

FitzroviaNews



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

Issue 136 Spring 2015

Westminster City Council must reject plans for triangle site

- Plans include a petrol filling station, 90 luxury flats and only 15 affordable homes
- Neighbours concerned about privacy and daylight loss
- 10-storey tower block twice the height of Holcroft Court would be only 8 metres from existing living rooms and bedrooms

By Linus Rees

Westminster City Council is coming under increasing pressure to refuse a planning application to build three tower blocks in Cleveland Street and Clipstone Street only metres away from the Holcroft Court housing estate.

The residents are furious with applicants Dukelease Properties, Assael Architecture, and PR company Four Communications, who stand accused of giving out false information and trying to obscure the scale of three tower blocks one of which will be twice as high as Holcroft Court.

The planning application submitted in December is to demolish a two-storey commercial building — a triangular site which is well known for Banksy's "If Graffiti Changed Anything..." on one of its walls — and construct a new commercial street frontage topped with 105 apartments in three tower blocks. Only 15 of the flats (or 11 percent by area) will be affordable homes, — less than a third of the 35 percent that policy requires.

The plans for 87-125 Cleveland Street were first put forward in September with residents invited to view sketches of the proposed development. Residents and community groups were immediately concerned about the scale of the development and the inclusion of a new petrol filling station in the narrow Clipstone Mews, and later met with the developer and architect in meetings facilitated by Four Communications.

During these meetings residents were encouraged to give their views ahead of a planning application to be submitted to Westminster City Council. But the Holcroft Court Residents Association and the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum who participated in the meetings quickly became suspicious of the developer and the way the consultation was going. The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and



The Banksy building as seen from Clipstone Street. Holcroft Court is on the left with Cleveland Street on the right.

Charlotte Street Association have also expressed great concern about the plans.

Residents and local business people were frustrated when their questions about the height of the proposed buildings went unanswered, and said the whole process was a sham consultation.

Andrew Slee of the Holcroft Court Residents Association commented saying "on one drawing the relationship between the new ten-storey tower and the universi-

ty building on the south side of Clipstone Mews has been understated by as much as 12.5m. This is a fundamental error".

Residents were left with the impression that the height of the tower was deliberately obscured in order to diffuse opposition to the plans.

In subsequent communications it became clear that residents views were not being taken on board. Richard Leslie of Dukelease wrote to Holcroft

Court residents dismissing their concerns about loss of light.

"At Present Holcroft Court enjoys levels of daylight far superior to situations commonly found in central London and the reduction due to the proposed development brings the levels in line with those found elsewhere in the central area," he wrote.

Wendy Shillam, chair of the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum, expressed the irritation of

Continues on page 3



Bargain bites

See centre pages



A taste of Ancient Egypt

See page 12



Blue Peter producer reveals all

See page 14



GIGS

est. 1958

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Formerly *The Tower*
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Issue 136 Spring 2015
Published 3 March 2015

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Printed by:

Sharman & Co Ltd,

Newark Road,

Peterborough PE1 5TD

sharmanandco.co.uk

Fitzrovia News is produced
quarterly by the Fitzrovia
Community Newspaper
Group, ISSN: 0967-1404

Published by the Fitzrovia
Neighbourhood Association
(registered charity no. 1111649)
39 Tottenham Street,
London, W1T 4RX

fitzrovia.org.uk
google.com/+FitzroviaOrgUK
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**Public editorial
meetings are held at
7 pm, first Tuesday of
every month at
Fitzrovia Neighbourhood
Association,
39 Tottenham Street
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West End Project will take traffic off Tottenham Court Road and push it into the side streets

Camden's decision to only allow buses, cycles and pedestrians along the whole length of Tottenham Court Road from 8am to 7pm Monday to Saturday will mean the side streets of Fitzrovia will be filled with rat-running taxis and delivery vans.

Camden claim that overall traffic levels will go down in the West End Project area but their own figures derived from Transport for London (TfL) vehicle counts show that Torrington Place, Grafton Way, Charlotte Street, and Cleveland Street will see increasing levels of traffic.

These streets are already crowded by delivery vans serving the many shops, restaurants and cafes in the area.

Camden have ridden roughshod over the views of residents and community groups in their push to make Tottenham Court Road a trophy project for the council creating what amounts to an experiment in

traffic management.

In many ways Camden have done a lot of good by restricting residents' car parking on new developments and blocking off streets to through traffic, as they have done successfully in Warren Street. And by providing cycling facilities they have encouraged an active form of transport with all its additional health benefits.

But with the West End Project they have got it badly wrong.

The project will cost around £41m but there are no plans for a public toilet, despite repeated requests from business and community groups.

Building site lorries running engines is causing unnecessary noise and pollution

Drivers of cars, vans and lorries running their engines are making peoples lives a misery and adding to noise and air pollution.

Despite repeated attempts by individual

residents and community groups, drivers of vehicles serving the Fitzroy Place development continue to ignore the basic instruction to turn off their engines when stationary. Fitzroy Place should have been completed last year but because it is now months overdue we continue to endure the noise and pollution.

Affordable housing is good news but it is far too little

The news of 81 affordable homes across three sites being built (see p3) is good news but it is far short of what we should expect.

At Fitzroy Place the development of 291 homes only 54 (17 percent) are affordable and only 40 of those are for social rent.

Likewise the 13 affordable homes at Suffolk House (3 more are to be built elsewhere) are connected to the massive Saatchi Block redevelopment at 80 Charlotte Street (refused by Camden but passed by Boris Johnson). These amount to less than half of what planning policy requires.

Researching Michael Alan Harmel

I am currently carrying out historical research into the life and politics of a South African communist, journalist and friend of Nelson Mandela's, Michael Alan Harmel.

Harmel was exiled to Britain from 1963, serving as the editor of *The African Communist* (the office of which was at 39 Goodge Street) and engaging in the anti-apartheid movement.

In the 1970s, he was seconded to Czechoslovakia in order to represent the South African Communist Party on the board of the World Marxist Review.

The biography of his then partner, an Irish woman from Mullingar, Kathleen O'Callaghan, also a party member, remains completely unknown.

I would like to invite their former friends, comrades, relatives or acquaintances to share with us their memories of them both.

Please email me at interpretace@gmail.com or m.oraiek@seznam.cz.

Milan Oralek, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Another of our readers thinks Michael Harmel worked in Goodge Street until about 1979 then went to Prague where he died.

St Patrick's School Tudor Place, Tottenham Court Road

I was so amazed to find so much information about Tudor Place off Tottenham Court Road in an article on your news website.

My great grandmother was admitted to the Roman Catholic School in Tudor Place as an Irish orphan age 7 years in 1839. I have been searching for years on the area to find where and what it was like for her.

Do any of your readers know anything about the school?

A reader via email

We need buffer zones around abortion clinics says councillor

A local councillor has backed Labour's call for new laws to stop women being intimidated and harassed outside birth control clinics by US-styled anti-abortion protesters.

Adam Harrison, who has been a Camden Labour councillor since 2010, writes in *Progress* magazine in response to an announcement by shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper MP who is calling on the government to address the increasing US imported anti-abortion protests with new measures to protect patients and healthcare staff.

In Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia protests have been taking place in recent years outside the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) in Bedford Square and Marie Stopes in Whitfield Street. Protesters —

often men — have been seen standing immediately outside the clinics, approaching women who enter and handing them leaflets.

In March 2012 police were called to Bedford Square after complaints about anti-abortion protesters filming women entering and leaving the BPAS clinic.

Now Cllr Harrison, who is deputy editor at *Progress*, has welcomed his party's call for action to be taken.

"I cannot endorse strongly enough the idea of introducing buffer zones around abortion clinics," says the Bloomsbury ward councillor.

"The central London ward where I am a councillor has hosted two clinics, each of which has long been the target of protests.

"Over the years we have sought to deal with this I have had reports of protestors blocking women's entry into the buildings, gory material that would not win an 18 rating shoved into people's hands, and even of nuns rattling buckets of plastic fetuses at women as they attempt to pass by," he writes.

"It is an issue that enrages locals, and which has seen people come to my surgery from across London and beyond to ask how they can help."

However Harrison says a balance has to be struck between the right to protest and the right not to be harassed or intimidated. He warns about any change in the law that would prevent free speech and legitimate forms of protest.

Corrections and clarifications

In the last edition of Fitzrovia News (FN135) we reported that LK Computers Ltd in Charlotte Street had closed. This was incorrect and we apologise for the error. We stated in the column "Opening and closing shops" on page 9 that the shop at 64 Charlotte Street was one of the closed shops. However, we should have reported the shop had moved to neighbouring premises. LK Computers Ltd, is now at Charlotte Street News, 66 Charlotte Street.

In the same column we also reported that Casa do Brasil, the Brazilian advice centre, at 31 Foley Street had closed. It is now at 64-66 Willesden Lane, London NW6 7SX.

If you think *Fitzrovia News* has made a mistake please tell us by email news@fitzrovia.org.uk or contact us at our office.

Westminster council under pressure on triangle site

Continued from front page

many residents and questioned the developer's motives.

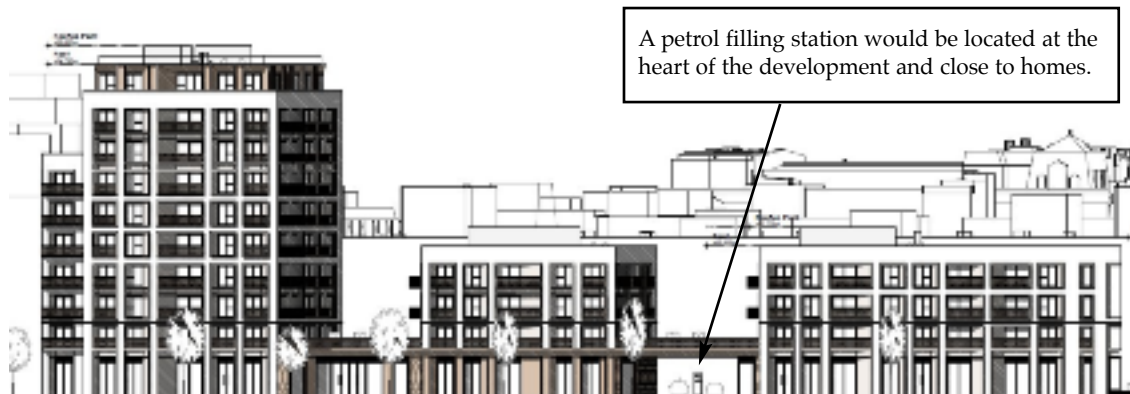
"Do we really want to build modern blocks that hark back to the Victorian slums?" she asked. "It seems that in spite of major opposition to a number of aspects of this application Dukelease have seen fit to ignore every single point raised and submit an unchanged application," said Shillam.

"I was shocked when I saw such a crassly over-developed scheme as this. It knocks out many small business units that are the life blood of Fitzrovia. It overshadows Holcroft Court, the mews and Cleveland Street frontages to an unacceptable level," she said.

In support of the planning application Four Communications provided a statement to Westminster City Council which went so far as to say "there is generally support for the Applicant's proposals".

The suggestion was so ridiculous that some residents told *Fitzrovia News* the PR company should re-brand themselves as "Poor Communications".

Fitzrovia News asked Dukelease and Four



The plans for 87-125 Cleveland Street is to demolish the existing 1960s commercial building and create new a mixed-use complex with 105 apartments across three tower blocks with a petrol filling station in the middle.

Communications to respond to the criticisms of the way they handled the public consultation. Dukelease did not respond to our questions but Four Communications issued a statement on behalf of themselves and Dukelease.

"Throughout this project, Four Communications has managed a thorough and transparent consultation process with neighbours around the site, including Holcroft Court. The team has had positive feedback from many neighbours, including some residents of Holcroft Court," they said.

However, in the response they did not repeat the line that the plans were supported by residents. Instead they chose to say:

"Feedback at the exhibition was mixed, with residents of different streets holding varied views."

They added: "The team is committed to upholding this process of consultation with neighbours as the application progresses and will continue to respond to all residents' queries and concerns."

Westminster City Council is due to make a decision on the planning application in April.

Westminster council own the freehold of the site but sold a 35 year headlease to Soho Data Holdings (SDH) with an option to take a longer lease following grant of permission for the redevelopment of the site. At the

time, SDH proposed to redevelop the site for offices and retail and the original lease excluded redevelopment for residential use.

In 2013 SDH approached the Council to remove the residential restriction which the Council agreed to in return for a premium payment to the Council.

A long lease will be granted subject to grant of planning permission. The premium paid to the Council will help to fund the provision of additional affordable housing in the City, says Westminster City Council.

The arrangement means that in effect the City Council will be deciding on an application it has a direct interest in.

Camden approves West End Project plans

Camden has passed its own plans for changes to Tottenham Court Road.

The decision taken in January is to remove the one way system, reduce traffic lanes and provide some cycling facilities and create new public open space and wider pavements.

It will remove all buses from Gower Street and re-route them to Tottenham Court Road with passengers served by three bus stops in each direction. The project area stretches from Euston Road down to Cambridge Circus and Camden say it would reduce overall traffic levels.

It will be the largest project of its kind that Camden has undertaken and many residents are concerned that it could make matters worse not better.

The decision bans taxis and private vehicles from 40 percent of Tottenham Court Road from 8am to 7pm Monday to Saturday despite concerns about pushing more traffic into many side streets.

News in brief

In **Camden**, 526 households are homeless, and 402 of those households are families with children. In 2014, only 210 affordable homes were built in Camden. In **Westminster**, 2,398 households are homeless, and 1,865 of those households are families with children. In 2014, only 100 affordable homes were built in Westminster. Source: Shelter.org.uk

Westminster Council have approved the creation of the **Fitzrovia West** Neighbourhood Forum. An application to **Camden Council** is being made to recognise the **Fitzrovia East** Neighbourhood Forum.

Buildings in **Bedford Square** used by the Ministry of Justice to hold tax tribunals belong to a company registered in a tax haven, says *Private Eye*. The discovery by the Eye means the UK government is going against its own rules which forbids it from transferring its assets offshore. In this case it is paying a landlord that is registered in Gibraltar.

The **Love Activists** direct action group who had occupied the former Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) building near Trafalgar Square in December went on to occupy Arthur Stanley House in **Tottenham Street**. After being evicted in early January they went on to occupy an empty commercial building in **Rathbone Place**. They were again evicted a couple of weeks later.

The stylised magazine *Fitzrovia Journal* which fea-

Continues on page 7

Fitzrovia gets affordable homes

After all the demolition and building work, Fitzrovia will finally benefit from some much-needed affordable housing.

Three sites in Fitzrovia are either completed or nearing completion at Ogle Street, Whitfield Place and Fitzroy Place.

Octavia Housing will manage 54 flats at Fitzroy Place (Pearson Square) and expect handover of these homes in August or September 2015 depending on the construction schedule.

Rachel Morency for Octavia Housing told *Fitzrovia News*: "Forty of the flats will be for social rent and these will be at below the housing benefit cap rates. Octavia only take nominations from the local authority. So in this case Westminster will determine who will occupy all of our socially rented homes - those they deem to be in most need from the housing waiting list."

According to the s106 agreement with Westminster council there will be 40 family sized (4-6 person) homes. Fourteen 1 bedroom flats will be offered for shared ownership. "Anyone interested in purchasing one can register their interest via our sales website octavialiving.org.uk," said Morency.

