GOODBURN

Billy Morrissey passed away at UCL Hospital just short of his 79th birthday.

He lived most of his life in Fitzrovia and was determined to stay in his third floor flat in Charlotte Street, despite the effort of climbing the stairs. The ground floor shop below him used to be William's Dairy and was owned by his family.

He worked for the Post Office for many years. On "retirement" he continued to have many jobs, including being a porter at the Middlesex Hospital.

Billy frequented many pubs in Fitzrovia. He told a great yarn and could cheer anyone up if they felt down.

His last local was the King and Queen on Cleveland Street, where his friends including Colin, Briony, Wendy, Mel, Tony and the staff helped him through his latter years. Urgent mini cabs helped him get around Fitzrovia with his Taxi Card.

I will miss his banter and saying: "I love this country."

Fitzrovia News attended Billy's wake at the King and Queen and visited other pubs he frequented to gather the following tributes:

Michael Shepherd (friend): "He could be cantankerous and rude, but he was also very generous and did not have an ounce of bitterness in him. He had trouble with authority figures, especially in the army where he once spent 120 days locked up for being rude to an officer.

"Once, after not seeing him for ten days and getting no response from his flat, I got the police to break into his flat, causing damage which was expensive to repair. When he reappeared Billy called



Billy in his 'favourite gaff' at 65 Charlotte Street.

me a lot of names for causing his door to be smashed, but then he bought me a pint. I think he was quite touched underneath that I had missed him."

Brian Keats (ex-regular at Northumberland Arms, Goodge Street): "He was a tough street fighter and once took great exception to an army officer's coat I used to wear. When he worked at Middlesex Hospital he completely controlled the porters. I was there for a test

once and realised it was no longer the right hospital and I had to go to UCH instead. Even though he was only part-time he insisted they got an ambulance to take me there, even though it was walking distance."

Tony Craig (Duke of York, Rathbone Street, regular): "If anything he was always blunt, it was just his nature. If there was not a proper head on his Guinness there would be murder to pay.

He was very close to Caroline when she ran the Duke of York. He often entertained her and us with his stories about life in Waterford. At 5pm on Saturday he would unfailingly stop mid-pint to get cheap meat as soon as the prices were reduced, then come back and bang his purchases proudly on the table."

Jock (Rathbone Place Royal Mail depot worker): "Bill was a cleaner in the depot and always forthright. He asked me once how I was and I moaned about having to deal with one pile of letters after another. He said what about the piles I have to deal with, having to clean one toilet after another."

Denise Ramsey (niece): "He was born in Waterford, one of 11 children, and came to London at the age of 17. Although he returned to Waterford every year in light opera week, it was not for the music, but the pub extensions. In London he described his flat at 65 Charlotte Street as 'me favourite gaff.' His many nephews and nieces got great enjoyment from his stories and anecdotes."

Tia Morrissey (great niece, aged 11): "He was like a granddad who bought toys for us."

Ella Morrissey (Tia's sister, aged 10): "He bought a green chair for me, and I always sat on it when I visited him. He bought a board game for us and once I cheated, so he called me cheetah."

Stephen Morrissey (nephew): "He was a man of a thousand stories. My father, Paddy, taught him to dance in the 1950s when they were very close, and he was a good jiver at wedding receptions. He lived life to the full and was happy out every night."

Joseph the street artist

By FIONA GREEN

Tall and kindly, unassuming, vulnerable talented and loquacious, Joseph is like the pied piper of Tottenham Street. Every Friday he meets with me and a band of interested and artistic guests we have gathered together, and start work at the Soup Kitchen of the American church after lunch.

Seventy odd years on this earth Joseph writes objectively: "Once a reprobate, drifter, charlatan, chancer and law unto himself; judge this book by its cover and some major surprises are revealed. It has even taught me some tolerance of myself."

"This tough nut has a hard shell, but prise a little and some very interesting stories emerge from the past.

"My way out of my problems was always do a runner. I could never conform. I've done it all my life," and adds: "joking. The trick of a successful marriage is long separations and the ability to go deaf!

"The old man needs a place of retreat from the mayhem of



One of Joseph's drawings

family life. Mine was various squats round London."

However, life wasn't all feckless, and irresponsible, Joseph did train as a draughtsman when he left school and got his equivalent of City and Guilds, working at this for over forty years.

He lost his job, and then his home and family in the late seventies having stayed with them

for thirteen years.

John Bird, Founder of the Big Issue, describes Joseph as a "formidable writer and user of the English language, who helps people to use their skills: a great aid to homeless people."

Bird who himself was once homeless, knows how hard life can get on the streets. "I remember when Jeremy Sandford's book 'Cathy Come Home' about homeless in 1960s came out." Joseph continues, "my family was not yet together, but it had a huge impact on me and the way I thought about life in general. When I became homeless, I soon got badged up and sold The Big Issue and made many friends. I went to art therapy and a creative writing group organized by Big Issue.

Keeping busy with projects

and interests keeps him alive and healthy: drawing, film making, and a book of poetry with girlfriend Linda 'Wild Life in Suburbia' from which this poem is taken:

BE GOOD

So please be kind

To Pigeons

At the setting of the Sun

Because if you don't

Behave yourself

You will come

Back as one.

Nowadays our art group meets alternately at the The American Church and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre which is around the corner from the house where Charles Dickens lived as a child and also close to the Strand Union Workhouse, upon which he most certainly based his novel Oliver Twist: the most powerful image of poverty in literary history

But this Centre has an uncertain future too with the cuts and so Our Group – along with SMart, another group working with the Homeless at Somerset House – is seeking a more permanent base.

Joseph continues: "My Linda was born in a workhouse up North which had been turned into a hospital. The way things are going now, I fear the workhouse will make a comeback with the ongoing National Debt crisis, the new housing legislation and Westminster's wish to move on their rough sleepers.

.... Continued from page 5

space and gaining higher rents. They have also sold Victory House on Tottenham Court Road.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of rough sleepers on our streets. There are 1,611 privately-owned empty homes in Camden, according to housing strategy draft to be discussed by Camden's cabinet on 7 September. There is a high demand for property in Fitzrovia from overseas investors.

A design trail organised by Fitzrovia Now with special exhibits will run throughout the London Design Festival with late night events on 21 September.

Camden Council are consulting about traffic in Fitzrovia from 3.30pm to 7.30pm on Tuesday 13 September at the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX

Marylebone Area Forum: Monday 10 October 2011, from 6.30 to 8.30pm, at Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT. **West End Area Forum:** Monday 31 October 2011, from 6.30 to 8.30pm (venue tbc). Area forums provide an opportunity to talk to Westminster City Council officers and ward councillors. See: bit.ly/wccareaforums for more information.

Sleuths needed to solve mystery of historic pub's past

By GUY O'CONNELL

One of the most historic pubs in Fitzrovia is hunting clues to its past, after a chance discovery by builders. The King and Queen pub on Foley Street at the corner of Cleveland Street has been serving locals down the generations, and it's thought a tavern has been on the site since the 1700's.

It's known as a famous landmark in the history of Chartism - one of the first mass movements for working class people. Among those said to have attended Chartist Meetings at the pub was Karl Marx. In 1962 a young folk singer called Bob Dylan played in the same upstairs meeting room, in what's widely seen as his London debut.

FN editor and pub historian Mike Pentelow also says the pub was used as a library for working people in the early 19th Century. Over the last thirty years, the pub has been in the hands of one family who treasure its history. Bill and Rachel Lea took the pub over in 1985 and now it's in the hands of their son Colin.

Sitting at the bar, Colin Lea told FN of an unusual visit from a builder working nearby.

"The lads drink in here, and so I'd got to see them before, but a few days ago one of them passed over a photo. It's clearly

from around the 1950's or 60's and seems to show Cleveland Street was a two-way street back then."

The photo was found behind an old notice board and shows the signs of age and damage. "The builders are demolishing a big building nearby and that's where they found this photo. It has all the pub details on the back, although parts of the landlords' name are missing. The business card must have been used by past locals."

But if you look carefully at the old snapshot, you can make out the many doors used by drinkers. "There would have been one entrance for the snug, the saloon, and lounge and possibly for off sales too. But what we're now looking for is any photo of the old interior."

Colin is sure that the pub once sported a famous Victorian horseshoe-shaped bar, with wooden stalls and cubby holes for drinkers.

"We'd love to get our hands on any photos of the inside of our pub, and to find the names of all the past landlords." If you can help this detective mystery, please show up at the bar of this much-loved Free House and tell the barmen your tales over a pint or two.

If you're very convincing, the writers at FN will join you, in the interests of wider investigation.