"All interested parties would



21 homes at Lavington Mansions, Ogle Street, were completed last year.

also need to register with the homeownershipwestminster.co.uk site and would need to live or work in the City of Westminster to qualify.

"All the shared ownership homes will be available for people to purchase a minimum share of 25 percent. At this stage it's too early to say how much a share will cost as we need to be closer to completion to get valid valuation but we are working very closely with Westminster City Council to try to make sure that income levels are sufficient to provide a viable shared ownership product to local people," she said.

At Ogle Street Peabody took control of the 21 flats in

Lavington Mansions last year. Peabody says all 15 social rent homes were let to households on Westminster's housing waiting list and the six shared ownership properties have been sold and are now fully occupied.

Later this year Suffolk House at Whitfield Place will be completed. "It is a 100 percent affordable housing development, being developed in partnership with Derwent London, delivering 7 units for Affordable Rent and 6 units for Shared Ownership," says Origin Housing.

All the shared ownership flats have been allocated and the rented homes will be filled from Camden's waiting list.

Affordable Homes

Social rented homes are only available to those on council waiting lists and vary from about £150 per week for a 1 bedroom flat to £180 for a 4 bedroom flat including service charges.

Shared ownership is provided through housing associations.

You buy a share of your home (25% to 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share. You need to take out a mortgage to pay for your share and you can buy more shares after you become the part owner. This is known as 'staircasing'.

You are eligible if gross household income is less than £66k or £80k for a family sized home (three or more bedrooms) and are unable to purchase a suitable home on the open market; and if you do not already own a home.

Priority will go to the following groups, set in priority order: housing association and council tenants, armed forces personnel, key workers, borough residents, then borough workers

Long-term tenant caught out by affordable housing gap See page 5

Pioneering publisher dies

By FIONA GREEN

Martin Green, who died of cancer on Wednesday 4th February 2015 was born in Stockport, Cheshire in 1932.

A pupil at Summerhill school from 1936 to 1951 with his sister, Frances Brouard, their fees were paid for by Wogan Phillips - later Lord Milford - the first communist peer in the House of Lords, so that his parents, George and Nan Green could volunteer and go to fight in the Spanish Civil War with the International Brigades on the Republican side.

In the event, his father, a cellist, was killed there, on the last day of fighting, returning with an ambulance to pick up a wounded friend.

Martin was four. The grief of this loss never left him. But it was at Summerhill, he made some of his life long friends and began to write poetry "just to be myself".

AS Neill was the first man he looked to as a surrogate parent.



Martin co-founded the literary periodical, *Nimbus*, and later worked as an editor at MacGibbon and Kee where he published such books as Nell Dunn's "Up the Junction" and Colin MacInnes' study of bi-sexuality "Loving Them Both" in the 1960's.

He then went on with fellow editors Brian Rooney and Tim O'Keeffe, to form his own popular publishing house, Martin, Brian and O'Keeffe, in Bloomsbury. Here he specialised in poetry, and collected and published the eminent Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh.

While living in Fitzrovia with myself (his second wife) we hosted Thabo Mbeki (later President of South Africa) and the African National Congress - then banned - who held secret meetings in our house in Tottenham Street.

He was a member of the famous literary football team, Battersea Park, and enjoyed many adventures with them on tours round England and the Continent.

Martin published eight books of his own, four plays and numerous poetry periodicals.

He had five children who survive him, and with whom he had close loving ties. His third wife, the writer Judith Cook, predeceased him in 2004.

His funeral was held on February 23 in Exeter, Devon. The family would like donations made to the Homelessness Charity (www.robos.org.uk).

A memorial service is planned in London in the near future.



New captains of The Ship

The Ship in New Cavendish Street has got new managers for the first time in 43 years.

Young Meg Dobson and Sean Barber (pictured) have taken over from Bill and Kathy who retired at the ages of 77 and 67.

"It is just the sort of traditional pub we like," said Sean. "It is absolutely original and has got real character, so we want to keep the soul of the pub and not change it too much."

Added Meg: "We are just going to keep our customers in touch more through the web and other social media, letting them know what we have to offer."

"For instance we are introducing a quiz on alternate Tuesday nights at 8pm, and

offering a student discount on Monday nights."

The function room upstairs is also available free during the day for meetings.

Meg is also very interested in the history of the pub and has discovered that before operating as The Ship it was The Centurion in the 1770s.

"We want to put a section about its history on our website, and are looking for old photos of it, which is very hard," she said, "so any from your readers would be most welcome."

The website is www.theshipfitzrovia.com; and the pub can also be contacted on [facebook.com/theshipfitzrovia](https://www.facebook.com/theshipfitzrovia) and [twitter @shipfitzrovia](https://twitter.com/shipfitzrovia) as well as email on info@theshipfitzrovia.com.

Derwent London draws up timetable for major development projects



Saatchi & Saatchi will be flying the flag at 40 Chancery Lane after leaving 80 Charlotte Street.

Derwent London has now set out its timetable for major developments in Fitzrovia including its largest construction project to date which will see the district's most famous advertising agency leave and herald another onslaught of building work to endure.

Later this year demolition and construction work will begin on 80 Charlotte Street — the offices of Publicis' companies Saatchi & Saatchi and Starcom MediaVest.

"In the second half of 2015 we plan to start our largest development to date: 80 Charlotte Street W1 which lies in the heart of Fitzrovia," says Derwent London in an announcement made last month.

Work will also start on a smaller building at nearby 53-65 Whitfield Street W1.

"We are currently negotiating with contractors, but we expect the total cost to be around £380m." The project is due to be completed in the first half of 2018. Derwent says the estimated rental value (ERV) will be £23m a year.

The Publicis' companies currently at Charlotte Street and Whitfield Street will leave Fitzrovia and move to new offices also owned by Derwent London. Saatchi & Saatchi will move to 40 Chancery Lane, and Starcom MediaVest Group will move to the Turnmill building in Farringdon.

Fitzrovia News understands

that some of the smaller companies located within the Charlotte Street and Whitfield Street block are looking to remain in Fitzrovia but are finding it increasingly difficult to find premises locally due to the high rents currently being demanded.

Derwent will also demolish and redevelop Copyright House in Berners Street — another controversial decision, this time passed by neighbouring Westminster City Council, due to finish in 2017.

Derwent also have projects at Tottenham Court Road and Charlotte Street due for completion later this year.

Perhaps after all that lot we can all enjoy a bit of peace and quiet for a change.

Shaftesbury plc buys the Newman Arms



The Newman Arms at 23 Rathbone Street closed at the end of 2014 and will open when new owners Shaftesbury find a tenant.

A pub in Rathbone Street where George Orwell used to drink and is widely assumed to be the setting for the proles pub in his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been bought by West End property owners Shaftesbury plc who say they will continue to operate it as a public house.

The pub has been closed since the beginning of the year and confirmation of the sale to Shaftesbury puts an end to local rumours that it was going to be converted into a private club.

A spokesperson for Shaftesbury told *Fitzrovia News*: "The Newman Arms — with its famous homemade pies — was a highly regarded traditional pub. However, the owner Mrs Bird decided she wanted to relocate to another part of London and therefore needed to sell it in order to facilitate her move.

We're delighted to have purchased it to add to our growing Charlotte Street holding; an area we love for its dynamic mix of great restaurants, bars and cafes.

"The Newman Arms will continue to operate as a pub and we have already instructed Davis Coffey Lyons who are going to commence the search for a new tenant imminently."

Davis Coffey Lyons completed the sale of the pub which had been jointly marketed with Savills.

According to the Land Registry the pub was bought from Punch Taverns on 21 August 2009 for £800,000 plus £108,000 VAT.

Fitzrovia News does not know how much Shaftesbury paid for it but in July 2014 Savills said "Offers are invited in the region of £4,000,000".

•Word from the Streets, p8.

Camden Council clips late hours of strip club

Residents not convinced decision will take effect



Spearmint Rhino gentlemen club, Tottenham Court Road.

Residents living in Paramount Court above Spearmint Rhino lap dancing club have complained for over 10 years about the noise and disturbance caused by noisy customers entering and leaving the club.

The club officially closed at 4am and residents were disturbed up to 4.45am by customers and staff leaving the premises.

A Camden Council licensing committee in late January voted to reduce the hours of operation to close at 2am to tackle late-night disturbances. The licensing committee said lap-dancing venues must renew their licence annually and managers at Spearmint Rhino were told that if the noise complaints "continue without remedy" it could be refused a licence in the future. Labour ward councillor Rishi Madlani said the club was "utterly inappropriate" for the area and urged the committee to reject the application. After the decision, Cllr Madlani said it was a "good result".

But Paramount Court residents are sceptical about when this will happen. One of them told us: "Spearmint Rhino does cause residents grief with noise and they are open far later than other bars and clubs in the area, so a reduction would bring them in line with the rest of establishments in the area and reduce its impact on residents.

"Reduced hours would be great if they ever come to pass. Spearmint Rhino will operate at the previous hours while they go through the numerous layers of appeal (assuming the judge rules against them at each stage). This process could well take one year or more, by which time they will be up for renewal again.

"As result, we have a slightly cynical view as to whether they'll ever be reduced, given the hurdles still to go. Nevertheless, we'd like to thank councillor Rishi Madlani for his support in the hearings and the licensing committee for listening to residents."

Gresse Street and Rathbone Place in Crossrail 2 line of fire

Buildings between Gresse Street and Rathbone Place could be demolished to make way for surface works when another railway tunnel under central London is built. Maps produced by Transport for London as part of a consultation for "safeguarding proposals" for Crossrail 2 show sites where stations, ventilation shafts and emergency exits could be built. Earmarked buildings on the lower part of Rathbone Place include part of the Rathbone Square development, around Gresse Street including the Fashion Retail Academy as well as Derwent London's recently built Charlotte Building. The area

of surface interest also includes the former Nickelodeon Studios building Rathbone Place. Crossrail 2 would connect south west London with north east London and also Surrey and Hertfordshire. Like Crossrail the central section will be in a tunnel. If approved in the future it would not see public service until at least 2030. In neighbouring Soho the Curzon Cinema is threatened with demolition as part of plans for a ticket hall and Soho Square is marked a site where surface works could take place.

Fitzroy Square planning applications: railings, play equipment, and gates



We reported in the Autumn 2014 edition of *Fitzrovia News* that in July, the owner of the property at 34-35 Fitzroy Square (formerly known as Swiss House) installed front gates and a dividing railing between the two front doors on the front steps. The properties on the South side of Fitzroy Square are grade I listed. Alterations to a listed building without consent from a planning authority is a criminal offence. When Camden Council found out they took enforcement action and made the owner apply for retrospective planning permission.

The owner's agents statement to the Council gave the reasons for installing the gates.

"Due to the personal circumstances of the current occupier who has been harassed and disturbed by members of the public 'camped out' on the steps of the property. This is largely due to his 'celebrity' status and that of his often-visiting friends. The gates have been designed to be fully in keeping with the surrounding balustrading and to be easily removable. The owner of the property installed the gates to safeguard the right to privacy, safety and to prevent nuisance calling which has been occurring late into the evening due to the sensitive nature of the current occupier of the property. When pinned open, the gates are designed to be barely visible within the Square, [and] designed to be fixed open when not in use and the house not occupied, and ultimately reversible. The client is also prepared to accept a condition requiring their removal if and when he moves."

The application has been opposed by the Georgian Group, the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and a resident from neighbouring Conway Street who stated that the gates are cluttered, inappropriate and out of character in a conservation area. English Heritage declined

to make any comments.

In another application, The Fitzroy Square Frontagers and Garden Committee applied for planning permission for the "erection of a non-permanent, movable discreet wooden climbing frame" which was put up in December 2014 in Fitzroy Square Gardens. In their application they state that it is a private garden square used solely by the residents. Over the last 12 years many families have moved into the square and at present there are 18 children resident. They wish to encourage the use of the garden space for all the children and families.

"The climbing frame will enhance a positive community spirit, positive neighbourly relations ... and encourage more families to move into our square. This will have a knock on effect for the area, supporting business and property value."

Neil Phoenix for the Fitzroy Square frontagers and garden committee applied to Camden Council for permission to install a new gate opening into the existing metal railings on the south side of the Fitzroy Square garden.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the 20th Century Society both sent letters to Camden expressing concern that the planning application implied further landscape gardening works for which there were no plans shown on the website.

The climbing frame application states that Fitzroy Square Gardens is a "private garden", while the application for the new gate describes it as a "public garden."

It seems there is a difference of opinion over public use of the Fitzroy Square Gardens.



Long-term tenant caught out by affordable housing gap

Michael is single, 57, with some minor health problems. He has lived in Fitzrovia since 1998 in three privately rented flats. From 1997 to 2005 he ran his own business; since then he has worked full time in a store on Oxford Street from which he earns roughly £18,000 per year. He had to leave his previous two flats due to landlord rent hikes.

"They completed minor refurbishments (lick of paint) but gave me major rent rises," he explained.

Michael has lived at his present flat on the Westminster side of Fitzrovia since December 2007 where the weekly rent is £ 331. Because of his level of earnings he is entitled to £236 per week housing benefit contribution towards the rent. Late last year he was notified by the landlords' agents that they wish to increase the rent to £425 per week. This is beyond the cap that Housing

benefit will pay so he will either have to make up the difference from his wages or leave his flat. He cannot afford the top up so he will have to leave the flat. The agents have told him that they will begin proceedings to evict him from his flat.

He at first contacted the Local Authority to ask about joining the social housing waiting list. They were pessimistic and advised him to contact Home Ownership Westminster who tried to push him toward shared ownership property. "I explained that in my age and employment I was in no position to take on a mortgage." They advised him to bid for an affordable flat on the rental part of the website. "They informed me that I was classified in priority category 4. I now constantly look at the available flats on the site which are in Westminster at quite reasonable rents from about £180 per week which I would like to move into and

reduce the amount of Housing benefit I receive.

"But to qualify for one of these flats you have to have a minimum income over £27,000 per annum. All flats on the site have a maximum income of £66,000. I have bid on several flats but on each occasion my bid was rejected because I didn't meet the minimum income or priority housing requirements.

"It seems that someone earning say £50-60,000 would be able to afford to go into private rented housing. Is this affordable housing being given to those who need it most?"

"I have written to the local councillor and MP to tell them about my situation. They both sympathised and said they would write to my landlords' agents but they couldn't do anything about me getting an affordable flat or the fact that I am stuck between a rock and a hard place: social housing and affordable rented flats."

Sore feet for Moses as a pilgrim in Galicia

Fr. Alan Moses is the Vicar of All Saints Church in Margaret Street, where he leads the team of clergy and lay people who maintain the daily round of worship, pastoral care and spiritual guidance and teaching in this busy city-centre church with its long high church tradition.

He was born and brought up in a very different world from cosmopolitan Fitzrovia and hectic Oxford Street: in a small village in Teesdale in 1949. His parents both came from families of farm-workers or miners. His father began his working life combining the world of farm and pit by looking after pit ponies. He and his younger brother were the first members of the family to go to grammar school and then to university.

Fr. Alan studied history at the University of Hull, which was where he met his wife Theresa, whose own home village was also in County Durham. They married in 1971 and have a grown-up son and daughter and a newly-adopted granddaughter. Theresa now works as a finance officer for the Diocese of London, working with parishes in some of the poorest parts of east and north London.

After theological studies in Edinburgh, Fr. Alan was ordained in 1976 to serve in a parish in the centre of that city. The ministry ranged from working class families to students and academics to the homeless. Three years later he was moved to a parish in central Fife, an area with very high unemployment and other social problems, which only became worse during the Miners' Strike. After 6 years, he was moved back to the parish he had been a curate in as Rector. He remained there for 10 years, until his move to All Saints.

"Most of my ministry has been in city centre parishes. These have their own challenges and rewards. The work is both demanding and fascinating. It is rarely dull."

All Saints is open every day from 7am to 7pm. People come to worship and pray or just to find peace and quiet, to see its extraordinary architecture. Homeless people often come simply to find a place of shelter. The church's courtyard garden is a popular haven for local workers during their breaks. Volunteers from the congregation man a church watch scheme to welcome visitors. The volunteers receive training to help them cope with the occasional difficult visitor. The parish supports the work with homeless people done at the West London Day Centre and the Church Army hostels in Cosway Street.

Last summer, a young woman, home-

Father Alan grew up in a small Yorkshire village. He tells Pete Whyatt how he came to be vicar of All Saints Church Margaret Street and how he raised money for its restoration by walking hundreds of miles across Spain.

less and pregnant, was allowed to sleep in church during the day. One Saturday morning in August, she went into labour during the 8am mass and went out into the courtyard so as not to disturb the service. Some Chinese ladies, on their way to the Buddhist temple, heard her and called an ambulance. Her baby girl was born in the courtyard. Her mother named her Angel – because she had been born at a church. Angel is now with foster-carers who have brought her to All Saints.

Fr. Alan says of his regular congregation that they, like him, are mostly immigrants. They have come to London from other parts of Britain or from all over the world, to study and to find work. His surname causes some amusement: "Shouldn't someone called Moses be a rabbi?" Moses is a name which can have Huguenot (French Protestant) roots as well as Jewish ones. "I was once asked if I was related to Ed Moses, the athlete, who is over 6 feet tall and black." Worshippers at All Saints also include visitors from around the world. Like many other city churches, All Saints has a high turn over of population and a deeply loyal core membership. It has long been a place which gay people have found welcoming and supportive.

When All Saints was built in the mid-19th century, the area was a crowded slum with 5,000 people crammed into a few streets. Now, no more than a hundred live in it. The area became a centre of the rag trade. Even in the twenty years, he has been here, the area has changed considerably. The fashion industry is still here, but has been joined by media, advertising and PR firms, and a wide variety of eating places to feed them. Sadly, the small family-run cafes and restaurants which were a feature of the area have been forced out by increasing



Fr. Alan in the pulpit at All Saints Margaret Street

rents, to be replaced by rather anonymous chains. Many of the largely young work force seem to socialise in the area. A place which was once pretty quiet after 6pm, is now busy until late in the evening; and with the night clubs, until the early hours. With the advent of Sunday shopping, what used to be a quiet day has become almost like any other with crowds coming in to shop.

Despite all the changes, All Saints is determined to remain here. To this end, over the last couple of decades it has been working on the restoration of what is one of the iconic buildings of the 19th century Gothic Revival. This has included the replacement of the roof, the rebuilding of the cathedral size organ which accompanies its choral tradition, the cleaning and restoration of its magnificently decorated interior to remove the ravages of gas-lighting, London smog, as well as candles and incense. The latest phase, nearing completion, is a complete re-wiring and a new lighting system. The huge sums needed for this have largely been raised from the congregation and without using professional fund-raisers. Fr. Alan's particular contribution was to undertake two walking pilgrimages. The first was the Camino de Santiago in Spain – 760 kilometres in five weeks from the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. The second was the Pilgrims Way from Winchester to Canterbury. "The congregation were happy to sponsor my sore feet

generously."

Fr. Alan is also the Area Dean of St. Marylebone, which means he supports clergy and lay officers in very varied parishes in Fitzrovia, Marylebone, Lisson Grove, St John's Wood and Maida Vale. All Saints has a mutually supportive relationship with the Annunciation, Marble Arch and St. Cyprian's in Clarence Gate. One of the happiest parts of this is helping each Tuesday with the mass at Hampden Gurney Church school.

He is also a member of the General Synod of the Church of England and Chair of the House of Clergy in the London Diocesan Synod. Along with his two fellow Area Deans in Westminster, he will be carrying out the duties of the Archdeacon of Charing Cross until a new one is appointed to replace Dr. Bill Jacob who is retiring. This means he has to go to rather more meetings than he would wish to.

The Bishop of London appointed him a prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral five years ago. This medieval title goes with an almost entirely honorary post. It's duties consist of preaching in the cathedral once or twice a year (usually at weekday evensongs on a saint's day), reciting part of the Psalter each day (in his case Psalms 12 to 16), and attending special services when he has time. It also means he often has to explain what his title means.



Fr. Alan at the beginning of his pilgrimage to Santiago.



All Saints Church Margaret Street

Your neighbourhood and one of the UK's favourite churches
(National Churches Trust 2013)

A diverse congregation we warmly welcome you to worship with us in the catholic tradition of the Church of England with glorious music from our professional choir in one of London's finest church buildings.

Sunday Main Services
11am High Mass
6pm Choral Evensong & Benediction

The church is open throughout the week 7am - 7pm and there are regular daily services.

For more details please see
www.allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk
or call the parish office 020 7636 1788

If you come new to All Saints because of this advertisement please tell us that you saw it in Fitzrovia News

Synagogue opens its doors as a concert venue for a wider community

The Central Synagogue London has announced a series of classical music concerts arranged around the theme of Jewish cultural identity and is inviting a broader audience to attend.

In a break with tradition the concerts, which started in February, will be the first time the Synagogue has promoted itself as a music venue to a non-Jewish audience.

"We are running an international concerts series at the Synagogue featuring well known musicians, which is open to the wider community," says Raquel Amit of the Central Synagogue.

The inaugural season of the International Concerts Series boasts some of the world's finest musicians but it is distinct because the musicians will explore the Jewish cultural contribution to the world, and the world's cultural contribution to Jewish identity, through music in one of London's most iconic

Jewish buildings.

The Central Synagogue has been in Great Portland Street in one form or another for more than 155 years. Today's Synagogue was rebuilt and reconsecrated in 1958, after the original building was destroyed in a bombing raid on 10 May 1941.

The history of the Central Synagogue is an integral part of the history of Anglo-Jewry. It has played an important part in the life and activities of the Jewish Community here in London and, although always warmly welcoming of guests and visitors, this is the first time the Synagogue has publicised itself as a concert venue for the wider local community too.

Tickets for each concert are £20 and obtainable from: centralsynagogue.org.uk or by telephoning 020 7580 1355. Central Synagogue, 36-40 Hallam Street, London W1W 6NW.

An alternative to smoking?



Opened in November in Wells Street. With little or no regulation the vape bar operates on a voluntary code.

Smoking rates in the UK have halved since the 1970s but now more than 2 million people are inhaling in a different way. A vape bar and lounge has opened in Fitzrovia selling "E liquids" for use with electronic cigarettes and offers customers to taste the products before buying. The owner claims that E cigarettes have no proven health issues and are the best alternative to smoking and a proven aid for people wishing to stop smoking.

The E liquids come in a variety of bottled flavours. These are poured into a device known as a clearomiser, fitted with a battery to heat the mixture to create a vapour and enable people to inhale the flavour.

This is known as vaping and is on its way to becoming a cultural phenomenon as well as a difficult public health issue.

Electronic cigarettes contain nicotine, an extremely addictive substance which is poisonous and is derived from tobacco plants. With conventional tobacco sales in decline in established markets, and electronic cigarette sales booming, the tobacco

industry has launched its own products as well as taking over existing manufacturers. But the vape industry remains relatively unregulated.

Fitzrovia News visited the vape bar at the invitation of the owner and their marketing people.

"You can come in and taste the flavours at the cocktail style bar and mix and blend them to suit you," says the owner who opened the shop in November. "It is an alternative to the harmful effects of tobacco but you can have them made of tobacco flavour if you like. Others are fruits, vanilla custard, the list is endless."

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has called for vaping to be banned indoors in public places and a major scientific review criticised the claims made for electronic cigarettes being a proven aid to reducing smoking.

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) supports the use of electronic cigarettes as an aid to help users in their efforts to quit smoking tobacco.



Newman Street Post Office as it was in December last year. Planning permission and a licence has been granted for a late night private members' club in the basement and a beauty salon is planned.

Newman Street Post Office closes after plans for late night private club passed

Fitzrovia has lost another post office and now the building owner has been granted permission to open a late night members club.

The post office at 19 Newman Street was situated within a general store selling newspapers, magazines, stationery and foodstuffs but closed in December.

Earlier in 2014 the owner of the premises was granted permission by Westminster council to convert the basement and part of an upper floor at the back of the building to a late night members club open to 3am. The application was strongly opposed by local residents and community groups.

A late night licence was also granted by the council in 2014.

But the applicant Mr Amin Thobani and his company Mimi's Bars Limited then applied to vary the licence to add the exhibition of films, performance of dance and to

change the layout so as to increase the capacity from 150 to 280 persons.

Significantly, the variation was opposed by Councillor Glenys Roberts who had previously supported the applicant both at the planning stage and the original licence application. Cllr Roberts told local residents she had supported the applicant because doing so would help the viability of the sub post office on the ground floor of the same building and also run by Mr Thobani.

In her statement Cllr Roberts says: "I do not support this subsequent proposal to increase the numbers [of people]. I am aware that local residents, some of whom live directly opposite, do not want to see a significant increase in late night activity on Newman Street leading to possible nuisance and disorder."

Councillor Paul Church wrote an objection saying a late licence at this venue should

never have been given in the first place due to the proximity of nearby residents. "Newman Street is a residential street in Fitzrovia and I, alongside many local residents were astounded that the original application was passed, so I find it astonishing that the applicants now wish to almost double the capacity."

A licence hearing in January however allowed the application but limited the capacity of the venue to 215 people and insisted on several conditions to be included to prevent any noise nuisance.

A planning application to change the ground floor to a beauty salon has now been withdrawn by Mr Thobani after planning officers expressed concern about the accuracy of the application.

Fitzrovia News understands that Mr Thobani intends to submit a new planning application for a change of use of the former post office site.

Cold weather initiative takes in record number of street sleepers in Camden

Camden's Street Safe Team (SST) has been out in the borough over the winter finding rough sleepers and offering them a bed under the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) scheme. They have also produced a mobile app to make it easier for the public to help Camden's street sleepers and get them the support they need.

SWEP is a London-wide scheme which enables outreach workers to offer people sleeping rough, short-term emergency accommodation, when the temperature is forecast to drop below zero degrees for 3 consecutive days or more.

"These offers are unconditional and a person's usual right to housing in the borough or immigration status become irrelevant," say SST. "The aim of SWEP is quite simple; it is there to preserve the lives of those without accommodation during these cold spells."

So far, during the recent cold weather, the Camden team has booked 16 people into beds which they say is a record number. "Although we will have to ask them to leave their temporary accommodation when the weather warms up, we always try to direct them towards a long term accommodation offer and continue to work with people after they leave," they say.

SST have produced the Streetsafe app which can be used for reporting rough sleeping in the London Borough of Camden.

More at: camdensst.com

News in brief continued from page 3.

tures people, business and editorial articles celebrated a year of publishing with a fourth issue printed in January.

A new co-working community and meeting area for the creative industries called Newman House has opened at 27 Newman Street and currently has a photographic exhibition featuring images of India and Nepal by Leo Manning-Jones.

What claims to be the UK's first regular literary speed dating event is being launched at the Nordic Bar, 25 Newman Street at 7.30pm on 10 March. The advert states: "Fancy pitching Buckowski (sic) against Atwood?" Let's hope the choice of dates is better than their spelling.

The next Fitzrovia News will be published in June.



Alley cats

Regulars of the Bricklayers' Arms in Grasse Street will recognise Stephen Mews (the alley next to it) in the 1962 film "The Boys."

It is about a local robbery and was lent to my brother Stephen by the pub landlord, Paul Rowson, and stars Dudley Sutton.

A while ago Dudley gave a talk in the Wheatsheaf just round the corner.



Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her family

Debby Banham reads her book published by Oxford University Press



Text book success

University of London historian **Debby Banham** found there was no text book to help her teach Anglo-Saxon Farming. So with fellow lecturer Rosamond Faith they decided to write one.

It took them 20 years but the book, Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming, has just been published by Oxford University Press.

Debby will be familiar to locals not just from teaching locally, but in the past squatting in the area, and also through her mother Mary who lives in Paramount Court, Grafton Way.

After squatting in the 1970s she moved to The Fens near Boston, Lincolnshire, and joined a women's gang picking cabbages and potatoes for £1.50 an hour.

By then a single mum she attended evening classes and took Open University courses in Anglo-Saxon history, and finally got a place at Cambridge University in 1982. It was here that she discovered that, because of her work as an agricultural labourer, the subject she knew more about than the people teaching her was farming.

When she and Rosamond started teaching themselves they were not satisfied with the books available on it. "The books were all written about kings and queens but not much about economics or farming methods," Debby told me in the College Arms in Store Street. "We decided to write our own textbook, thinking we could base it on others' research, but discovered nobody had done it."

Debby concentrated on crops and growing techniques, while Rosamond covered the peasantry and how they developed methods independently of the lords.

Debby has written books and articles about the Anglo-Saxon period on food and drink, diet, medicine, and monastic sign language.

She has also studied "the role of the supernatural, chants and prayers, before they had science to tell them how agriculture worked" - and tried some ancient charms on her allotment.

Anglo-Saxon farming, she concludes, was "sustainable, because it had to be; they did not have the means to wreck the environment." As for learning lessons for present agriculture, she hesitates. "It would mean ploughing with oxen," she smiled.

But now she can use her own book when teaching the subject.



Cartoon by Jayne Davies

Whistle blow woes

The perils of being a referee were explained by retired community policeman **Pete Smith**, who served at Tottenham Court Road police station from 1955 until its closure in 1980.

In 1969 he went to Anguilla as part of a force to quell a feared armed uprising which never materialised. "We played a football match against the local islanders - who burned the goalposts when they lost," he told my brother Warren.

"Then we played them at cricket and needed just four runs to win. When our batsman hit the boundary we all rushed out and escaped in our Land Rovers, leaving all our bats, stumps and other equipment behind to avoid further trouble."

Pete still referees football matches and umpires cricket ones at the age of 81, but does not think he is the oldest. "I saw one referee recently who could hardly walk," he mused.

Painful performance

Our friendly pharmacist needed his own products to pick him up recently.

My brother Mortimer was collecting his prescription from Shiv in Great Titchfield Street when another customer came in and asked: "Have you got any anti-depressants?"

"The way England are playing cricket against Sri Lanka at the moment I need some myself," replied **Kirit Patel** who has run the shop for over 30 years.

Fortunately his spirits were lifted on Christmas Day when his first grandchild (a boy) was born.

He also showed us two pictures of Great Titchfield Street market: one in 1904 (pictured right top), and another in 1906 (pictured right bottom).

They are two historic prints which he found when taking over the shop.



Name dropping

The **George** in Great Portland Street was mentioned in a tribute to **Ned Sherrin** on Radio 4Extra recently. He always took his guests there after broadcasting Loose Ends to sample the "suspect scotch eggs" (under a previous management) washed down with beer, said the presenter.

One of the younger guests asked another (a Hollywood actress) if she had ever met Elvis Presley. "Met him? I dated him," she replied. "But only to make Marlon Brando jealous." This double name dropping greatly amused Ned.