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FITZROVIA GALL

The Frieze Gene

By CLIVE JENNINGS

There are now 37 galleries in Fitzrovia. The trickle of new commercial galleries that Fitzrovia News and Time Out wrote about in summer 2008 has become a tidal wave. At that time, we mentioned 8 new galleries that are still around. Added to the eight or so galleries that were already here in 2008, this makes an impressive 21 new galleries that have opened in the last three years. During the research for this article, in early August, two large new galleries have opened: Different in Percy Street and Twist in Great Titchfield Street.

Around 10 per cent of all London galleries are now locat-

ed in Fitzrovia, and Eastcastle Street and its environs are being heralded as the new Cork Street. This is like the art boom of Mayfair in the '60's and '70's, Portobello in the '80's and '90's, and the East End since the '90's. No doubt there will be more in the months to come and it is likely that property developers are monitoring the situation, as "money always follows art", as seen recently in Hoxton and Shoreditch. Also, many new art establishments have popped up in the immediate hinterland of Soho, Marylebone, Kings Cross and Bloomsbury.

Fitzrovia has many attractions for art galleries. Commercial property is relatively cheap, given its central location, and the exodus of the rag trade has left many desirable showroom spaces. The rich mix of companies specialising in advertising, architecture and design provide an existing arts hub and an appropriate and stimulating context for art. Many are also attracted by the impressive list of artists that lived or worked here: from Hogarth and Constable through Whistler and Sickert to John and The Bloomsbury Group, not forgetting the English Surrealists who met weekly at the Horseshoe Hotel on Tottenham Court Road, and more recently conceptual artist Cerith Wyn Evans.

Several galleries, including **Different (Percy Street)**, **Modern Art (Eastcastle Street)**, **Mummery+Schnelle (Great Titchfield Street)**, **Paradise Row (Newman Street)** and **Woolf (Charlotte Street)** moved to Fitzrovia from the East End. These are often operations that started quite modestly in Shoreditch or Bethnal Green and quickly built an international clientele. They discovered that these influential collectors were not prepared to traipse around vast expanses of East London, from their bases in West End hotels. The solution was to take the art to the collectors.

Other art dealers, seeing the proliferation of art in the area, have opened a second gallery here. **Lazarides**, now in **Rathbone Place**, known for Street Art and famously the first gallery to sell Banksy also trades in Soho; and **Whisper**, now in **Eastcastle Street**, a contemporary print specialist owned by Ronnie Wood's son Tyrone, has a sister gallery, **Scream**, in Mayfair. **Rebecca Hossack**, one of Fitzrovia's first gallerists in

the 1980's now has two galleries here, in **Charlotte Street** and **Conway Street**, and has recently expanded to New York. Increasingly, overseas galleries are choosing Fitzrovia to mount their bid for a slice of London's art action. The last six months has seen **Regina**, also in Moscow, open in **Eastcastle Street** and **Rosenfeld Porcini**, also in Naples, open in **Rathbone Street**. **Hanmi Gallery** who have a project space in Seoul, have been organising shows with local **Fitzrovia Noir** artists at their **Maple Street** space, prior to its renovation and official opening in 2012.

A major Fitzrovia factor with all the local galleries that I spoke to was proximity to Frieze Art Fair, and the opportunity to seduce collectors into visiting their spaces. The importance of Frieze Art Fair as a showcase for international excellence in contemporary art is enormous, and it is held on Fitzrovia's doorstep, in Regents Park for four days every October. Since it began in 2003, it has become one of the most respected art fairs in the world, attracting over 60,000 visitors. Galleries from Mexico to Hong Kong clamour to get in, as acceptance is seen as an acknowledgement of the quality of art on offer. 500 galleries from around the world have the temerity to apply for a booth at Frieze each year and around 150 are accepted. Of these only 26 are from the UK, and four are based in Fitzrovia, Alison Jacques, Modern Art, Pilar Corrias and Regina.

ART FAIRS

Art fairs have become an essential platform for galleries, especially at a time when galleries are openly competing with auction houses, that now account for around 50 per cent of art sales. Collectors love the convenience of the 'art mall' and go there for 'one stop shopping'. Fairs can account for a third of a gallery's business, often more, and some art dealers no longer consider a 'shop' necessary, leaving them free to concentrate on art fairs around the world. They range from small local affairs, such as The Affordable Art Fair, to major international showcases in New York, Dubai and Hong Kong. The right fairs give galleries and their artists credibility at a time when powers of personal connoisseurship are often wanting. Fairs open up new markets for artists, raise a



Zoe Paul "Back and Forth" (2010) mixed media (Cole)



Barry Reigate "Equation 1" (2011) Mixed media on linen (Paradise Row)

EVERY EXPLOSION

ration



Jennifer Kate McIntyre "Totem"
Lithograph (Curwen Gallery)

gallery's profile and draw new collectors to the gallery. Every gallery that I spoke to in Fitzrovia considered art fairs an essential part of their marketing strategy.

An exciting development on the Fitzrovia art scene is the number of new, often young, gallery owners showing work by talented artists, sometimes only a few years out of college. As artists "jump ship" to the next gallery up the food chain (or are sometimes poached) at increasingly early stages in their careers, it's become important to get in first. These galleries tend to be relatively modest spaces compared with large architect designed galleries such as Modern Art and Rosenfeld Porcini, but there are treasures to be found. **Tom Cole**, who set up shop in **Little Portland Street** in May 2010, visits degree shows, and most of his artists are aged 25 to 35. Having been an intern at Mummery+Schnelle and worked as a curator at Lisson Gallery for four years, he was attracted to the mix of existing galleries in Fitzrovia. He complements gallery exhibitions with art fairs as far afield as Rotterdam and Hong Kong.

Josh Lilley, who managed the now defunct Cass Sculpture Foundation Gallery on **Percy Street** in 2004, explained that, "I realised that the East End's time had been and gone, and that the centrality and charm of the location of Fitzrovia made it ideal. My grandfather was a successful wine merchant based in Fitzrovia since the '60's, and was the lover of Paula Rego for 15 years, so the area was familiar to me." His gallery in **Riding**



Stefanie Schneider "Max at Fence" (1999) Analog C-Print on aluminium (Rollo)

'An exciting development on the Fitzrovia art scene is the number of new, often young, gallery owners showing work by talented artists, sometimes only a few years out of college'

House Street shows emerging to mid career artists with a conceptual basis and a rigorous approach to medium, and has taken part in art fairs in Brussels, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and New York.

Rollo in **Charlotte Street** is the brainchild of curator Philippa Found and picture restorer Simon Gillespie, who operates from adjacent premises. Their focus is on women artists and they have a driving concern to redress the under-representation of women artists. Many of their artists are under 30. In contrast, they also represent Frank Bowling, Silver medalist to David Hockney's Gold at the Royal College of Art in 1962, and in 1987, the first living black artist to be purchased by the Tate Gallery. Rollo also find art fairs a useful platform, taking part in Pinta in New York and London.

Inevitably, in such a fluid business as art, several Fitzrovia galleries have gone, and I have counted eight that have either moved out or closed down since 2008. This has always been the case: **Karsten Schubert** who famously traded from **Charlotte Street** and later **Riding House Street** from 1986 to 1996, and was responsible for launching the careers of many YBA's including Gary Hume, Michael Landy and Rachel Whiteread, traded privately until his reappearance in Golden Square, Soho in 2007. **Curwen Gallery** moved to **Windmill Street** in February 1987, and is still going strong, making it the longest surviving gallery in Fitzrovia. (They occupy premises that were previously the home of the Ozzy Osbourne and Led Zeppelin Fan Clubs.) They still shows vibrant young art in their annual Northern Graduates

exhibition and, given her seniority, director Jill Hutchings should have the last word: "I didn't follow Frieze, Frieze followed me!"

A full list of Fitzrovia galleries appears on the back page.



"Untitled" by Manuel Sanmartin in window of Pollocks Toy Museum.

Intervention Art Trail

By CLIVE JENNINGS

Organised by local group of curators and artists, Fitzrovia Noir, this tantalising exhibition spanned around 25 business premises, from cafes to tailors, and one private house in March and April. Armed with one of the guide / maps, financed by Westminster Arts, art lovers were encouraged to seek out the works in various Fitzrovia locations. Even the official route became a work of art, as when viewed from above it takes on the shape of a stylised dog, his tail in the air.

The size, medium and positioning of the works varied enormously from Michael Mayhew's monumental sculptural addition, "Assemblage", to 23 Scala Street, that could be seen from a hundred metres away, to Manuel Sanmartin's small bright tondo that had to be sought out where they were cunningly displayed amongst the paper theatres in the window of Pollocks Toy Museum, also in Scala Street (pictured below). The sharp of eye discovered the elaborate miniature paintings of "Chewing Gum Man" Ben Wilson that embellished several of the thousands of black remnants of discarded gum that dot our streets.