Ian's blue period

Ian Collier, the late actor from Great Titchfield Street, keeps appearing on our television screens through repeats. The latest was in **Bergerac** on the Drama channel when he shared a bed with **Suzy Kendall** (pictured above) in the famous "Ice Maiden" episode, first broadcast in December 1983 (episode 4 in series 3 available on DVD). They are now repeating Hi Di Hi on BBC2. Watch out for the episode when he is the police inspector raiding a blue movie, scheduled for March 4 (but then available on BBCiPlayer).

Radio fun

Local pubs are being used for BBC radio "tryouts" and "readthroughs". **Andrew O'Neil**, the "comedian, transvestite and amateur occultist", was due to rehearse in **The Albany** in Great Portland Street, but floods meant it switched at the last moment to **The Phoenix** in Cavendish Square. My brother Percy enjoyed it immensely.

The King & Queen in Foley Street is the preferred venue for ex-policeman and up and coming comedian **Alfie Moon** for his show "It's A Fair Cop", and Ethiopian poet **Lenn Sissay** for his "Homecoming" series.

Future tickets can be requested online from www.bbc.co.uk/tickets.

Fishy start

Back to Basics fish restaurant which was at 21 Foley Street is where **Simon Brett** was commissioned to write the No Commitments comedy for Radio 4 in 1992.

This was revealed by the late **Jonathan James-Moore**, head of light entertainment in the 1990s, in the Radio Heads programme on Radio 4Extra on December 13. James-Moore commissioned many ground breaking comedies in that decade including On The Hour, Knowing Me Knowing You, and League of Gentlemen.

Good Pie for now

The **Newman Arms** in Rathbone Street is boarded up. My sister Margaret loves their pies and is sorry to see **Tracey, Amber** and all the staff move on after 20 years - leaving a note on the door "Thank You and Good Pie for now."

George Orwell drank there and based the "Proles Pub" in his novel Nineteen-Eighty-Four on it.

And of course it is where the name of Fitzrovia was revived in the early 1970s when the festival committee met there.

Those wishing to let the pub are invited by the notice to phone Kate Taylor or Emma Flaher on 020 7299 0700. But seemingly it has already been sold: see page 4.

Charlotte Street

'I put my heart and soul into each item I make'



Mark Tallowin, an artisan leather worker is a new arrival to Fitzrovia. He has just set up a showroom, studio and workshop in the area where he is being hosted by 4 Windmill Street. "I've initially signed up to be here for six months but I'm hoping to be here for the long term. I started out at Cockpit Arts in Deptford which supports and promotes designer-makers. This is now the home of the label."

Mark's core range of five handbags and five wallet/credit card holders, are only offered in black. "I spent three years designing and refining the range. Each bag will be made on the premises by commission and takes roughly a week to make. I use only Italian vegetable tanned leather which is a slow natural process rather than the quick chemical processes that are more common nowadays. I keep no stock so if you order a bag or wallet it's made especially for you. Each bag is numbered and has a gold plated brass disk with the handbag's chronological number inscribed. There is a secret compartment in every bag into which I place a small piece of vellum parchment on to which I write the client's name and the year the handbag was made."



Opening and closing shops

Closed

Mizuna sandwich bar 6 Charlotte Street
Daley Bread sandwich shop/cafe 20 Gosfield Street
Bubbletopia bubbletea 29 Hanson Street

Opened

Russell & Chapple fine art supplies, scenic and digital canvases 30-31 Store Street
Wrapchic Indian burritos 48 Goodge Street
Western Printers 108 Cleveland Street moved from 103 Cleveland Street
Hare & Bone hairstylist 69A Great Titchfield Street
Rhymes with orange picture framers, greetings cards and gifts 106 Great Portland Street
FitzMaple cold pressed juices and salads 36A Berners Street

Opening soon

Love die late coffee and cocktails 114 Great Portland Street
Big Fernand French gourmet burgers 19 Percy Street
Konditor and Cook cakes 39 Goodge Street
Moba French Asian bakery 53 Goodge Street
Kaffiene (second store) speciality cafe 15 Eastcastle Street

Crowdfunded shop trades beyond social convention



By Linus Rees

Coffee, Cake & Kisses was started by Amanda and Sonia and financed with support from a crowdfunding appeal which drew in more than 400 people and over £35,000 towards the project. It opened in January.

"With everything for sale except for the staff, Coffee, Cake & Kisses celebrates bonds between people, and its common expression, the kiss. We are the place to build all kinds of relationships, and to explore all aspects of them. An accessible place for all people, purposefully inclusive and welcoming of all genders, sexuality, relationship models and lifestyles," is how the project was described.

The Kickstarter campaign was a huge success and they

raised the money in just four weeks.

"Everyone's been so very welcoming, with people bringing us cards and flowers and saying we are just what has been missing in the area. It's such a joy and privilege to join the vibrant Fitzrovia community."

The project will go beyond labels of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

"It's a cafe, a bookshop, and so much more. We sometimes refer to the place as a 'social design space'. The architect and the designers are the people themselves, designing their own lives and relationships," says Sonia.

Coffee, Cake & Kisses, 54 Warren Street, W1T 5NN.

RESIDENTIAL SALES & LETTINGS



Robert Irving Burns
Property Consultants

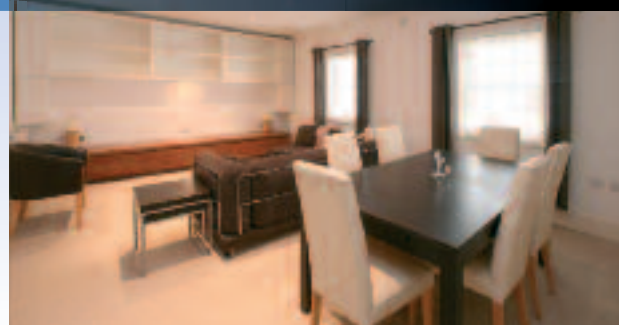
25 Gosfield Street Fitzrovia W1



25 Gosfield Street is located in the heart of London's West End's most fashionable districts, Fitzrovia.

£1.45m

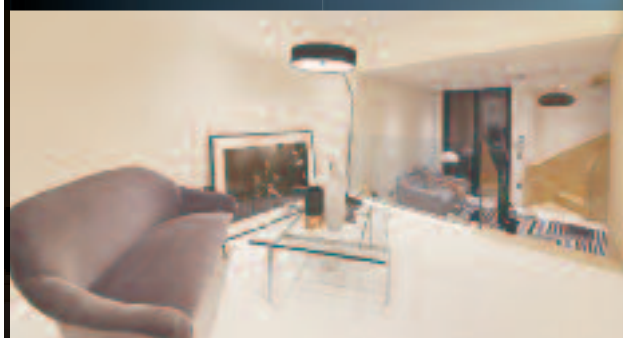
Percy Mews, Fitzrovia W1



An extremely spacious two bedroom, two bathroom apartment spread over approx 1000 sq ft moments from well renowned Charlotte Street.

£865 pw

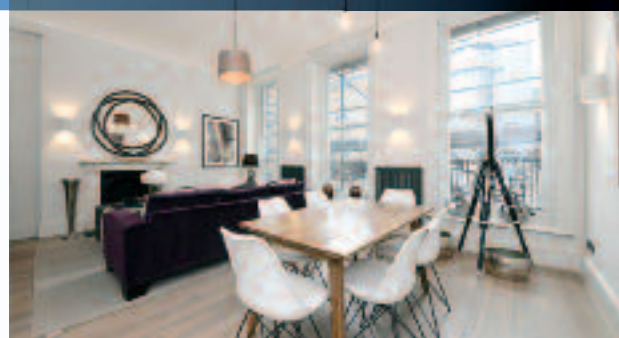
10 Warren Mews London W1T



Forming part of a small development of an attractive period building and having its own private entrance is this contemporary designed triplex apartment with open planning living in mind.

Offers in excess of £1m

Guildford Street, Bloomsbury WC1



A stunning first floor one bedroom apartment within a beautifully refurbished Georgian house with the benefit of a private terrace.

£625 pw

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www.rib.co.uk



Our guide to where you can eat

We sent our reporters out looking for bargain and good value bites.



The Great THAI
57 Great Portland Street.
The express lunchtime menu is tasty and great value. At either £5.95 or £6.95 you choose from soups, Thai curries, Thai stir fries, all served with jasmine rice, or a stir fried noodle dish, then decide whether you are having it with meat, vegetarian or seafood.
I have tried and would thoroughly recommend green chicken curry, stir fried beef with thai chilli oil and the vegetarian pad thai fried noodles.
Opening times weekdays 11am–10pm
weekends 12noon–9 pm.
Express lunchtime menu weekdays 12–5pm.



Kua 'Aina, 40 Goodge Street
Warm and friendly with Hawaiian atmosphere. Prices around £5 to £8. The Lava grilled meat burgers and Mari Mari fish fillets are good. Several vegetarian options available. The thyme and garlic Portobello mushrooms are delicious. Popular malted vanilla milk shakes and good coffee. Glasses of cooled cucumber, mint or lemon water served to all. Licensed.
Open 7 days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Vegetarian breakfast for £5.50 at Ishta's



Ishta's Cafe, 61 Cleveland Street
At just £5.50 the vegetarian breakfast tomatoes, mushrooms, beans, hash brown, cheese, two eggs, roast pepper, and toast. At the same price the full English breakfast with bacon, sausage, tomato, hash brown, mushrooms and toast. Other meals such as chicken with rice, or lasagne with salad are £5.50 or £6.50 to eat in. Fresh oranges are served to you to make the juice.



Italia Uno, 91 Charlotte Street. This popular sandwich bar and cafe has been around for nearly 20 years serving up reasonably-priced food. Open all day and most weekends it is a real Italian cafe run by real Italians. It is also well known to football fans as the London home of the Napoli Fans Club. A freshly made sandwich and a coffee will cost less than £6.

The Mosque, 46 Goodge Street (entrance in Charlotte Street)
A large helping of pilau rice with spinach and chickpeas, with ginger beer, is very filling and tasty for £3.60. Non vegetarian options also available. Our visitor was the only woman there but nobody seemed remotely concerned she was not wearing a headscarf. Is this the cheapest hot lunch in Fitzrovia?



Dino's Deli, 22 Charlotte Place
Toasted ciabatta or focaccia sandwiches are so popular you'll need to queue in the alley at lunchtime. Also parma ham, mozzarella, tomato, olive oil, oregano and basil. Massive fresh sandwiches around the £5 mark. Also gorgeous rich arancini served with roasted vegetables or salad and a selection of pasta. They stock a vast array of imported Italian foodstuffs too. Open Monday to Saturday 9am–5pm.



ICCO Italian, 46 Goodge Street
Lovely aroma from the freshly made pizza (try a Margherita). Free croissant with evening coffee from 7am to 11am. Greek salad, fruit and cheesecake, freshly made smoothies, juice, TV and daily newspapers. Open every day till late.



Gigs, 12 Tottenham Street
For generations this has been home to the (later professors) in their quest for cheap food. The vegetarian burger is now the cheapest, but a sit down meal. The cheapest take away is kalamari, but for £5.80 you can get coffee, salmon or scampi. Open Monday to Saturday 10am–11pm.

Gluten-free in Charlotte Place



Kasia Kendzia, Giovanni Dedola, and Rebecca Steel outside Beyond Bread, gluten-free bakery.

By Angela Lovely

Opened in a pedestrian walkway off Goodge Street is a bakery and cafe offering gluten-free and dairy-free products. I paid them a visit in December and chatted to the staff.

"Today is just a soft opening," I'm told by manager Kasia Kendzia who's from Poland. "We'll be officially open in January when we'll have a full range of products."

During my visit they were inviting people to come in to try some free samples.

I try a piece of banana cake and ginger bread and realise I can't interview them with my mouth full of food. But I'm tempted to have more of such delicious banana bread.

From the basement emerges a woman dressed in a white baker's outfit. Are you

the baker? I ask. "No, I'm the development chef," says Amanda Parker. She tells me about her passion for gluten-free baking as she herself is gluten-intolerant.

She explains that some people react very badly to gluten — the protein found in wheat and other grains. Some people are gluten-intolerant while others can have coeliac disease which is far more serious.

The shop has a range of sandwiches, cakes, mince pies, pastries, quiches and loaves. They also do dairy-free and vegan. All the bread and cakes are baked on the premises. There's coffee to have in or take away. If there's a demand they may supply wholesale gluten-free food to local shops and restaurants.

Beyond Bread: Gluten-Free Bakery, 2 Charlotte Place, Fitzrovia, London W1T 1SB.

Out on a wallet full of change



's



contains fried
crowns, haloumi
past. For the
contains, eggs,
beans, mush-
chicken curry
5.50 to take out
squeezed in front



pizzas (£3.95 for
ery hot drink
salad, vanilla
juices and coffee.
y day from 7 or 8



o local students
eap filling food.
apest at £6.90 for
way is £5.20 for
d, haddock, rock
m.



Kin, 22 Foley Street
A salad from the several on offer in an imaginatively tiered display costs £5, with home made bread another 50p. Stuffed aubergine is £4.50, and the soup (broccoli, mushroom and carrot) is £3.90. They also serve that New York staple - smashed avocado on toast, plus a large selection of cakes and organic juices, all made on the premises. Open Monday to Friday 8am-6pm, Saturday 10am-4pm.



Julia's Meadow, 44 Newman Street
Friendly and homely. One of the best cafes in Fitzrovia. Julia's Meadow serve a really good selection of salads and fillings, nicely dressed. Have with meat lasagne, vegetarian pasta, chilli con carne or oven baked jacket potatoes. All around £5.



Olives Indian Cuisine, 20 Cleveland Street
For £5.25 you can get chicken or lamb curry, and for £5.95 you can get tandoori chicken or prawn curry. The house speciality is chicken tikka masala at £6.95. The restaurant also does take aways and free home delivery. Open Monday to Saturday 12-2:30pm and 6-11:30pm, Sunday 5:30-11:30pm.



Marinara pizza for £4.50 at Franca Manca



Fish Bone, 82 Cleveland Street
A small cod can be had for £4.80, and for just £5.40 you can have a fish burger, chicken burger, or veg burger. Pie and chips is just £4.40. Take away prices for less. Open Monday to Thursday 11:30am-10pm, Friday 11:30am-11pm, Saturday 4-10pm.



Russi Espresso Bar, 23 Rathbone Place
Lunch time offer of free vegetable soup with every order of filled bap, focaccia or ciabatta bread makes a meal for under £5. Home cooked speciality dishes include pasta and Spanish omelettes. Roast coffee. Early breakfasts with daily newspapers and open Monday to Saturday until 6pm.



Franks Coffee House, 50-52 Great Titchfield Street
An unpretentious old school breakfast place with lovely coffee and many choices for under £5. Chicken escape on ciabatta is recommended. Outside tables catch the sun. Open Monday to Saturday 6am-6pm.



Franco Manca, 98 Tottenham Court Road
The marinara pizza of tomato, garlic an oregano suited our correspondent fine (with wild broccoli, kale or wild mushrooms) and cost just £4.50. To take away it is just £4, which is less than many supermarket pizzas. Many ingredients are organic, including the tomatoes, and the source of all the ingredients are listed on the menu. The most expensive of the six pizzas on the menu is £6.95. Open Monday to Thursday 11:30am-11pm, Friday and Saturday 11:30am-11:30pm, Sunday 12noon-10pm.