Organised tours of the trail were well attended, including one for children from All Souls Primary School in Foley Street. Three out of four local businesses approached welcomed the idea of playing host to a work of art, and there was a very enthusiastic buzz about the trail. Quick Response codes on many of the pieces enabled viewers to read more about the works on their smart phones. It is planned to make it a regular event, with a trail in May/June 2012, to coincide with the Olympics, and then biannually, alternating with the established London Festival of Architecture.



Vaudeville medicine show comes to town

Two one-man bands joined forces to become Zarbo and launch their debut album at the King & Queen pub in Foley Street in July. Fronted by a vaudeville medicine show set-up they greatly impressed the audience in the pub's upstairs bar with the variety of sounds they could produce between just the two of them.

Andy Heath (left in picture) plays guitars, foot drums, kazoo, and harmonicas, while Paul Bishop (right) plays banjo, dobro, and foot percussion. All the songs on the album, called Zarbo, on the Tune Records label, are written by Andy. More details about them are on www.zarbo.co.uk.

Picture by Mark Thomas.

Fitzrovia Photography Prize "Within A Mile"

By CLIVE JENNINGS

Local gallery Diemar Noble Photography had the enterprising idea to invite photographers to submit photographs taken within a one mile radius of their Wells Street premises for the first Fitzrovia Photography Prize. Over 600 people, from as far away as Europe and the USA, rose to the challenge and submitted up to three images, of which 53 were selected for the exhibition that ran through August. Some entrants chose to provide an explanatory caption, while others let the picture tell the story, but the location of each photograph was plotted on a detailed map of the area.

The result was a fascinating window on the West End, with an enormous diversity of styles

and subjects from Fariha Karim's rubber clad revelers in the Harp pub, Chandos Place to Fiona Green's portrait of defiant looking homeless artist "Mary" posing outside the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, her hat set at a jaunty angle. Curators, Laura Noble and Eleanor Kelly explain, "Romance, apathy, absurdity, political unrest, comedy, national celebration and quiet moments of observation all compliment each other to present a genuine portrait of London life ... whereby everyday moments become breathtakingly, perceptible and extraordinary."

Winner Julian Wakeling received £750 worth of photographic equipment from exhibition sponsor John Lewis, Oxford Street, who were keen to back a project related to the local com-

munity. His dramatic and fleeting image is of an elegant woman, apparently deep in thought, her face enigmatically distorted by a reflection. Many of the photographs are taken on the actual pavements of Fitzrovia and beyond, and the theme echoes the increasing interest in 'street photography', works characterised by an element of chance - a fortunate encounter, a momentary juxtaposition - and also celebrated in a major exhibition at The Museum of London until 4 September.

The universal availability and economy of digital photography, from camera phones to more sophisticated equipment, has made photographers of us all. The true meaning of amateur as an enthusiast and lover is evident in many of the photographs, with around half by photographers with no training. Second prize winner Kayne Li Lui Sang's "Girl on Oxford Street" and Paula Smith's "Ladies with Matching Hair on a Night Out in London's West End" keep alive the spirit of Cartier Bresson and Doisneau, and are poignant social observations that reflect our times. This exhibition inspires us all to engage with the streets of Fitzrovia, and it is hoped by the organisers that it will become an annual event.



Fiona Green's photograph of Mary in the exhibition.

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The eccentric scientist who died in a squalid squat

By MIKE PENTELOW

An extraordinary eccentric scientist excelled in several fields, and also housed homeless alcoholics in his Little Titchfield Street flat before becoming homeless himself.

George Price (1922-1975) developed America's nuclear bomb, discovered an early detection technique for cancer, and created a computer design programme (which made billions for IBM instead of him because he did not patent it).

This was all before 1967 when he moved to London, by which time his interest had switched to the role of altruism in the evolution of animals and mankind.

Largely unknown until now, he is at last getting some recognition through a book published this year by Vintage called "The Price of Altruism" by Oren Harman, and a programme called "Human Kind" which was broadcast on Radio 4 on August 3.

He landed in London in November 1967 and rented a small room in Whitfield Street that was so cold he spent as much time as possible in Foyle's bookshop for warmth.

Luckily he was able to move into a much better flat in July, 1968. This was Flat 3 at 1a Little Titchfield Street, which had three bedrooms. It was above the butcher shop of Harry Thomas Harris at 41 Great Titchfield Street, which is now a delicatessen still bearing the name H T Harris.

More luck came George's way on September 24 of the same year when he got a job totally unexpectedly in the Department of Human Genetics at University College London (UCL).

"I have been working on a paper on mathematical genetics and evolution, and I obtained a mathematical result that looked very interesting, but it was so simple that I felt sure someone must have discovered it before," he wrote at the time.

So he went to UCL off the street without any appointment to check if it had. He was seen by a professor called Cedric



LEFT:
George Price in 1973.

RIGHT:
The building at 1a Little Titchfield Street where George lived from 1968 to 1973. He also lived at 45 Gordon Mansions, and in Whitfield Street.

BELOW:
The new book about George's extraordinary life and many achievements.

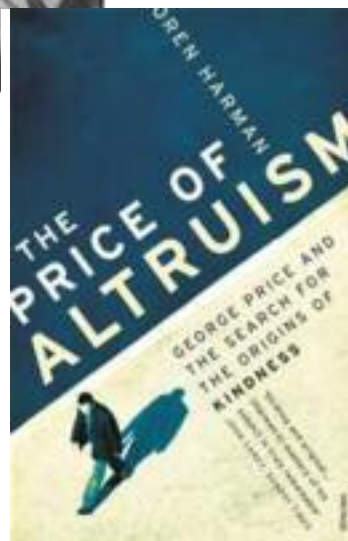
Austin Bardell Smith, known as CABS, a quirky Quaker, who, continued George, "said it was interesting, very pretty, and he had never seen anything like it before. He liked it so much that he took me to meet the department chair. Ninety minutes later I walked out with a room assigned to me, with keys, plus a request for my curriculum vitae so that they could make it official about giving me an honorary appointment."

The value of his work earned him grants from the Science Research Council for the rest of his short life.

He had been an atheist all his life, but a series of coincidences in 1970 made him think God was speaking to him. "It wasn't that I wanted to believe, but there wasn't any alternative," he explained. So he walked into a service at All Souls Church on June 14 and joined the next day.

Intense conversations he had with the rector, John Stott (who died in July 27 of this year, aged 90), became acrimonious when this zealous novice told the cleric how he was misreading the Bible. George even told him the church was using the wrong formula to decide when Easter fell.

Just before Christmas 1972 his Little Titchfield Street neigh-



bour Mr Wood found George collapsed on the stairway and rushed him to Middlesex Hospital, barely conscious. He had been eating very little and had stopped taking his thyroid medicine as a form of testing his faith. Dr Webb at the hospital noticed the deficiency in his thyroxine and administered it intravenously as George slept - so saving his life. The next month he was released and helped into a cab by Mr Wood back to his flat.

Shortly after this he had another vision in which Jesus whispered to him: "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back."

By March, 1973, he acted on this by giving money and food to vagrants in Soho Square and Euston station - and offering them free room and board.

He had as many as four staying at once, all alcoholics with criminal records, and gave them their own keys.

These included Peg Leg Pete, who had lost a limb clambering over a wall when pursued by police, and catching it on a hook, where he hung until they caught up with him.

Smoky was another hardened alcoholic (real name Trevor Russell) who had been in and



out of prison more than 30 times, and was barred from all London hostels. George described him as "tough and ready to fight any man of any size."

Another known as Aberdeen was an alcoholic with a mental hospital record, and a karate expert.

A boozy couple, Bernardo and Christina (or Chrissy), who later lived for a short time at 40 Fitzroy Street, were frequent visitors and stayed loyal to George to the end.

Considering he was putting up thieves, and heavy smokers who were drunk most of the time, it was lucky or providential nothing was stolen or any fires took place. "I told myself that if I was obeying Jesus, he would protect me against serious harm," wrote George. His neighbours were not happy about the goings on, however, but accepted George's gentle explanations. Rev R F H Howarth from All Souls advised him that giving money to down-and-outs "is seldom more than an easy way out for ourselves."

The lease on the flat ended on June 24, 1973, and rather than renew it George chose to renounce all personal property and become homeless. Just before Christmas 1973 he visited 102 Drummond Street (headquarters of the Tolmers Square squat) to ask for a bath, and was offered a room to stay. But when Peg Leg Pete joined him and acted violently George left the squat and slept rough for a while.

By March 1974 he was taken in by an old lady at 45 Gordon Mansions in Huntley Street.

He became besotted by a fellow American, the 25-year-old print artist, Sylvia Stevens, who had opened a gallery called "Artists for Democracy" in Whitfield Street, lived at 68 Warren Street, and set up a squat studio at 19 Tolmers Square.

George had moved into another squat at 164 Drummond Street when Sylvia rejected his proposal of marriage. He was also feeling depressed that his acts of altruism had not changed anybody or the world, and his studies in animal and human evolution had only found altruism that was also self-serving in one form or another.

He stabbed himself to death in the neck with some sharp tailor's scissors on the night of January 5, 1975. Only 11 people, a strange mixture of distinguished academics and vagrants (including Smoky, Bernardo and Chrissy), attended his funeral at St Pancras Cemetery on January 22, 1975, before he was buried there in an unmarked grave.

Not long after the building George was squatting in when he died was demolished by speculators. But just before they did one of his academic friends, Bill Hamilton, visited it and, amid the squalor, rescued many of George's papers, including "The Nature of Selection" and some material on genetics, some of which were published posthumously and the rest preserved in the British Library.

Poetry

The Chemical Man

When you look at the mess you call a life.
And there see death as your only friend.
You must realise you've pissed off all of your family and everyone else you once called friend.
You were such a bright and beautiful child, Johny G.
Now all you can say is c'est la sodding vie!!!?
Shuffle off!

John Theodor Fisher

Strictly acrobatic dancing

By BRIAN JARMAN

You may, like me, recall black and white pictures of her at the London Palladium (younger readers can check her out on Youtube): they used to spin her like a top, skip with her like a rope, and throw her across the stage. Sometimes off it.

It was like a trapeze act without the trapeze. Or ice skating without skates or ice.

It's a style of acrobatic dance called Adagio. It can still make you gasp.

So my first question when I meet Merian Ganjou in her Gosfield Street flat is 'How on earth do you get into something like that in the first place?'

'I always wanted to be a ballerina,' she says. 'I was also a daredevil, climbing trees with the boys. But when you're 15 the Royal Ballet measure you from toe to knee, knee to hip and so on, and they told me I'd never be right for the corps de ballet.'

But she was determined to

'Almost from the word go it seemed as if the sex and the aggression of the act were right for the time.'

be a dancer, so she became a chorus girl instead.

'But I was that much smaller and had difficulty keeping my legs up with the other girls.'

Then in the mid 1950s someone suggested she try out for a new adagio act being put together by Bob Ganjou, of the Ganjou Brothers whose family had fled the Russian revolution.

She got the job. It would be her and three men. She was 17 and five feet one and three-quarter inches (five feet two inches after her stretching exercises). They spent a year in a rehearsal room while Bob – whom she would go on to marry – taught them the mechanics of the adagio.

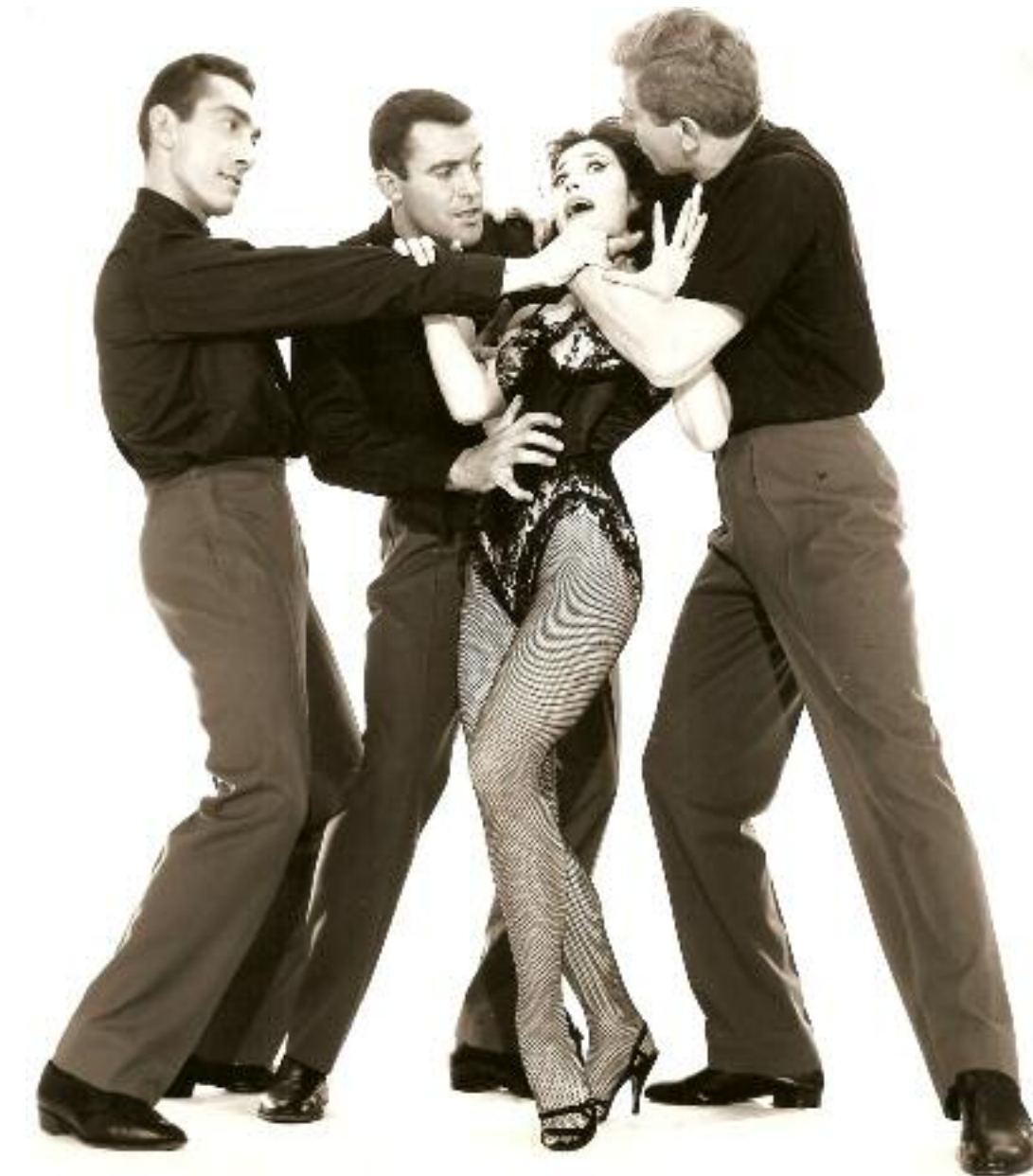
'I married my catcher,' she says.

STUNNING ROUTINES

They started simply at first, but soon built up some stunning routines. Every single move was planned in time to the music. They emerged as the Dior Dancers.

They then almost pushed their way into theatres, saying they would work for nothing. But offers of work soon came pouring in.

'Almost from the word go it



Merian Ganjou with the rest of the Dior Dancers at the height of their fame

seemed as if the sex and the aggression of the act were right for the time,' says Merian. 'Word got around very quickly.'

There's one clip of her being thrown into the wings at the Palladium. The catcher had sneaked off stage and was waiting to catch her.

There soon came an invitation from the Ed Sullivan Show, then the top-rated entertainment programme on American TV. It

Sullivan was announcing the act and the music started, one of the shoulder straps of Merian's costume broke.

There was nothing for it but to go on. Merian tried to hold the strap in her teeth, but it didn't work. The audience could see more than her tush.

'We got loads of work after that,' she says.

The Dior Dancers did shows in Paris, and spent three years

hard, she says, to lead a normal life.

'When Greg was getting up at six o'clock I'd be going to bed. I hardly ever saw him.'

After twenty years in the act, Merian left to devote her time to motherhood.

In that time there had been minor mishaps but only one serious injury.

VERY HOT NIGHT

'It was a very hot night at the London Palladium,' she says. 'I slipped out of my thrower's hands, landed on my head and lost consciousness. The curtain had to come down.'

'I must have a head like cast-iron. The next night I went back on stage, otherwise I might never have gone back.'

But she never suffered from stage fright and was at her happiest when she was dancing.

Merian settled in Barnes and



Merion is Queen of the Lady Ratlings charity this year.

was soon back on stage dancing for the Barnes and Richmond Operatic Society, where her present partner Ian Calder was a tenor.

In 1996 she joined the entertainers' charity the Grand Order of Lady Ratlings, the sister organisation of the Water Rats, and this year is Queen Ratling.

This involves organising lunches and balls, but the Lady Ratlings are unusual in that they don't donate money to charities. They buy equipment themselves – such as wheelchairs for the disabled rugby club West Coast Crash or for wounded soldiers from Afghanistan – so as to cut down on bureaucracy.

FITNESS

And Merian's fitness still comes in handy. She's been preparing for a charity run around Hyde Park.