Indian YMCA 41 Fitzroy Square, is one of central London's best value eateries. This plain, unpretentious dining hall has freshly prepared canteen food, offering a conventional Indian menu of rice, dhals and curries, as well as a selection of tasty sides. Weekday lunchtimes it's pay-per-dish, each item is under £5, rice and vegetarian options £2 or less. Evenings and weekends you pay £8 for all-in meal which includes simple desserts and coffee (you can even go back for second helpings!). It is a fantastic option for a cheap, healthy meal you can happily fill yourself up for a wallet full of change. Weekday lunch 12-2, weekend lunch 12:30-1:30 dinner everyday 7-8:30



Double J's, 333 Euston Road. This traditional cafe serving all-day breakfasts used to be on Charlotte Street. Now in new premises they have more seating and the choice of food is even better. Clean, cheap and always cheerful this is a favourite of some *Fitzrovia News* editors who need replenishing after taking Fitzrovia's evil property developers to task. Here you can get a meal and a coffee or tea for around £6.



Rasa Express 327 Euston Road
Lunch is served in a plastic tray with five compartments, the bryani box costs £5.00 and contains chicken bryani, flat bread, dhal, vegetable curry, shredded spiced vegetable and rice pudding you can sit down or takeaway. Chicken curry box £4.50, vegetarian box £4.00, and snack options are available. The South Indian food is fresh light and delicious, an excellent value lunch. Open weekday lunchtimes 12-3pm



LEFT: Bronze cat statuettes. RIGHT: A pot burial of a man near Badari, where the earliest farming started 6,000 years ago. BELOW: An empty mummy case. www.markthomasphotos.com

An intimate glimpse into Ancient Egypt

By HELENE PARRY
If you're interested in Ancient Egypt then you've probably been to the British Museum to admire its statues and architecture from Pharaonic times. For a more intimate glimpse of life in that ancient culture, try the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology.

Sir William Flinders Petrie (1853-1943), known as Flinders Petrie, was an English Egyptologist who spent most of his life digging up the Middle East. A pioneer in the field, he's been hailed as the "father of scientific archaeology". Visit his museum and you'll see how lovingly he recorded and compared the smallest details, devising a system of dating pottery and ceramic fragments.

The Petrie Museum was set up in 1892 through the work of writer, traveller, and explorer Amelia Edwards (1831-1892). Amelia first travelled to Egypt in 1873 - to escape the rain on her holiday in France!

She became fascinated by the country, and set about raising funds for the research and preservation of its monuments.



A glazed floral necklace with eight rows of beads, found in Amarna.

She bequeathed her collection of Egyptian antiquities to University College, London. Flinders Petrie sold his collections to UCL in 1913, transforming the museum into one of the leading collections outside Egypt.

You'll feel like an explorer yourself, trying to find the museum, which is squeezed in between university buildings (in Malet Place opposite Waterstones).

Some of the displays are in the stairwell, so, unfortunately, if you can't navigate stairs, you'll miss part of the collection.

The museum appears rather antiquated itself, with some labels handwritten - in faded ink - and old wooden cases, but that adds to its charm.

Only part of the museum's vast collection - over 80,000 objects from different periods in prehistory - is on show. The two small rooms house small artefacts, steles (worked stone or wooden slabs, often found in shrines of temples), bronze figurines and pottery. Everyday objects are arranged in long rows of glass cabinets, with drawers that can be opened to show more. Thankfully, the corridors between the showcases are wide enough for visitors to move without having to do a sideways Egyptian shuffle.

Rather than displaying epic



monuments, this museum houses real life - leather sandals, bead dresses, children's toys, pots, pans and spindles, showing how people in Ancient Egypt lived and worked.

Among the most striking exhibits are the vibrantly painted pottery and the hundreds of brightly-coloured beaded necklaces - amazing to think that they were made by hand. I was especially taken with the bronze cat statuettes, fashioned in honour of our feline friends, who

were venerated as gods in Egypt (a practice which, as every cat owner knows, they have never forgotten).

Lighting is kept low to help preserve the exhibits, but the stelae look remarkably well preserved. The hieroglyphics of the masonry are not blurry and worn, but sharp and defined. Vases and pots of many designs are whole and colourful, and show no visible signs of damage or wear. Rare examples of Egyptian cloth and paintings are

on display. No mummies on show, but there are a couple of (worryingly empty!) mummy cases...

The staff are very welcoming and genuinely pleased to see visitors. But I wouldn't recommend the museum for children, unless they are particularly attentive. There's a reverential hush about the rooms, and very little space for running about. But a large table provides activity books, a computer with an interactive game, colouring pencils and paper.

The museum is open 1pm - 5pm, Tuesday - Saturday. Admission is free.

It stages events throughout the year, with all welcome to attend film screenings, exhibitions, talks, and lectures. Occasionally booking is required, but most invite you to just drop in.

Join the Friends of the Petrie Museum to help further its ongoing conservation programme, and you'll receive the museum's bi-annual magazine, a discount on books sold in the museum shop, and invitations to social events, study days and Egyptology tours.

UCL Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, Malet Place, London WC1E 6BT. Tel: 020 7679 2369. www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/petrie



A bead-net dress from 2400 BC found at Qau in 1923. Each of the 127 shells around the fringe are plugged with a small stone, so that it would rattle when the wearer danced in it naked underneath.

Public Safety

If you make it home safe – the clanking brightness of the platform as the train pulls in. A man pads up to you in black trainers, black tracksuit, a wide stare that is hard to slip out of. And have you just racially profiled him as unsafe? Shame on you. Except, don't teeter: this ugliness on your part does not neutralise the concern for safety, the potential threat he poses. You know how easily vulnerability disarms, like a knife slipped under the ribs. Wait for him to stop. Time it. Wait for the train to stop, the doors to open, and he makes a move towards the train...go! Dart two – three – carriages along, away from him. No – the fourth looks better. On. The doors close. Clear. You outsmarted him. As the train rocks forward note that possibly his stare is just a fence against the world, but you can't be too careful. Sometimes the stare is taking you in, and if you happen to be too hot in your coat so that you unzip it and reveal a little chest, some thigh, you know what you did wrong here, don't you? Whose fault is that? So stay zipped, no matter that you start to sweat and it makes you a little light-headed. Thirsty, but no time to indulge thoughts about thirst! Focus at all times.

And this carriage – chosen not at random, but because there are two women with bags from Hummingbird Bakery, one with a beret, the other in flat shoes and black tights, legs crossed – safe. Not because they will save you – women are not allies – but because if they are safe here, there is a higher chance that you will be safe here, although that chance reduced because you to them is a one to two ratio and two greatly increases safety by whatfold?

Relax. The train is tugging

A SHORT STORY BY SUNITA SOLIAR

along. Stop gripping your bag. Staring into the yellow jacket – like something you would wear at sea – of the young man opposite, clean-shaven. Headphones on, dimly tapping his jeans to music. His head moves, stretches to the side, looks along the carriage. A precise jaw. He yawns; covers his mouth with his hand. That's a sign: he must be OK. People who yawn are safe – it's human – they're not too bound up with cunning and anger to yawn. But. He's not making eye contact. That's clever. Isn't it clever? Looking around everywhere but at you. The danger now not of being followed on, but of being followed off. Act normal. Keep looking at the tube map at each stop, as though to make sure the next one is the one you were expecting. Don't put your hat on. Let him get off first. So you sit tight. Past Finsbury Park and Manor House. As you approach Turnpike Lane, you fiddle with your hat. Does he see? No indication that he does. His boots are so bright, clean, the colour of sand. He has delicate fingers (that's when they're relaxed, interlaced). The train slows. He sits. The doors open. He doesn't move. You vault out, and he has to pull his leg in as you pass because he thinks you will trip. Embarrassing, but no time for that. Off the train. Walk straight,

with a purpose, only realising you are going in the wrong direction along the platform as you catch the faces of people coming towards you. Back the other way. Fast to catch up with people so you are not alone on the platform. Next hurdle outside. Calm down. The heart. You can make it. Just down the road, two lefts, then in. You have done it many time before in the dark. Many times you have got in safe.

Walk with a purpose down

'It is Saturday night and no way to know who anyone is. Although possibly...'

the road, keeping a safe sight – safe distance – on the man ahead with a backpack and an ill-fitting coat, the plod of a postman. Though probably an accountant? It is Saturday night and no way to know who anyone is. Although possibly he is an ally because he is ahead, not behind. You can't be sure. Overtake – high viz stripes on his jacket – he catches you, a little startled, as though with the vague fear that you might mug him. Striding ahead now so as not to give him a chance – also the shame of him thinking you might be a mugger – get out



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIFFORD HARPER

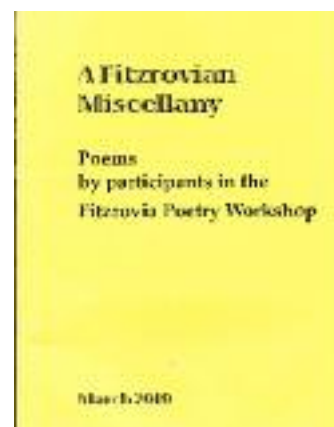
keys as you both approach the bright lights, the crossing because you can cut a few seconds off standing in the dark and also, keys through fingers equals potential weapon, although don't let the keys give him ideas about following you in. A car stops to let you through and... across the road, running up the stairs of your building because now that you're ahead, he is definitely not safe. You can't be sure. When you are in, you will be able to breathe, to yawn. But now, at the door, the key at the lock, like a child with her first pencil. You can do it. Steady. In. And out. Down the hallway. When you reach your flat, the same again with the key. Inside the flat, slam the door, lock the door. You made it! Oh, thank you. Whoever I am talking to up there – and I don't believe in God – thank you. No,

'I'm breathing a little funny. But that's the way these things go. It's competitive sport'

thank you, yourself because you made it.

Made it? Yes. I did, didn't I? I made it. Not just because I am lucky, but because I outwitted you, whoever you are. Never mind I'm breathing a little funny. But that's the way these things go. It's a competitive sport, getting home. I can't take it for granted that I will get home safe – apparently, it isn't the same as you with the high viz stripes being mugged. If I don't make it, there will always be reasons. Things I did wrong. It's all on me: either I win or you do. And now that I'm in, how crazy I am! Paranoid. How stupid to have been so worried, talking to myself – I hope not out loud – so sure that the world is focussed on me, that people might be out to get me. See, little girl – in fact, woman of twenty-nine – you can let down your guard a bit, surely?

After all, nothing happened, did it?



This booklet is available for £3.50 from the neighbourhood centre.

THE BUST PICTURED ON PAGE 15 IS A PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWER. TORRINGTON PLACE, 90-103 RIDGEMOUNT GARDENS,

Poetry corner

On dream holiday,
Away, friends all, again,
Escape! Great!
The distractions only summer brings –
Nothing but sunshine for long days.
Cold ice-cream,
Suntan... " 'Bin abroad?"
- neighbour's chippy!
The round trips, sightseeing,
Sole strain: on bank!
Rowing, family activity,
Main adventure, outdoor abandon.
Everyone faces long day...
all inside garden, soaking up sun,
Chilling.

Chilling....

Sun-up: soaking garden.

Inside all day,

Long faces.

Everyone, abandon outdoor adventure.

Main activity: family rowing – bank on strain!

Sole sightseeing trip's round the chippy.

Neighbours abroad.

Bin suntan cream.

Ice-cold days,

Long for sunshine,

But nothing brings summer.

Only distraction's "The Great Escape"

(again).

All friends away.

Holiday? Dream on!

Cat Napping By Helene Parry

Catnapping,
Peace in lounge.
Object: you being idle.
Duties at work task your mind,
Matters pressing...
More tend to turn up,
Give you weary feeling still.
Body's soft, doing nothing,
You can't move.
Cosy and nice place,
Warmest enjoying fire you had been, ever,
Armchair comfy, your overstretched eyes closed...asleep.

Sound is outside...
From intruder? Friend?
Firm, calm, taking breath...

With apprehension, sudden, turning you to creaking door...
Over-anxiety -
In strolls cat!

Cat strolls in,
Anxiety over!
Door creaking to.
You, turning,
Sudden apprehension –
With breathtaking calm,
Firm friend, intruder from outside,
Is sound asleep, closed eyes,
Stretched over your comfy armchair!
Ever been had?
You fire: "Enjoying warmest place? Nice and cosy?
Move, can't you?"
Nothing doing - soft body's still!
Feeling weary, you give up,
Turn to tend more pressing matters,
Mind your task, work at duties.
"Idle being!" you object,
"Lounge in peace, napping cat!"

Bloomsbury ward councillors' surgeries

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

Fitzrovia Community Centre, Foley Street, W1W 6DN

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

Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1N 1AB

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

Adam Harrison, Sabrina Francis, and Rishi Madlani

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

sabrina.francis@camden.gov.uk rishi.madlani@camden.gov.uk

Biddy drew the kids into Blue Peter

By BRIAN JARMAN

For a quarter of a century, she wove her own brand of magic for children throughout the land. Biddy Baxter was a name to conjure with - it appeared at the end of the hugely popular Blue Peter programme, underneath the much-coveted badge.

Biddy had joined the BBC as a trainee radio Studio Manager at Broadcasting House in 1955 - and still lives nearby.

"It's absolutely marvellous," she says about the area when we meet for coffee. "It's home. I would never, ever want to move."

She grew up in wartime Leicestershire, the only child of a schoolteacher and pianist. In her forthright manner, she says that, for her, it was an exciting time.

"It was thrilling to get up in the middle of the night, put on

my siren suit and go into our shelter," she says. "I wasn't old enough to be frightened."

There were early signs of her energy and creativity: she and her friends put on little plays and organised bring and buy sales for the Red Cross.

"At one we put photos of Hitler and Mussolini on boxes like a coconut shy," she says.

Then the family moved out into a remote gamekeeper's cottage, a mile and a half from the nearest road. There, books and the radio became a lifeline.

She remembers writing a letter to the children's author Enid Blyton and being thrilled when she got a reply. She wrote again and got another reply.

"It was a facsimile letter, identical to the first one," she says. "I went to my mother in tears."

It was the first of many salutary lessons which she would turn into a positive in her later career.

She won a painting competition - although she professes to be no good at it - and the prize was to be presented by children's radio presenter, Uncle Mac.

"I was in seventh heaven," says Biddy. "But he was horrible. He was grumpy. I was so disappointed."

Salutary lesson Number Two.

She went on to grammar school and then to Durham University to read Social Studies and thought of becoming a psychiatric social worker, but when she went to see the Appointments Officer he had different ideas.

"All the men were being sent off on marvellous assignments in industry," says Biddy, "but if you were a woman he had two ideas: you either did a teacher's training course or a secretarial course."

While she was in his office, she spotted an advert for a job at the BBC asking: Are you interested in the Arts? Do you like meeting people?

"I was so thrilled with this, and I said that this was what I wanted to apply for. He looked at me with absolute horror as if I had just spoken an obscenity and said 'Nobody from Durham



Biddy with official national treasure David Attenborough.

has ever joined the BBC."

Biddy applied. She got the job. Salutary lesson Number Three.

But things didn't start well at Broadcasting House. She was working in Spain when she got a telegram summoning her to a training course, so she missed the beginning.

"I was always a fortnight behind," she says. "I wasn't technical at all. On one occasion I caused the Overseas News to go out ten minutes late."

After four years she moved into Children's Programmes and become producer of Listen with Mother. Two years later she moved into TV as Editor of a new programme called Blue Peter.