'I go to the gym to keep fit,' she says. 'I've never lost my muscle. When you're doing that kind of dancing you're constantly lifting your own weight – it's a constant work out.'

For the past five years she's lived in Gosfield Street and loves been in the thick of things, and close to the theatres which she still loves.

And although the old variety shows have died out, she's pleased to see the popularity of programmes such as Strictly Come Dancing.

'I'm sitting there spurring them on all the time,' she says. 'I know what they're going through.'



Princess Anne meets Merion in the course of her charity work.

went out live in prime time.

'I wore the skimpiest of costumes, and when the wardrobe people saw it they were horrified,' says Merian. 'They said honey, you're showing your tush, and sowed these frills around the bottom of the costume. But that was even worse, because it used to ride up.'

Not only that, just as Ed

appearing in Las Vegas. She got to know the famous rat pack – Sammy Davis Jr, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. She and Bob got married between shows at the Folies Bergere – they would do two every day and three on a Saturday.

But she didn't particularly like Las Vegas, especially after the birth of her son Greg. It was

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A machine to make heads turn

A short story by
SUNITA SOLIAR

‘The frame’s come loose,’ Hannah says. It’s her washboard. Last time the crank was stuck on the box mangle.

‘Let’s see when we can take a look,’ John Ward says. He places his palms on his thighs as he searches under the counter for the appointment book, then he goes into the back office to look for it.

The bell announces James Greenacre, a man with a shifting movement of his eyes and hands so that he appears to have always just vacated the spot where he stands. He looks around the store like he might set it on fire then stands beside Hannah. She catches his eye then turns away: for a woman as plain as her such contact seems presumptuous. His gaze rests on her scrubber’s fingers, fidgeting as though anxious to get back to work. The skin around one of her knuckles splits.

He says, ‘One day you won’t have to do that anymore. There’ll be a machine that does it for you.’

‘Go on!’ There’s a hint of daring in her voice but she fidgets under this man’s attention.

‘It’s true.’

‘How do you know?’

‘Because I’m going to invent it. Imagine never scrubbing clothes again.’

‘It would send me to the poorhouse.’ The air gripes, and Hannah is embarrassed. It isn’t quite true: since her husband died she works because she would not be dependent on her brother again. She’s proud of her self-sufficiency and as this good-looking man looks at her hands she needs him to know, to impress him.

‘It’s not as bad as that,’ she says. ‘I have something put by.’



Illustration by CLIFFORD HARPER

He turns his body towards her now. ‘Have you?’

‘I’m good for a few pounds in the bank.’ She presses her fingers against the counter to steady herself: she can’t remember when she last spoke to a man – not since her husband.

John Ward emerges with the book, and looks with displeasure at Greenacre. ‘I already told you,’ he says. ‘I’m not giving you a penny.’

‘My machine will make heads turn.’

‘Roll, more like. Do you even have any plans?’

‘I’ve a model.’

‘Let’s see it then.’

‘It isn’t finished.’

‘All in your mind.’ He turns back to Hannah. ‘Friday’s the

best I can do.’

A small spanner lies at the other end of the counter. James slides towards it and slips it into his pocket – he takes delight in these petty thefts. As Hannah reaches the door he opens it for her. He says, ‘I don’t suppose you have time for tea?’

Through the clatter of cups and saucers he tells her that his father was an alcoholic, who used to beat him and who ended up in a debtors’ prison. It isn’t true but he enjoys his creativity, spinning out her interest – she’s no strapper but he sees something in her that he can work with: her resourcefulness. For a moment he imagines her split knuckles grated bloody against the washboard.

‘I’d best get back to work,’ she says, taking care to smooth down her dress. It makes her blush.

‘No rest for the wicked.’

‘I have to keep myself.’ An offer ripple through her words – she could invest in him, invest in the possibility of not dying alone.

He says, ‘I’d like to see you again.’

He’s been living with her in the basement of Union Street for two months and they’re due to be married next week. He’s altogether given up his work as a cabinet-maker, and they live on the washing she takes in, while he sits day in, day out, at his model. He hears the rubbery sound of her plunging clothes into the tub and running them over the washboard. For twelve hours a day, it’s rub, rub, rub, until he can hear nothing but the robotic movement of her arms. She tries to hang out washing around him and knocks one of

‘He must stop the sound of those hands, those automatic, iron-strong hands’

his papers to the floor.

‘I’m working,’ he snaps, the parts of his model lying in a turbulent scatter around him – he dismembered it in a rage: it’s the electric shocks – he can’t work out how to stop the user from getting electrocuted.

Hannah stretches over him to the washing line. ‘You’re not the only one working,’ she says. ‘Perhaps you could go out for a bit? Just until I’m finished.’

He slaps down his papers. ‘Can’t you see I’m in the middle of something?’

She steps around him. ‘You never stay in on Saturdays. You never come back until Sunday night. Where do you go?’

He thumps his fist. She doesn’t know about Sarah. So many times he’s thought about leaving Hannah, packing it all in and running off with Sarah. But Sarah couldn’t support him.

Hannah pegs up a petticoat. ‘All you do is hunch over that

thing.’ Her hand hesitates on the line. She says, ‘I heard you went to the bank to check on me.’

He folds his arms, shutting down any sense of an apology. ‘It turns out you don’t have quite as much as you said.’

She fidgets with her skirt. ‘I was sick for a year.’

‘You misled me into our engagement.’

‘And I’ve got so much out of that! Can’t you get out from under my feet?’ She goes back to her washboard and the see-sawing sound of it starts up again, wringing out his mind so that the plan in front of him starts to swirl and dance.

‘Stop that,’ he says.

‘Someone has to work around here.’

‘Just cut it out!’

But she scrubs on and sparks of shock constrict him, and always the woman scrubbing until he jerks himself to standing, a spanner still in his hand. He must stop the sound of those hands, those automatic, iron-strong hands.

She sees him come into the room. ‘I’m sorry I lied to you,’ she says. But I’ve given you what I have. You do still want to marry me, don’t you? He comes closer to her, and panic leaps into her voice. ‘James?’

He strikes out with the spanner until she is silent and slumps to the floor. When she is still he can breathe again. There’s no movement in that nagging mouth. But it’s her fingers that wrest him – he’s sure he sees them twitch. Always those hands taking away his dream so that even now she won’t let him alone. He must cut the sound of their industriousness from his brain. As he sets to work, the rain screams against the windowpanes, and the wind starts up, scattering litter across the streets. He doesn’t hear any of it because he is consumed by this new work. And later, he and Sarah will hide the evidence; he’ll pretend it was an accident. Yes, he can see it all now – he and Sarah will go to America and there he will find investors. His machine will become real, and as he dreams, the hangman’s noose readies in the distance.

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250 years of rioting

By MIKE PENTELOW

The recent rioting and looting in the area are the latest examples in a history going back nearly 250 years.

In 1763 riots were prompted by the jailing for seditious libel of people's champion John Wilkes (1727-1797), who was later MP for Middlesex (covering Fitzrovia). Wilkes had criticised the peace terms with France in issue number 45 of the journal *North Briton*, which was seen as critical of the king and government. When parliament ordered all copies of the article be burned by the public hangman, the crowds prevented him and pelted him with rubbish, shouting "Wilkes, Liberty and Number 45." After a few days' rioting Wilkes was released from the Tower.

RAMPAGED

He was popular for being among the first MPs to call for votes for all male adults. In order to get elected however he had to canvas the support of the few with the property qualifications that entitled them to vote. The Green Man tavern (called the Farthing Pie House in those days) opposite what is now Great Portland Street station was where he frequently electioneered (washing down mutton pies with claret).

In June 1780 the anti-Catholic Gordon Rioters mustered in Tottenham Court Road and rampaged the surrounding area. The riots were directed by Lord George Gordon (1751-1793) from nearby Welbeck Street and



his home at 64 Wigmore Street. He mobilised 60,000 to protest against the Catholic Relief Act. They attacked Catholic chapels, shops and taverns over five days, and when they targeted the Bank of England 10,000 troops were brought in, killing 200 rioters, and arresting 450, of whom 25 were hanged.

One of those sentenced to death was a public hangman! Edward Dennis was however granted a pardon "in order that he may hang his brother rioters."

The introduction of the Corn Laws in 1815 pushed up the price of basic food to benefit large agricultural landowners. This provoked serious rioting by the poor, who mobbed the home of one member of the landed gentry, Sir Joseph Banks at 32 Soho Square.

A banker was the next target in 1824 - Henry Fauntleroy, owner of the Berners Street Bank, at 6 Berners Street, who lived with his mother, Elizabeth, at number 7. When a large

building speculator went bust owing the bank £60,000 Fauntleroy resorted to fraud to prevent the bank collapsing. He forged customers' signatures to sell their stocks and shares. When dividends became due to customers or they wished to sell them, he fraudulently sold more to pay for them. His embezzlement was finally revealed when a customer who owned £40,000 worth of shares died without warning, so Fauntleroy did not have time to replace them before the executors of the will discovered the shortfall.

He was arrested and the bank's transactions were immediately suspended, ruining many local traders who had invested their life savings in the bank. As they massed around the bank, vainly demanding their money, the police were brought in to disperse the developing riot.

In those days they executed bankers who ripped off the public, and Fauntleroy was hanged

before a crowd of 100,000 on November 30, 1824. The crowds took off their hats, not out of respect, but so those behind could get a better view.

In 1833 another riot developed when police broke up a demonstration by the National Union of Working Classes, which was demanding votes for all. The police attack was resisted and in the armed battle that followed a police constable was fatally stabbed. One of those arrested was a carpenter called James Hutchinson, who lived at 1 Tudor Place (an alley that existed off Tottenham Court Road between numbers 19 and 20). Because anti-police feeling was so high all charges were dropped against Hutchinson, those accused of the stabbing were acquitted, and the inquest returned a verdict of justifiable homicide.

REPRESSED

When the Chartists' call for universal suffrage was ruthlessly repressed by the government, riots spread in the north. Troops, despatched with bayonets to crush them, were marching up Tottenham Court Road to Euston station on August 13, 1842 when they were surrounded by taunting crowds, jeering and shouting: "Remember you are brothers." When they reached Euston Square the order was given to fix bayonets, and they needed the assistance of the police to stop the crowd ripping up the railway line.

More riots in Tottenham Court Road followed on July 27, 1848, protesting against the sus-

pension of Habeas Corpus in Ireland to allow detention without trial. Large detachments of police armed with cutlasses were needed to break them up.

Several jewellers' shops were looted in Oxford Street on February 8, 1886 following a meeting of the unemployed in Trafalgar Square. It was called by the Fair Trade League, campaigning for import tariffs to alleviate unemployment by creating jobs at home. It was addressed by leaders of the revolutionary Social Democratic Federation, including H M Hyndman and John Burns. Burns, had warned that west end bakers would be looted to feed the hungry jobless. When members of gentlemen's clubs threw boots and polish brushes at them, they returned fire with stones and lumps of metal before going on the rampage. It was not until they reached Oxford Street that they were confronted by a small number of police. Shopkeepers closed their premises to prevent further damage. In November of the same year, as the unemployed camped in nearby parks, more bloody riots erupted in Oxford Street.

Margaret Thatcher's unpopular Poll Tax (or Community Charge as it was officially called) led to more riots, coming to a head on March 31, 1990, with Oxford Street again suffering from looting and cars being overturned. They also spread up Tottenham Court Road and into Goodge Street where shops were damaged. The offending tax was rapidly dropped by the government.

John and Jack, the singing Fitzrovians

By JESS OWENS

As the Free and Easies of the 1830's became transformed into the Concert Rooms of the 1840's, two Fitzrovians played a significant role in the consequent development of popular music.

John Labern was the son of a Warren Street fruitmonger, who may also have let lodgings. He quickly assimilated the literacy of the working class radical culture that surrounded him. This part of Fitzrovia was a cosmopolitan area, with radicals and their effusions in abundance.

The first clue we get to his prominence is a series of songs appearing in TP Prest's *London Singers Magazine*. This was a periodical that presented the work of London's leading songwriters of the late 1830's. For several numbers his work merited an illustration on the title page, implying that it was the 'hit' of the moment.

Labern's forte was the 'topical' song, where the issues of the day were alluded to in a humorous way. This was wholly against the grain of 'legitimate

performance' at the time, as the stage was heavily censored by the Lord Chamberlain's office. But it suited the halls such as Evans or the Cider Cellars which were becoming a focus of the entertainment industry in London. In some respects, Labern's work bridged the gap between the ballad sellers and patters and the early halls. His Catalini Joe; The Ballad Monger was widely pirated, as was his *Literary Dustman*.

He remained a regular performer around Fitzrovia and its surrounding areas, and by 1838 had enough confidence in his 'prospects' to marry a fellow singer, Susanna. Their names were familiar to Charles Rice who met them in April 1840 in a Great Portland Street pub and described Labern as a comic song writer and a "clever and agreeable fellow."

Building on his renown, Labern's first Songbook was printed in 1842 by Henry Youd of 62a Tottenham Court Road. Youd, almost certainly the son of a dockyard worker born in 1817, opened his business in a

building adjacent to the Rose and Crown pub in 1841. He was soon printing playbills for benefits at the Tottenham Street Theatre (later called the Scala). It may have been through this connection that Labern came into contact with JW 'Jacky' Sharp.

Jack Sharp was a singer who supplemented his earnings as a theatrical 'supernumerary' by moonlighting as a concert singer in the vicinity of whichever place he was working. In the 1840's he became a 'property man' at the Queens Theatre, Tottenham Court Road.

While working at the Swan in Hungerford Market Sharp "employed the talent of John Labern, a clever comic song writer".

Shortly afterwards they lived in the same building and legend later suggested that Sharp, on his return from a singing engagement would slip a suggestion for a 'topical' song under Labern's door on his return home, then collect the new lyric, on his way to the next performance.

The partnership proved

fruitful and Sharp was recruited by the proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens in an attempt to revive its fortunes in the mid 1840's. He opened the new season there in May 1845, including in his performance, a song from Labern's pen. By 1848 they had become an established partnership. At a dinner organised by the licensed Victuallers Association that year, Sharp "introduced a new comic song, written for the occasion by J. Labern, Esq., called 'The Licensed Victuallers' Joys,' which was loudly applauded." His turn was followed by a 'company of equestrians.

By the turn of the decade, Jack Sharp appears to have been encountering problems with the over-availability of alcohol at his places of work. Rice records that at a pub performance in 1850 he was forgetting the words to his songs.

Charles Morton described him as one of the funniest fellows that ever appeared on any stage. But towards the end he needed to add 'to his small weekly allowance of lucre and liquor by selling personally in



John Labern



Jack Sharp

the hall, manuscript copies of his most popular songs. Poor 'Jack Sharp drifted into becoming a 'tramp' comic singer, making a collection in this or that tavern bar, ... finally he...drifted into the Dover Workhouse, where he died in January, 1856, aged thirty-eight.'

Two years later Labern and his wife opened a newsagents' shop on the 'New' Euston Road, just around the corner from where he had grown up. He ran it until his death in 1881.

Boxing star burned out at 17

All the talk in the Fitzroy Tavern in 1928 was about a 15-year-old professional boxer from Marylebone called "Nipper" Pat Daly.

He had won his first two professional fights in Marylebone and Euston as a mere 10-year-old. All the boxing press were convinced he was destined to be a world champion. Yet his career ended at the age of just 17.

One of his greatest fans was Fitzroy Tavern regular Nina Hamnett, a bohemian artist, who watched him training in Marylebone Road and fighting in Camden Town. She recalled in her memoirs: "Nipper Pat Daly was then in his prime. He was a funny little boy of fifteen and a half, and a very fine boxer. If ever there should have been a champion it ought to have been Nipper. But that is another story..."

That "other story" was that he was ruthlessly exploited by his manager and trainer, Andrew Newton, and literally burned out before he had a chance to challenge for a title.

At the age of 16 he fought 33 matches in a year, often with a

By MIKE PENTELOW

week or less in between, and a total of 120 in his seven-year career (winning 99, losing 11, drawing 8, with 2 no decisions).

He was also prevented from growing naturally in order to compete in lower weight divisions. This meant he frequently fought in a weakened state because he was forced to starve and exercise just before a fight to make the weight.

His duties also included menial work in the gym, such as window cleaning which once led to him cutting his finger and turning it septic, as well as acting as secretary to his manager.

And after all that he learned that this same manager was keeping back a large percentage of Pat's earnings on top of his agreed cut.

No wonder he decided to split from his manager and take a break from the sport, which proved to be permanent.

He then had a series of jobs, from building a boxing stadium, to being a dairy horse groom, making aircraft parts, briefly

being a wrestler, running an Irish dance hall like the Blarney Club in Tottenham Court Road in the mid-1950s (which he went to before opening his own club), and finally being a cleaner at the Daily Mirror in 1960. He seemed to enjoy many of these jobs and resisted being bitter about what might have been, and gave back more than he had taken from the sport by training youngsters.

His grandson Alex Daley (Nipper's real name was spelled Daley but on boxing bills it was spelled Daly) has recorded his life in a new book called "Nipper, The Amazing Story of Boxing's Wonderboy" (published by TPD Associates).