She remembered that second letter from Enid Blyton, and wanted to set up a correspondence unit which would answer each letter personally and award badges for good ideas. But at a 'frosty' meeting with the Head of Planning, she was told that it was impossible on a budget of £180 a week.

The Assistant Controller of Children's Programmes, Donald Baverstock, stepped in and pointed out it was for programme material - the young viewers would be sending in ideas.

And so the famous system of badges came into being. Biddy reckons that up to 80 per cent of the programme's items came from the letters, long before the term 'interactive' was coined.

Every letter was answered, if only with a cursory "Your comments have been noted" for the 'nasty' ones. When Otto Frank came on the programme to show the diaries of his daughter Anne, it prompted an anti-Semitic rant from one viewer.

But the overwhelming majority of letters were from enchanted children.

"It was sensationally wonderful to have them on the edge of their seat," says Biddy. "They used to say you never knew

what was going to happen next. The element of surprise was so important."

This was the magic mix of the programme. Action films showed presenters doing daredevil feats. Charity appeals raised money for homeless families, guide dogs, hospitals, and children in war-torn countries by getting viewers to send in milk bottle tops, old buttons or, of course, to organise bring and buy sales. Biddy fought for the biggest studios so they could stage what they called the 'spectaculars' - whether it was the Band of the Scots Guards or the unforgettable peeing elephant.

But perhaps one of the most popular elements were the 'makes', where household items were used to create everything from advent crowns (coat hangers) to Daleks (egg boxes). The catchphrase "Here's one I made earlier" is still parodied today.

By the time Biddy retired in 1988, she had worked with many presenters. One she speaks most fondly of is John Noakes ('Down, Shep!') whom she hired after reading a review in the Leicestershire Mercury of a play he was in at the time.

But as you can imagine, Biddy was not going to put her feet up. She's a Fellow or President of numerous societies. The most important activity for her is the John Hosier Music Trust she set up in memory of her husband, the music educator whom she met when he was a producer at the BBC. It gives scholarships to gifted music students from poor backgrounds.

Biddy never had any children of her own, but she entranced countless youngsters from all walks of life.

She's reluctant to comment on today's children's television, mainly because she doesn't watch it.

"It's so fragmented," she says. "In its heyday, Blue Peter had an audience of eight million. Now, I prefer Coronation Street."



Biddy (left) filming with Princess Ann (right) in Kenya in the early 1970s.

Plaque erected to jazz legend

A plaque to the legendary jazz pioneer Sidney Bechet (1897-1959) was unveiled by his son Daniel at 27 Conway Street.

Bechet lived there in 1922 when he was playing at venues such as the Rector's Club in Tottenham Court Road and the Philharmonic Hall at 97 Great Portland Street with the Southern Syncopated Orchestra.

He played clarinet and saxophone as well as

composing music.

His son Daniel is a drummer and writer.

The plaque was provided by the Nubian Jak Community Trust.

Also present were Wally Fawkes, the cartoonist and clarinetist who toured Switzerland with Bechet in 1954, and Sue Charteris, a jazz fan who lives in the house and has been dubbed "guardian" of the plaque.



Daniel Bechet describes his father Sidney to jazz fans at the unveiling. Picture by John Crosswaite.



Sue Charteris with the plaque just before it was erected

Scientific hub of the world

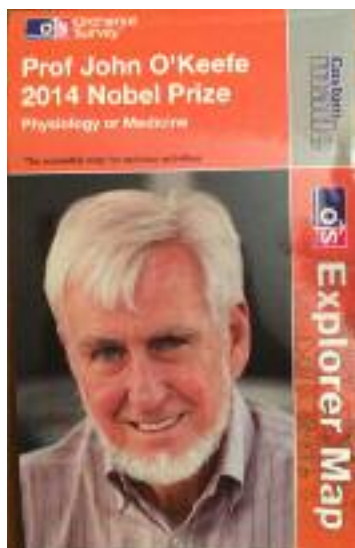
By SUE BLUNDELL

London is now the world's largest scientific hub, according to neuroscientist John O'Keefe. As a 2014 Nobel Prize winner, and the Inaugural Director of the SWC (the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour), he's certainly in a position to know. University College London was chosen over Oxford and Cambridge as the parent institution for the SWC, which will be at the cutting edge of future research into how the human brain works. John's work at UCL over the past 47 years was doubtless one of the factors which helped to determine that choice.

As a long-term resident of Fitzrovia, John is proud that our area is to be home to the new Centre. Work on the Howland Street building is now substantially complete, and the recently-recruited staff are moving in gradually. Forty computational neuroscientists – people who construct mathematical models and need big brains but not a lot of equipment – will be the first to arrive in March. Fifty support staff and the remaining 150 scientists – mainly neuroscientists – will be taking up residence over the next few years, as the SWC's labs are fitted out.

The building was designed by Ian Ritchie Architects, and its planning and construction were 'user-led'. Discussions were held at every stage with the scientists who would be working there, and the team also visited similar institutions in Harvard and elsewhere to learn about the problems such places throw up. "The SWC will be high-tech but small enough for everyone on the staff to know each other," John tells me. He sees it as crucial that the Centre should foster a scientific community in which personal exchanges help to promote commitment and creative thinking.

Most Fitzrovians will be glad to know that the Centre will also have zero spaces for cars, and



ON THE MAP: John and Eileen are keen walkers who praise Ordnance Survey Maps, and liken them to his work on human navigation systems. OS sent him this special one which contains a map of London.

120 places for bikes. Lorries delivering materials will enter and exit the site via a turntable that does away with the ear-splitting manoeuvres generally associated with the departure of large vehicles.

Outstanding women are increasingly coming through at doctoral and postdoctoral level in neuroscience, and SWC appointments are expected to reflect this. SWC staff who are fathers or mothers will have access to excellent nursery provision. Initially an on-site nursery was planned but the team soon discovered that existing local amenities, including the Fitzrovia Community Nursery, could provide enough places. Housing, of course, will be more of a challenge. John hopes that eventually the new site being developed by UCL in Stratford will meet some of the needs of the staff, many of whom will be coming from abroad.

So what about the work of

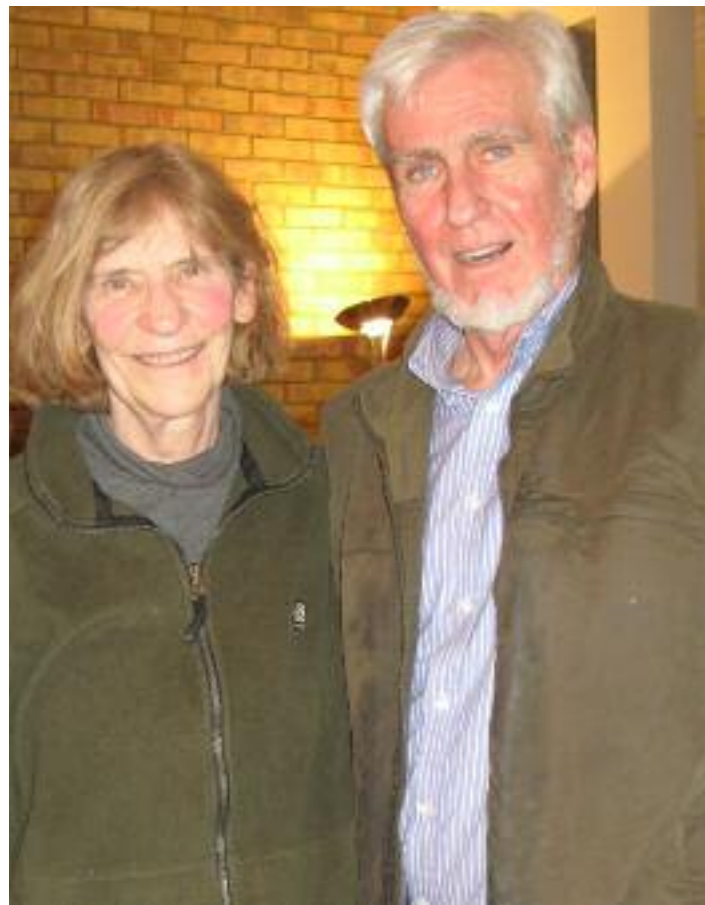
Nobel prize prize winner explains how UCL has overtaken Oxford and Cambridge

the SWC? "Neuroscientists know how single cells work," John explains, "and which parts of the brain do what. But we have to develop techniques which will enable us to figure out how cells interact with each other."

Learning how networks of cells operate is a vital step on the route towards understanding how the brain manages to integrate all the information it processes. Dementia is one of the increasingly urgent problems that this research will help to combat.

So far studies of the behaviour of rats and mice have formed the basis for this kind of work. But in future young fish and even flies may have a role to play. Apparently we humans share a lot with flies, including sexual activity and the ability to navigate. Primates are not used, and John is clearly pleased that the UK is the most regulated place in the world when it comes to animal research.

Outreach will be an important feature of the Centre's activities, and visits to local schools are on the agenda. And if, like me, you find it difficult to get



Eileen and John O'Keefe

your head round what neuroscience tells us about the insides of our heads, then you'll be glad to know that they're also considering some basic talks for adults.

Being awarded the Nobel Prize has made life especially hectic for John in the last few months. Enjoyable aspects have included the informal lunch which the British ambassador in Stockholm laid on for him and the 14 colleagues and family members each winner is allowed to take to the ceremony.

And for someone who was born in New York it was a particular pleasure to go to Washington to receive the congratulations of President Obama. This was John's second visit – he'd been there two months earlier when he won the

Norwegian Kavli Prize. "You back again?" the President said to him. "We'll have to set up a camp-bed." Obama added that he loves talking to scientists, because they belong to a profession where people actually pay attention to evidence.

John's wife Eileen took the opportunity of thanking the President for his recent executive order legalising the position of over three million undocumented migrants to the US. As UK immigrants themselves, John and Eileen know how important the free movement of people can be. And since the ability to recruit the very best scientists in the world depends upon it, it's also closely bound up with the future fascinating work of the SWC.

Welcome back Agra

Agra, 137 Whitfield Street. Well. What a surprise – the Agra is back!

Anyone who has lived in Fitzrovia area for a long time will remember the Agra – one of the best Indian Restaurants in the area, at the Warren Street end of Whitfield Street when second-hand car salesmen lolled and Profumo lied. It was run by an extended family – started soon after the war I believe. In the days when Fitzrovia WAS where "creativity lives" it was always full of students and writers and actors and members of the anti-apartheid movement who had their office in Charlotte Street (when Nelson Mandela



By the DINING DETECTIVE

was in prison and many of the leaders including Oliver Tambo and a young Thabo Mbeki were

living in small rooms in London). The food at the Agra was wonderful and cheap and it was always crowded.

Some years ago the old father died, but the family carried on; then the mother died, and finally the family closed the restaurant a couple of years ago – but did not sell it.

And I am here to report that half (to see how it goes) of the old restaurant has re-opened – under the management of the daughter, Sultana, who ran between the chairs years ago, and the food is STILL wonderful and very reasonable.

We went on a Sunday evening and it was almost full.

Bright lights outside will guide strangers. Somehow it was just as it used to be: all sorts of people, old and young eating curries of every kind. The most expensive dish we had was a beautiful prawn tikka at £11.25 – with a bowl of dhal the perfect meal. One of my dining companions had lamb rogan ghosh (£8.50) and declared it delicious; a third friend, a vegetarian, had three small vegetarian dishes for under £12. Good parathas. With rice, and three small beers, and a 10% (unlike everyone else in the area!) service charge, the bill for three people was miraculously £57.80.

Welcome back Agra!



PICTURE PUZZLE

How well do you know Fitzrovia?

Can you recognise where this bust in this photograph by Mark Thomas is? The answer is at the end of the short story on page 13.

Explosive history of Tottenham Court Road

By MIKE PENTELOW

Tottenham Court Road has an explosive history - literally. A brewery explosion just over 200 years ago (October 17, 1814) saw 10,000 gallons of beer "consigned eight people to a portery grave".

A series of gas explosions on July 5, 1880 killed two workers and injured 25 local residents; and German V2 rockets killed 82 people in 1944.

The first two events are described in a new book called *Bloody History of Camden* by Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms.

The Horseshoe Brewery stood at 269 Tottenham Court Road (where the Dominion Theatre now stands) and was opened in 1809 by Henry Meux. He had previously owned a brewery in Grays Inn Road with his brothers Richard and Thomas. But when Richard went insane Henry and Thomas disagreed on how to run it so sold it and shared the money.

The great porter vat was the talk of the town when it was built - it stood 25 feet high with 22 inch thick walls and contained enough to fill 3,555 barrels, which is about 128,000 gallons.

When it burst on that October day of 1814 at about 5.30 pm "a tsunami of beer" flooded through the street destroying people's homes and killing eight people including three children. Had it been later in the evening when more people were at home the death toll could have been far greater.

Even a pub was drowned out by the beer. This was the Tavistock Arms at 23 Great

Russell Street, where the wall collapsed and the cellar and tap-room were flooded.

And ironically four mourners at a wake were killed by the demon drink.

Amid all the chaos some locals took advantage of the situation by collecting beer in buckets and drinking it.

Apparently one of the iron hoops around the vat had fallen off which caused the disaster.

The brewery lost up to £1.25 million worth of beer at today's prices, and replaced the single vat with seven smaller ones, continuing to brew until 1921.

It had taken its name from the old Horseshoe Tavern which had stood a few doors away at number 262 since as early as 1623 (according to George Clinch in his 1890 book *Bloomsbury and St Giles*).

This pub and hotel was the scene of a murder in 1913 when a demented Armenian-Turkish tailor called Stephen Titus fired a pistol killing the manageress and wounding a barmaid. He was found to be insane and sent to Broadmoor.

It was also where surrealist painters met in the 1930s and 1940s. They suggested to the manager that their paintings could be exhibited in the saloon bar. But when he saw the (now priceless) paintings he was aghast at what they depicted and rejected them, saying: "I'm not having that sort of work in my place!"

Among those who met there and so had their work rejected were Henry Moore, John Nash, Paul Nash, Edouard Mesens,



Eileen Agar, Roland Penrose, and Conroy Maddox. Writers such as J M Tambimuttu also met in the pub and had a friendly rivalry with the artists.

In the 19th century the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti drank there, and after the second world war it was frequented in their days as artists by George Melly (later a jazz singer) and Desmond Morris (later an author famous for *The Naked Ape*).

The pub continued serving beer until its closure in 1983.

The first gas explosion in 1880 was at about 7pm outside the Bedford Head pub (which is now the Jack Horner) at 236-242 Tottenham Court Road, by the junction with Bayley Street.

This is where workmen were replacing the old main gas pipe from Tottenham Court Road along Percy Street, up Charlotte Street, and along Howland Street back to Tottenham Court Road.

They foolishly tested what they thought was the empty new mains with a lighted match. The resulting blast turned one of the workman, Alfred Beavis, into a human cannonball, blowing him 24 feet down the three foot diameter pipe to his death, and his charred face was beyond recognition.

His workmate, Wilfred Burr, was also badly hurt and taken to Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street, where his mangled right leg was amputated at the hip in a vain attempt to save his life.

Six more explosions followed along Percy Street, Charlotte Street and Howland Street.

An eye witness stated: "I felt myself lifted from the ground, and the next moment I was lying among the debris at the bottom of a deep hole in the roadway. The gas nearly choked me, and with much difficulty I scrambled out of the trench.

"A horse and cart were blown into the cavity, the poor animal being shockingly injured, whilst the cart was smashed to pieces by the falling stones and bricks.