It is a damning indictment of how the sport was run in those days and how it destroyed so much talent and so many lives. Many were destined to be punch drunk homeless down-and-outs.

One shameful statistic is that in 1965 five of the ten surviving fly and bantam weight champions between the two world wars had ended up in mental institutions (including Nipper in Hastings, aged 75, in 1988).



Young "Nipper" Pat Daly sparring with his exploitative manager

Hooked on carb dealers

If you are really what you eat, then I am cheap, quirky and easy. I am making a mental note to add to this to my online dating profile.

I spent five years buying my lunch in Fitzrovia and most of those were not in restaurants, rather at little holes in the wall, that worryingly gave me something to look forward to all morning long – carbs!

I will never forget my first working day in Fitzrovia. I was so nervous I found a little sandwich shop in Tottenham Street to sit down in, until I got up the nerve to walk into my new office...even though I would then proceed to lock myself in the ladies room in the building's reception.

When I walked in the lady was so welcoming I felt compelled to order something (it had nothing to do with the wonderfully greasy sausages shining in the counter display, or the piles of fresh sandwich fillings, that I would soon learn were a



By SALLY BEERWORTH

very good cure for Mondayitis...or Tuesdayitis. And so it was that I ordered my first bacon & chicken sandwich on white bread (happily with loads of butter) from Matteos. Worryingly I remember it like it was yesterday.

On a cold day in London (so quiet often) I would have only one craving and that was for lasagna. I have consumed so much of the stuff in my life, my younger brother once referred to me as 'Garfield'...or it may just have been in reference to my ample belly. The only place in the world that I would tell anyone to buy the stuff from is a Café Uno – my lasagna dealer of choice.

I had walked past the place every day for 3 years, before I finally went in. My hesitation was in part that there was always a queue at lunchtime...and breakfast time. But the real reason for my hesitation was that there was often Italian football blearing from inside, and football paraphernalia on the walls...as a foreigner it had taken me long enough to get used to English football, and so Italian football was a bit too much to deal with.

Putting my fear of ball sports aside proved to be one of my better culinary decisions - as I now had a dealer for the best lasagna around. When I had an inkling for something 'lighter' I would line up for their Parma ham, cheese, lettuce and tomato sandwich on the freshest bread you'll find in London. I didn't even mind the queuing for them- it was like foreplay.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention 'burrito man' – or that's what I call the guy who runs one of the local food stalls. Day after day I would see (smell) people walking around with foil wrapped burritos that were bigger than my head...and God was generous with my build. Not surprisingly it wasn't long before I decided to follow the wonderful smell towards the little cluster of food stalls next to Oxfam on Goodge Street. Ordering a burrito from there has the benefit of knowing that you won't need to have dinner later...or breakfast the next day.

Perhaps the best thing about all my favourite carb dealers is that they can all hook you up for not a lot of money. This is perfect for me, as I often had my mind on what I would order the next day!

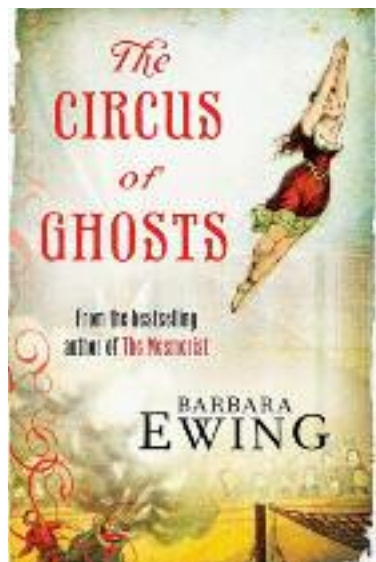


Sunny start for new novel

Actress and novelist Barbara Ewing (above) was drenched in sunshine rather than a monsoon when she launched her latest book "The Circus of Ghosts" in Fitzroy Square in August.

It is a sequel to "The Mesmerist" - the launch of which was drowned out in the square two years ago by an exceptionally heavy rainstorm, the noise of which on the roof of the marquee prevented anyone hearing Barbara's attempt to read extracts from the book.

The latest novel, the eighth by Barbara who has lived in Fitzrovia for over 40 years, is set in New York in the 1840s. It took her three years to research and write. She spoke of "the extraordinary energy in New York" when she visited it, and how in the 19th century it had "no history, no class systems (they were



developed later), just new ideas."

More about her and the book (published by Sphere) can be found on www.barbaraewing.com.

Artists and witches

Local artist Andrew Patterson was commended in the BP Portrait Award and received a £1,000 prize. His work, entitled Separation, was displayed in the National Portrait Gallery throughout the summer. He lived and taught in the area, as well as being the resident artist at the Clubhouse in Cleveland Street, producing banners, Christmas cards, and illustrations.

White Witchcraft was the subject of a talk given by the Fitzrovia History Group at the neighbourhood centre on the night of the Autumn Equinox.

Fitzroy Square Garden was opened to the festival for the

Ten years ago

first time. It was a great success with a Brazilian rhythm band, a Bengali dance group, Afro-Caribbean drummers, a Greek dance group, a traditional Irish group, a jazz band, and a Caribbean steel orchestra. Sadly the lottery Sports & Arts Development Fund announced it was discontinuing its funding for the event in future.

At the neighbourhood centre Dave Ferris and Nicky Charalambous moved on to be replaced by Dick Muskett and Lorna Reid.

Fitzrovia News, September 2001.

WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email fitzrovianews@yahoo.co.uk and put "Listings" in the subject box by Nov 18 for the December 2011 issue.

ART GALLERIES

Alison Jacques Gallery, 18 Berners St (www.alisonjacques-gallery.com): Sep 9 to Oct 8 - Dan Fischer. Oct 12 to Nov 19 - Paul Morrison

Arch One, 12 Percy St (www.archonepictureframing.co.uk): Ongoing - various artists

Art First, 21 Eastcastle Street (www.artfirst.co.uk): Sep 8 to Oct 8 - Eileen Cooper (Showing Off) & Jenny Wiener (Four Cardinal Virtues). Oct 13 to Nov 12 - Kevin Laycock (Collision) & Liane Lang & Rasha Kahil
Nov 16 to 20 Dec - Donald Teskey

Arup Phase 1, 8 Fitzroy Street (www.arup.com): To Sep 30 - student competition (Stories of Change). Oct 14 to Jan 20 - Fritz Haeg: Animal Estates, London

Building Centre, Store Street (www.buildingcentre.co.uk): Sep 10 to Oct 8 - (Engineering Sketches): Oct 9 to 29 - (PCKO 30 Years). Nov 5 to Dec 3 - (Urban SOS).

Cole, 3-4a Little Portland Street (www.colecontemporary.com): Sep 7 to Oct 1 - Stuart Middleton (Tankini). Oct 8 to Nov 5 - Zoe Paul.

Contemporary Applied Arts, 2 Percy Street (www.caa.org.uk): Artists in ceramics, furniture, glass and jewellery change monthly.

Coningsby Gallery / Debut Art, 30 Tottenham St (www.coningsby-gallery.com): Sep 12 to 24 - Viktor Koen (Alphabets & Steampunk). Oct 24 to Nov 4 - Serge Seidlitz (Serge v Spaceship Earth). Nov 21 to Dec 3 - Guy Reid (Little Me)

Curwen Gallery, 34 Windmill St (www.curwengallery.com): Sep 9 to 24 - Rebecca Hind & Victoria Langdon. Oct 6 to 29 - Richard Walker. Nov 3 to 23 - Alison Neville. Dec 1 to 23 - Christmas exhibition.

David Roberts Foundation, 111 Great Titchfield St (www.davidrobertsfoundation.com): Sep 2 to 17 - Fig.2 and Fig.3. Sep 30 to Dec 17 - Miriam Cahn.

Diemar / Noble Photographic Gallery, 66-67 Wells Street (diemarnoblephotography.com): To Oct 1 - Berenice Abbott & others (Land / City / Real / Imagined).

Gallery Different, 14 Percy St (www.gallerydifferent.co.uk): Group Show.

Exposure, 22-23 Little Portland Street (www.exposure.net): Ben Gold (A Journey through Trees) Paul Cummings.

Framers Gallery, 36 Windmill St (www.theframersgallery.co.uk): Check website for details.

Gallery at 94, 94 Cleveland Street (www.gallery@94.com): From Aug 2 - various artists (My Best Three).

Getty Images Gallery, 46



John Hegley in reflective mood at the Bloomsbury Theatre on October 6.

Eastcastle Street (www.gettyimagesgallery.com): Sep 12 to Oct 15 - various (The Nikon NCPI Competition).

Josh Lilley, 44-46 Riding House St (www.joshlilleygallery.com): Sep 9 to Oct 20 - Christoff Mascher.

Hanmi Gallery, 30 Maple Street (www.hanmigallery.co.uk): To Sep 10 - Radhika Agarwala, Luna Jung-eun Lee, Soheila Sokhanvari (Who do You Think We Are?).

Ladiray Gallery, 74 Wells Street (www.ladiraygallery.com): Through Sep - Emilie Satre (Erratic Patterns).

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

Lazarides Gallery, 11 Rathbone Place (www.lazinc.com): Sep 9 to Oct 10 - Antony Micallef (Happy Deep Inside my Heart).

Modern Art, 23-25 Eastcastle Street (www.modernart.net): Sep 9 to Oct 1 - Tom Burr & Willem Oorebeek. Oct 12 to Nov 19 - Richard Tuttle. Nov 25 to Dec 21 - Paul Lee

Mummery+Schnelle, 83 Great Titchfield St (www.mummeryschnelle.com): Sep 14 to Oct 29 - Luigi Ghirri (Project Prints). Nov 10 to Dec 17 - Paul Cafell.

National Print Gallery, 8b Conway St (www.nationalprint-gallery.com): Contemporary Prints, by appointment.

NL Pop Up Space, 40-42 Riding House St (www.nlpopup.co.uk): Oct - Maaike Sehoorel.

Paradise Row, 74 Newman Street (www.paradiserow.com): Sep 9 to Oct 8 - Barry Reigate. Oct 11 to Nov 12 - Douglas White. Nov 18 to Dec 23 - Margarita Gluzberg

Pilar Corrias, 54 Eastcastle Street (www.pilarcorrias.com): Sep 9 to Oct 7 - Elizabeth Neel (Sphinx Ditch). Oct 12 to Nov 11 - Charles Avery (Place de la Revolution).

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (1), 2a Conway St (www.r-h-g.co.uk): Sep 1 to Oct 1 - Alexander McKenzie & Emma Allcock. 6 October to 29 October - David Whitaker.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (2) 28 Charlotte St (www.r-h-g.co.uk):

Sep 1 to Sep 24 - Kate Jenkins (Crochet Market). Oct 6 to Oct 29 - Andrew Mockett. Nov 4 to Dec 3 - David Farrer (Holy Cow)

Regina Gallery, 22 Eastcastle Street (www.reginagallery.com): Sep 9 to Oct 6 - various artists (NUTS).

Rollo Gallery, 51 Cleveland Street (rolloart.com): Sep 13 to Nov 4 - Gallery Artists (New Work). Nov 26 to Jan 6 - Helen Carmel Benigson, Miri Segal, Anne-Marie Scleiner (The Body in Womens' Art Part 3).

Rosenfeld Porcini, 37 Rathbone St (www.rosenfeldporcini.com): Group sculpture show (Memory).

Store Street Gallery, 32 Store St (www.storestreetgallery.com): Sep 19 to Nov 6 - Gemma Appleby and Terry Watts (Outside In).

Twist Gallery, 67a Great Titchfield St (www.twistgallery.co.uk): To Sep 31 - Alexander Baynes (Taboo).

Gallery Vela, 8 Langham Street (www.galleryvela.com): Through Sep - Jamie Shovlin & others (Like Rowing a Boat; Facing the Way Cou Came).

Whisper, 27-28 Eastcastle St (www.whisperfineart.co.uk): Sep 16 to Oct 8 - Nick Gentry (New Work).

Woolff Gallery, 89 Charlotte St (www.woolffgallery.co.uk): Oct - Valeria Nascimento.

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St (www.thebloomsbury.com): Sep 12 - Sona Jobarteh. Sep 13 - Ola Onabule. Sep 14-17 - Opera Siam. Sep 25 - Show Me the Funny Live. Sep 28 - Liam Scott Presents a Night of Clairvoyance. Oct 1 - Being the Change. Oct 4-15 - Horrible Histories. Oct 6 - John Hegley. Oct 19 - Live Canon. Oct 20 - Doc Brown Unfamous. Oct 21 - Isy Suttie: Pearl and Dave.

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (www.cultura.embavenez-uk.org): Sep 8-10 - Love and Terror in the Wind, a Venezuelan play, 7.30pm. Sep 29 - Habana Eva, 7.30pm.

Dominion Theatre, 269 Tottenham Court Road (www.dominiontheatre.co.uk): Ongoing - We Will Rock You.

Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street (www.drillhall.co.uk): Sep 14-17 - The MTA: Celebs Anon. Sep 18-20 - Mysterious Skin. Sep 24 - Four Poofs and a Piano.

London Palladium, Argyll Street (www.the-london-palladium.com): Ongoing - The Wizard of Oz.

RADA, Malet St, opp Birkbeck College (www.rada.org): Autumn shows to be announced on September 7.

CINEMA/FILM CLUBS

Green Man, 36 Riding House Street: London Animation Club, first Tuesday of month, upstairs.

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

YMCA film club, 44 Portland Place (www.44portlandplace.org.uk): Sep 29 - The Third Man (1949), 2pm.

100 Club, 100 Oxford Street (www.the100club.co.uk): Sep 13 - Upside Down: The Creation Records Story, 7.15pm.

LIVE MUSIC

All Souls Church, Langham Place: Sep 16 - Handel's Messiah (in aid of All Souls Clubhouse), 6.30pm.

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (www.cultura.embavenez-uk.org): Sep 13-15 - London Classical Guitar Festival, 7.30pm. Sep 16 - Celso Machado: Fantasia Brasileira, 7.30pm. Sep 17 - London Classical Guitar Festival. Sep 28 - Santiago String Quartet & Ahmed Dickinson Cardenas.

100 Club, 100 Oxford St (www.the100club.co.uk): Sep 15 - Tav Falco and the Unapproachable Panther Burns. Sep 16 - M.O.T.. Sep 17 - Ray Gelato Giants. Sep 18 - Wild Mutation. Sep 22 - Sarah Spencer's Transatlantic Band. Sep 23 - Godsized. Sep 24 - North Soul All Nighter, 10pm-6am. Sep 30 - Claire Cameron. Oct 1 - Oo-Bop-Sh'bam.

Green Man, 383 Euston Road, opposite Great Portland Street station: Jazz every Wednesday in basement, 7.45pm.

One Tun, 58 Goodge Street: Live Jazz, Saturday, Sep 17, 8pm.

Smugglers Tavern, Warren Street: Piano bar, every Thursday 7 to 10pm.

UCL Chamber Music Club, Haldane Room, North Cloister, Wilkins Building, Gower Street (www.ucl.ac.uk/chamber-music): At 5.30pm on Oct 6, 18, Nov 2, 4, 17, 25.

KARAOKE/DISCO

The Bar @ TCR, 182 Tottenham Court Road: 70s and 80s music, every Thursday, 8pm.

Green Man, 36 Riding House St (www.thegreenmanw1.co.uk): DJ every Friday night.

One Tun, 58 Goodge St: Karaoke, Saturdays Sep 24, Oct 29, Nov 26.

LIVE COMEDY

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

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

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

PUB QUIZZES

College Arms, 18 Store Street: Every Wednesday, 8pm.

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

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

OTHER PUB EVENTS

One Tun, 58 Goodge Street: Sep 19 to Oct 2, Beer Festival (including Young's 180th birthday party on Sep 21).

EXHIBITIONS

British Museum, Great Russell St (www.britishmuseum.org): Until Sep 18 - Jewellery and costume from Oman, and traditional jewellery and dress from the Balkans. Until Oct 9 - Treasures of Heaven, saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe. Until Oct 16 - Australian Landscape, Kew at the British Museum. Until Nov 25 - Shakespeare: staging the world. Oct 6-Feb 19 - Grayson Perry, The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman. Until Oct 9 - Crocodile dance mask from the Torres Strait Islands. Until Jan 9 - Modern Syrian Art. Until Apr 15 - The cost of living in Roman and modern Britain.

UCL Strang Print Room, Wilkins Building, Gower Street (www.ucl.ac.uk/events): Sep 15-Dec 16 - Word and Image: Early Modern Treasures from the UCL Collection.

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Road (www.wellcomecollection.org): Until December - 75th anniversary exhibition, the work of eight influential people who have contributed to the history of the Trust.

TALKS

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (www.cultura.embavenez-uk.org): Sep 19 - Panel Discussion on Latin American Theatre in London, 7.30pm.

Darwin Theatre, Gower Street, entrance in Malet Place (www.ucl.ac.uk/events): UCL lunch hour lectures (1.15 to 1.55 pm) - Oct 11 - The State of the Nation, Taking Stock.

WALKS

Join a **Squatting History Walk** 2pm, Sunday 18 September, **Tolmers Square** NW1. See the square where squatters and tenants half succeeded in fighting off the encroachment of office blocks, and much more.