"A thick red dust enveloped the street. Some children were also thrown into the trench, and

some of these I helped extricate and carry to their homes."

About 25 were injured and taken to Middlesex Hospital and up to 400 homes damaged, 13 of which were demolished.

The worst hit area was the southern side of Percy Street, particularly numbers 5, 6, 7, 15, 16, and 17. Huge paving stones thrown into the air damaged the buildings up to roof level, and basements were ripped open.

The *Engineer* journal commented: "Rarely has so much damage been done over so considerable an area in the centre of a large town with so little loss of life."

The worst explosion however resulted in 200 casualties when a German rocket struck Tottenham Court Road police station (Nos 55-59) on June 19, 1944.

WPC Bertha Gleghorn was on duty and was buried in rubble from a falling wall at the rear, facing Whitfield Street. She was pulled out alive and rushed to nearby Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street, where she died later that day.

A plaque in her honour was unveiled on the 70th anniversary in Charing Cross Road police station.

The incident was recorded at the time in the diary of Kenneth Holmes, then a teenager working in the General Post Office in Tottenham Court Road.

"There was a tremendous explosion which shook the entire building and threw me across the floor a matter of six or seven yards," he wrote. "I picked myself up and found the room full of dust as though a terrific gust of wind had blown in. I



WPC BERTHA GLEGHORN thought my last hour had come.

"I went out into the street and saw a great pall of smoke rising further down the road, and decided to investigate. But what I saw I will always remember.

"The scene was indescribable, the bomb had crashed about 80 yards away actually at the rear of Tottenham Court Road police station, which is always thronged with people. They were wandering about in a dazed condition, faces streaming with blood. Mothers with bandaged hands, legs and feet, covered all over in dust.

"A horse lay dead, a victim of the surprise attack, shop windows completely blown out and shattered, huge lumps of masonry some smeared with blood, and glass scattered everywhere, ambulances speeding in both directions, civil defence workers already searching for victims."

This account was read from her book *Blitz Diary* by Carol Harris at a talk in Holborn Library on February 17.

Another German rocket also landed in Tottenham Court Road on the corner of Howland Street. The two explosions killed 82 people and injured over a hundred between them.



Henry Meux's Horseshoe Brewery in Tottenham Court Road depicted by artist Joseph Constantine Stadler in 1830. Getty Images



One of the gas explosions in Charlotte Street in 1880.

Pianist now plays with his musical heroes

Clifford Slapper, a professional pianist who has lived in Fitzrovia for 15 years, bought his first record at the age of ten.

It was David Bowie's "Aladdin Sane" album released in 1973. "The incredible avant-garde jazz piano on that record really impressed me and inspired my own piano future," he recalled.

The pianist on that record was Mike Garson, the most frequent member of Bowie's band who played on 19 of his albums and performed live with him on countless world tours over 25 years.

Fast forward to 2006 and Clifford got to perform with his hero on "Extras" the Ricky Gervais television comedy show. Bowie acted himself and in one scene was seen playing the piano. In fact he was miming to Clifford who actually played the music.

"A couple of years after that I met Mike Garson and we got chatting about the Extras show," continued Clifford. "Mike joked about the show and how after seeing it he [Garson] had told Bowie that his [Bowie's] piano playing had come along and he [Bowie] would not need him [Garson] any more.

"Bowie had told him it was not him playing but some English guy. So I said I was that English guy.

"That helped us to bond and we got on like a house on fire. He told me about his background and I was so intrigued I asked if anyone had written his life story. He said no but that I would be the perfect person to do it."

That project has finally been completed after five or more years in which Clifford recorded 25 hours of interviews with Mike and interviewed 30 or 40



Clifford Slapper working with David Bowie. Photo by Ray Burmiston.

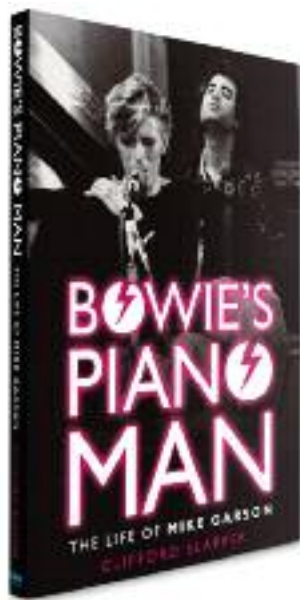
other people who knew him. He had enough material for 400 or so pages but cut it down to just over 200 to make it more manageable. "Maybe we will use more in further editions," he said.

"The book was a labour of love. It is not a chronological account of his life but a tribute to someone who had a huge influence on me, is fully authorised, and hopefully makes people more aware of him.

"Many know he was Bowie's most important collaborator musically, but he is not a household name. Yet he is a classical virtuoso and composer who has written several thousand pieces, has his own trio, and has played with jazz greats such as Stan Getz and rock bands like Nine Inch Nails, and the Smashing Pumpkins.

"He deserves to be better known than he is for he is an extraordinary creative genius."

Back in 1972 Garson was



playing for \$5 a night in New York jazz bars and finding it difficult to support his wife and baby so decided to look for more lucrative work. The very next day he was phoned by Bowie's manager and asked if he would

like to play for him. "David who?" he asked as he had never heard of him. He passed the

audition and was given a cassette with 20 songs on it to learn in a week for their next live show at a major venue.

For a while in the 1980s he took a break from Bowie as he was not finding it enough of a challenge. "But he came back in the 1990s and found it a real epiphany - that simplicity can be emotionally expressive, so he shook off the jazz orthodoxy that complexity was more demanding and so superior," said Clifford.

"He credits Bowie with helping him to discover his own particular voice with elements of jazz, rock and other influences, and allowing him to improvise."

Clifford was just six years old when his parents bought him a toy piano, and he was never off it. Then he got lessons from a Miss Silly and eventually became a professional, playing with Boy George, Suggs, Lisa Stansfield, Jarvis Cocker, Angie Brown, Stereo MCs and Gary Kemp. More recently he has featured on releases by Marc Almond and Holly Johnson. He also writes music for many artists and played the piano as Dudley Moore in a BBC recreation of his sketches with Peter Cook.

Clifford has lived in Store Street, Cleveland Street, and Charlotte Street and does not want to leave the area.

Bowie's Piano Man: the life of Mike Garson, by Clifford Slapper (Fantom Books, £19.99) will be on general sale from March 20 and is now available from http://www.fantomfilms.co.uk/books/cliffordslapper_mikegarson.htm.

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Book reviews

A bodice ripper with a difference

The Petticoat Men, by Barbara Ewing (published by Head of Zeus, £7.99).

Reviewed by BRIAN JARMAN

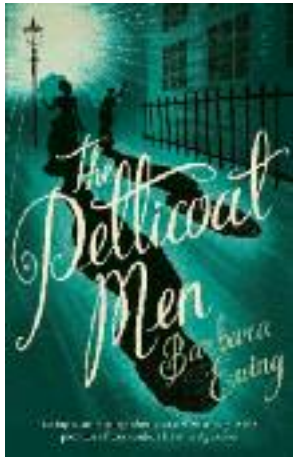
This is a bodice-ripper with a difference: the bodices adorned the bodies of two young men who scandalised Victorian society.

But the term doesn't do justice to this fascinating historical novel which explores the true story of Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park, who today would be called drag queens.

Known on the stage as Stella and Fanny, the pair hobnobbed with the highest echelons of the outwardly high-minded elite, including clergy, nobility and statesmen.

The trouble began when they were busted at a party in the Strand Theatre, and charged with inciting unnatural acts.

It soon becomes clear to the reader, though not to the public at the time, that Boulton had had a relationship with former MP Lord Arthur Clinton. The



peer's sister was Lady Susan Vane-Tempest, mistress of the Prince of Wales. His godfather was.....well, I'll let you discover who. And so the cover-up began.

He died the day after he was subpoenaed to appear in court - officially of Scarlet Fever but the book raises a more likely possibility.

Local author Ewing weaves this complex web into a ripping yarn, thoroughly researched and packed with detail yet readable

at every eager turn of the page.

Her tale is told mainly by Boulton's and Park's landlady at 13 Wakefield Street, south of King's Cross (there's a blue plaque there commemorating the pair) and her daughter Mattie. A narrator charts the role of son Billy, a clerk in the Houses of Parliament, and therefore a fly at the very centre of the web.

The vernacular accounts of Mattie and her mother Isabella add to the striking authenticity of the novel - although may eventually grate on punctuation pedants.

Underlying the gripping narratives is the corruption and cant at the heart of Victorian society, and the class snobbery and injustice that protects the powerful with no regard for the havoc that is wreaked on the weak.

The Petticoat Men is a fine achievement. It smoothly blends social history with a case that in its day was as sensational as the trials of Oscar Wilde.

A whimsical and gripping treat

Salad At The Bad Cafe, by Helene Parry (published by PublishNation)

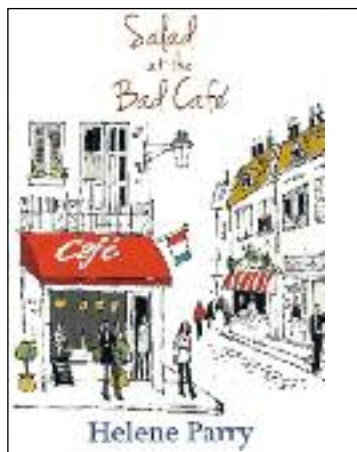
A gripping narrative crafted with wit (and shades of Dylan Thomas) make this an encouraging first novel for Fitzrovia News contributor Helene Parry.

Thomas named the Welsh village in his radio drama Under Milk Wood as "bugger all" backwards - Llaeggub.

Parry also indulges in word play to set her story in the "one-hearse town Pontycynon (alias Ponty Sign-On)" and its French twin town Mauvoisins.

The main character is Holly who decides to spend a year in France on her own feet when her language course French placement falls through.

All kinds of problems befall her and it is clear someone has a vendetta against her. Tracking down her anonymous persecutor is all part of the intriguing plot which has many twists and turns.



There are an abundance of puns, even in the chapter titles such as "Out Of The Fine Plan, Into The Foyer" and "Waitressing For Godot."

There is even the odd spoonerism (as my friend Mal Apropism calls them) like a "saw with a bare head." Thankfully there are not too many as to be intrusive or to detract from the narrative.

My favourites are slightly

adapted comparisons such as "we all got on like a torched holiday cottage."

Little observations, that we can all identify with, enrich it, such as when Holly bought "one of those maps that never went back the right way once you'd unfolded it."

Then there are incidental scenarios such as her English neighbours who "at first thought Dad was Welsh-speaking, until he'd put his teeth in."

The many disparate characters and all their foibles are all well portrayed, as are the interactions between them, covering the whole spectrum of human emotions.

An engaging plot, well rounded characters, and whimsical humour - this little treat has all the ingredients of a good read.

It can be ordered through www.publishnation.co.uk MP

Murder mystery

Doctor Crippen, by Nicholas Connell (Amberley, £20).

Claims that DNA evidence has proved the innocence of Dr Crippen, who was hanged in 1910 for murdering his wife, are conclusively dismissed in this book.

Crippen and his wife lived and worked in Fitzrovia before they both met their end in 1910.

First they lived in **South Crescent** (off Store Street) from 1897 to 1900. Then they returned to America for two years and came back in 1902 when they lived for a year at **34 Store Street**, then two years at **37 Store Street**.

At first Crippen became manager of the Sovereign Remedy Company at **13 Newman Street**, before returning to his previous employer, Munyons Homoeopathic Remedies at 61 New Oxford Street.

During this time Crippen's wife, Cora, whose stage name was Belle Elmore, performed for a week as a comedienne in the Oxford Music Hall on the corner of **Hanway Street**, Tottenham Court Road, and Oxford Street.

On January 19, 1910 Crippen purchased five grains of the poison hydrobromide of hyoscine at Lewis & Burroughs chemists at 108 New Oxford Street, which was a vast quantity.

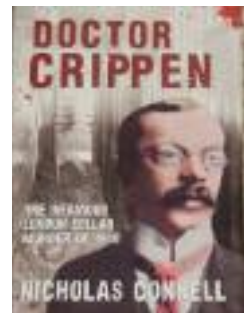
His wife was last seen alive 12 days later. Two days after that Crippen pawned £100 worth of her jewellery at Attenbrough's pawnbrokers shop in **Adam and Eve Court** (between Eastcastle Street and Oxford Street). A week later he returned to pawn another £115 worth of her diamonds. His lover, Ethel le Neve was also seen wearing Belle's brooch, and lived with Crippen.

At first Crippen claimed his wife had left him, and police found nothing when searching his house in Hilldrop Crescent, Holloway. It was only when he left his job and home and fled abroad that suspicions were aroused and police found human remains under his coal cellar.

His description was released and a costumer called Mr Newton in **Great Portland Street** reported that a man answering this description entered his shop "and said he wanted to purchase a lady's costume and underclothes which he said was for himself."

Famously, Crippen and Le Neve (unconvincingly disguised as a boy) were recognised by the captain of the ship taking them to Canada who used wireless for the first time to alert the police who arrested the couple when the ship docked.

To pay for his legal costs Crippen sold all his furniture at an auction in **Oxford Street**, where Madame Tussauds bought his armchair on which they seated his waxwork effigy when his appeal failed and he



was executed.

His solicitor, Arthur Newton, sold a bogus confession to the Evening Times for £500 in the **Langham Hotel**, which claimed Crippen had poisoned his wife with the hyoscine on indigestion tablets and then dismembered her with a surgeon's knife which he hid in the garden. Newton later claimed that Crippen had rather improbably signed a confession before his trial, saying he had been driven to murder his wife by her infidelity, nagging, drinking and jealousy. Newton alleged he had lost or destroyed the confession. He was finally struck off the rolls of the Law Society and jailed.

Crippen said he did not know whose remains were found in his coal cellar, but an operation scar was identified by Home Office pathologist Bernard Spilsbury which matched one that Belle was known to have. Other medical experts disputed it was a scar. But the evidence of Spilsbury, whose laboratory was at UCL, was believed by the jury.

The recent DNA evidence suggesting the remains in the cellar did not match those of Belle's descendants and indeed were male, are dismissed in this book. The author points out that the specimen tested had been handled by at least 17 male police and medical experts which would almost certainly have contaminated it. And he cast doubt on whether the living person whose DNA was compared with it was really a descendant of Cora. MP

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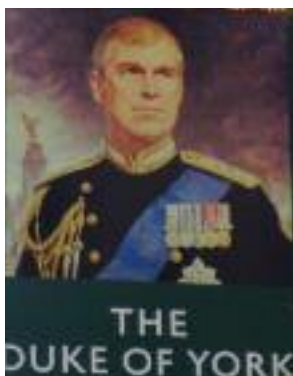
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Slade reject proved tutor wrong

By MIKE PENTELOW

The leader of the Futurist movement in Britain and a successful painter was told at his art school in Gower Street that he had no future as an artist.

The artist was C R W ("Chips") Nevinson (1889-1946), and his tutor at Slade school of art was Henry Tonks, who advised him to give up art and become an orange grower instead.

This was revealed in a Sohemians talk at the Wheatsheaf in Rathbone Place by **Dr Jonathan Black**, author and compiler of the recently published book *C R W Nevinson - The Complete Prints* (published by Lund Humphries, price £150).

When at Slade from 1909 to



C R W Nevinson in 1928 (Fox Photos/Getty Images).

1912 "he enjoyed his time there immensely with other students such as Mark Gertler and Dora Carrington," said Dr Black.

While there he called himself a cockney and a member of the

Coster Gang - "which considering he was born in Hampstead he must have had good ears to hear the sound of Bow Bells." (He was educated at University College School after it had

moved from Gower Street to Hampstead).

After leaving Slade he joined the London Group which met in Fitzroy Street, and Percy Wyndham Lewis's Vorticists and Rebel Art Centre which met in the restaurant at 1 Percy Street.

When the first world war started Nevinson became a driver for the Friends Ambulance Unit (a Quaker organisation formed by his father) and served with it for two years until he was sacked for overstaying his leave.

He then became a war artist, and depicted the reality of dead soldiers in mud and barbed wire in his ironically titled picture *Paths of Glory*. When it was rejected by the military authorities he exhibited it with a "Censored" sign over it. "The authorities then told him that the unauthorised use of a Censored stamp was in itself censored," continued Dr Black. "A real Catch 22 situation." His next picture was also ironically titled - this time it was *Tum-Tiddly-Um-Tum-Pom-Pom*.

After the war in 1919 he and his new wife, Kathleen, moved into a flat over **Warren Street** underground station (Flat 1, 295 Euston Road) and lived there for two years. He produced a London Underground poster showing cockneys dancing on Hampstead Heath which was widely displayed. He also drew a lithograph entitled "Any Street in London" which people speculated was based on one in Peckham but looks remarkably like Warren Street.

He was a member of the Cave of Harmony club in **Gower Street** which was run by actress and cabaret artist Elsa Lanchester, who after official licensing hours served "Russian tea" from a pot which was in fact whiskey. Earlier it had been at 107 Charlotte Street from 1924 to 1925 until it was forced to close because of noise complaints.

Another drinking haunt of his was the Fitzroy Tavern at 16 Charlotte Street, where he sketched customers and the landlord Pop Kleinfeld. One of his friends here was the American novelist Sinclair Lewis who based one of his characters on Nevinson, said Dr Black.

During the second world war, by now in his 50s, he became a stretcher bearer at the Royal Free Hospital, where he was briefly buried in rubble when it was bombed. A short while later he had a stroke which paralysed his right hand so he learned how to paint with the left one.

Just before he died in 1946 he requested that his body be donated to the University College Hospital in Gower Street for medical research, but his widow overruled this and had him cremated.

ART LISTINGS

Continued from back page

GRAD, 3-4a Little Portland St (grad-london.com).

Hanmi Gallery, 30 Maple St (hanmiguallery.co.uk)

Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, 22 Eastcastle St (kashyahildebrand.org): Khaled Al-Saa'i, until Apr 14; Pooya Aryanpour, Apr 23-Jun 6.

Gallery Libby Sellers, 41 Berners St (libbysellers.com):

Josh Lilley, 44-46 Riding House St (joshlilleygallery.com): Vicky Wright, until March 14.

LG London, 2 Hanway Place (lglondon.org): David Cunningham & Yukio Fujimoto until Apr 11; Camilla Wills, May 1-June 13.

Lazarides Gallery, 11 Rathbone Place (lazinc.com): Antony Micallef until Mar 19; Pete Hawkins, Mar 13-Apr 9; Alexandre Farto aka Vhils, Mar 27-Apr 23.

Nancy Victor, 6 Charlotte Place (nancyvictor.com).

National Print Gallery, 56 Maple St

(nationalprintgallery.com): see website for details

Pi Artworks, 55 Eastcastle St (piartworks.com): Mehmet Ali Uysal, until Mar 28; Paul Schwer, Apr 10 - May 9; Yesim Akdeniz, May 23-Jun 7

Pilar Corrias, 54 Eastcastle St (pilarcorrias.com): John Skook, Mar 6-Apr 17; Koo Jeong A, Apr 22-May 15.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (1), 2a Conway St (rebeccahossack.com)

Dione Verulam, until Mar 7.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery (2) 28 Charlotte St

Rook and Raven, 7/8 Rathbone Place (rookandraven.co.uk):

Kirstie Macleod, Mar 6-April 4.

Rosenfeld Porcini, 37 Rathbone St (rosenfeldporcini.com):

Casare Lucchini until Mar 21; Lu Chao. Lanfranco Quadric, Marianna Gioka, Marcel Ruso, Eduardo Stupia, Antonis Donef, Mar 26-May 22.

Richard Saltoun,

111 Great Titchfield St (richard-saltoun.com): The Last Art-of-Peace Biennale, until Mar 20; Helena Almeida, Mar 27-May 22.

Store Street Gallery, 32 Store St (storestreetgallery.com): Michal Lukasiewicz ongoing; London Contemporary Art Launch until Mar 8; Forces of Nature, Apr 13-May 23.

Tiwani Contemporary, 16 Little Portland St (tiwani.co.uk): Ruby Onyinyechi Amanze until Mar 28; Mequitta Ahuja, Kapwani Kiwanga, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum and Alida Rodrigues Apr 10-May 9.

T J Boulting, 59 Riding House St (tjboulting.com): Dominic Hawgood until Mar 11.

Woolff Gallery, 89 Charlotte St (woolffgallery.co.uk): Oona Hassim until Mar 13; Joanne Tinker, Mar-Apr 23; Annemarie Wright, Apr 30-May 15.



Mischievous show is a Turkish delight

By CLANCY GEBLER DAVIES

Turkish artist Mehmet Ali Uysal, famous for his striking and funny work *SKIN* - a giant wooden clothespeg "pinching" the turf at Chaudfontaine Park in Liege, Belgium - is to have his first UK solo show at Fitzrovia gallery **Pi Artworks** London. *SKIN* made *The Independent* newspaper's list of top-10 public art commissions in November last year and was a huge hit with the public.

Uysal's mischievous and playful approach will be in evidence in the new show **BLOCK**, where he toys with preconceptions of gallery space with contorted and deformed pillars, blocks and wall sections.

BLOCK runs until 28 March. Further information is available from Neil Jefferies at Pi Artworks London, 55 Eastcastle Street, London, W1W 8E6, 020 7637 8403, nj@piartworks.com

Looking back

Cancer fear over erection of more mobile phone masts

Permission was granted for two more mobile phone antennae to be erected in the area, despite concerns there were already 83 masts within 500 metres of **All Souls School**.

Head teacher of the Foley Street school, which had 300 pupils aged three to 11, Tim Hunter-Whitehouse, said: "It is unclear the long term safety with phone masts. Our position is they should not be set up near schools."

Tottenham Street resident

10 years ago

Fiona Green was also worried: "Fitzrovia is a residential area, so many people will be affected. Years from now we will know the truth which will be too late for those with cancer."

The draft planning brief for redevelopment of the Middlesex Hospital site was set by Westminster council.

It called for at least 50 per cent of the site to be residential, with 25 per cent of residential

units to be allocated to those with housing need, and 5 per cent to key workers. To encourage families, one third of all housing units (both private market and affordable) should have three or more bedrooms.

Fitzrovia News, March 2005.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In the event just 17 per cent of housing is affordable at the redevelopment on the hospital site, known as Fitzroy Place. See Comment on page 2.

WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email news@fitzrovia.org.uk by May 19 for the June 2015 issue, and put "Listings" in the subject box.

LIVE MUSIC

The Albany, 240 Great Portland St (thealbanyw1w.co.uk): Ukeleles on Wednesday evenings.

All Saints, 7 Margaret St: Organ recital by Charles Andrews, March 8, 7.15pm.

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way: String Quartet Libertadores. March 13, 7.30pm. Free but book by March 11 at culturaembajadalondres@gmail.com.

Jet Lag, 125 Cleveland St: Jamming on Mondays, blues and boogie on Thursdays. NOW DISCONTINUED

King & Queen, 1 Foley St: Folk once a month on Fridays (visit web.mustradclub.co.uk).

Tower Tavern, 21 Clipstone St: Live rock music most Saturdays, 8-11pm.

The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): Spoek Mathambo presents Fantasma, March 5. Rhino's Revenge album launch party, March 6. The Thirst, then Soul All Nighter, March 7. Henry Herbert featuring Big John Carter, March 8. Expertise Rocks, March 12. Mick Ralph's Blues Band, March 14. The Fabulous Lampshades, March 17. The Garden, March 19. The Ramoanas, March 21. Ben Waters, March 28. Tuesday Blues, March 31. An Audience with Arthur Brown, April 2. Mike Sanchez & His Band, April 12. Spector, April 16. The Cockney Rejects, Apr 17. Toyah and the Humans, April 18. Paul Lamb & The Kingsnakes, April 19.

UCL Haldane Room, Gower St: Chamber music concerts, March 13, 1.10-1.55pm, March 24, 5.30-6.30pm.

LIVE COMEDY

The Albany, 240 Great Portland St: Mondays at 8pm.

Fitzroy Tavern, 16 Charlotte St: Wednesdays in basement, doors open 7.30, performance 8.30.

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

PUB QUIZZES

The Albany, 240 Great Portland St: Every Tuesday.

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

The Ship, 134 New Cavendish St: Alternate Tuesdays, 8pm.



Strange Creatures:
The art of unknown animals
16th March to 27th June

Friends of the Museum
Private View
Grant Museum of Zoology
Thursday 26th March
6 to 8pm

This is at the Grant Museum of Zoology in University Street from March 16 to June 27. UCL experts tell stories of medieval accounts of exotic creatures, art from the ages of exploration and empire, contemporary craft taxidermy, and reconstructions of dinosaurs based on cutting edge engineering principles.

ART GALLERIES

Alison Jacques Gallery, 18 Berners St (alisonjacquesgallery.com): Thomas Zipp until March 21; Organic Sculpture, March 27-April 25.

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

Art First, 21 Eastcastle St (art-first.co.uk): Jack Milroy in the main gallery and Mimei Thompson in the project space, March 11-May 1.

Bartha Contemporary, 25 Margaret St (barthacontemporary.com): James Howell, Winston Roeth, Kate Shepherd and Joan Waltemath, March 12-May 2; Vanessa Henn, Clay Ketter and Julia Mangold, May 7-June 20.

Berloni, 63 Margaret St (berlonigallery.com): Presence of Absence group show until March 14; Edward Coyle, March 27-May 9.

Building Centre, Store St (buildingcentre.co.uk): From Ming to Modernity until March 20.

Carroll/Fletcher, 56-57 Eastcastle St (carrollfletcher.com): Evan Roth, March 6-April 11; John Wood & Paul Harrison, Apr 24-May 30.

Coningsby Gallery / Debut Art, 30 Tottenham St (coningsbygalleries.com)

Curwen Gallery, 34 Windmill St (curwengallery.com): Anthony Green main gallery, Thirza Kotzan upstairs, March 5-28; Seascapes main gallery, Adrian Sykes upstairs, April 2-30; Emma Dunbar & Fiona Millais main gallery, Mark Cazalet upstairs, May 7-28.

Evelyn Yard, Evelyn Yard (evelynyard.com): Samuel Levack & Jennifer Lewandowski, Mar 12-Apr 11; Than Hussein Clark in April, Hector Arce-Espasas in May and Jordan Nassar in June.

Framers Gallery @ Artefact, 36 Windmill St (theframersgallery.co.uk): Maqbool Ahmed until Mar 6; Colours of Ghana Mar 24-28; JE Pipkin May 12-23.

Gallery Different, 14 Percy St (gallerydifferent.co.uk)

Getty Images Gallery, 46 Eastcastle St (gettyimages-gallery.com): 10 years of Grazia, until Mar 14.

Continued on previous page

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Roots, March 4. John Bishop, March 5. Crossroads (play about homelessness), March 7. Synergy (UCLU Dance Society), March 12-14. Conversations with Gary Katz, March 22. Amadis de Gaule (amateur opera), March 23-28. We Love Immigration benefit, March 30. Soldier's Tale/Renard (opera and ballet), March 31-April 1. Musical Comedy Awards, April 10. An Evening with Tony Hawkes, April 11. They Live In You (charity concert), April 12. Sean Walsh, April 16-18. Stand Up For AIDS, April 17. Royal Comedy, April 23. Andrew Lawrence, April 24. Count Arthur Strong, May 1-2. One-Way Ticket to Heaven (musical), May 7-8. Radio Stanshall (tribute to Vivian Stanshall), May 9.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cpttheatre.co.uk): Sprint, a festival of daily plays and performances, March 6-29. Gods are fallen and all safety gone, May 12-31. Mass (one woman show), May 23-24.

Dominion Theatre, 269 Tottenham Court Rd (dominiontheatre.co.uk): Lord Of The Dance: Dangerous Games, from March 13.

London Palladium, Argyll St (the-london-palladium.com): Cats The Musical, until April 25. Beyond Bollywood (Indian dance extravaganza), May 8 to June 27.

New Diorama Theatre, 15 Triton St, opposite top of Fitzroy St (newdiorama.com): Sapphire's Push, and Blind Summit's Citizen Puppet, March 3-14. Idle Motion's Shooting with Light, March 24 to April 11. Box of Tricks' Plastic Figurines, April 14-18. The Point of No Return, April 28 to May 23. Incoming Festival, June 1-10.

CINEMA/FILM

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org): All 7.30pm unless stated. Blue and not So Pink, March 6. London Socialist Film Co-op screen films at 11am on the second Sunday of each month: Maria Querida, and Claudia Jones biographies, March 8. Capital, April 12. El Caracazo, May 10.

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

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

UCL Petrie Museum, Malet Place: Justine (1969), March 5, 6pm. The Spy Who Loved Me (1977), March 26, 6pm.

UCL Roberts Building, Torrington Place: Skippy the Bush Kangaroo, March 24, 6.30pm.

TALKS

UCL Darwin Lecture Theatre, Malet Place: (all 1.15-1.55pm): How can we improve growth of small babies before birth? March 10. Nature as an economic asset: a new era for environmental law and policy? March 12. Language and the brain: insights from deafness and sign language, March 17. Rethinking the English country house: "Indians" at home, March 19.

Sohemian Society, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: The Betty May Story, by Celine Hispiche, April 15. Light Entertainment, by John Lloyd, Edward Taylor and Sally Grace, May 15. Adam Faith, by David and Caroline Stafford, May 18. All at 7.30pm.

EXHIBITIONS

Architecture Gallery, RIBA, 66 Portland Place: Works of designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh, until May 23.

British Museum, Great Russell St (britishmuseum.org): Poetry and exile, until March 29. Eight mummies, eight lives, eight stories, until April 19. The body in ancient Greek art, from March 26. Indigenous Australia: enduring civilisation, from April 23. Indian Ocean trade and exchange, until May 31. Prints and propaganda in the age of Napoleon, until August 16. Pacific barkcloth clothing, until Aug 16.

Grant Museum of Zoology, 21 University St (ucl.ac.uk/museums/zoology): Strange Creatures: The art of unknown animals, March 16 to June 27.

UCL Institute of Archeology, Gordon Sq: Voices of war: UCL in WW1, until April 5.

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Rd (wellcomecollection.org): The Institute of Sexology, until Sept 20. Forensics: The anatomy of crime, until June 21.

WALKS

Anarchist Fitzrovia. Sunday March 8, 1pm. Meet at Great Portland Street station ticket office. £4 waged, £2 unwaged.

London Literary Pub Crawl, every Saturday, 5pm. Start at the Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place. LondonLiteraryPubCrawl.com.

Every Street in Fitzrovia guided by Peter Berthoud, May 30, 10 am to 5.30 pm. Book: www.evenbrite.co.uk (£35 plus £1.53).

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