

FitzroviaNews



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

Issue 139 Winter 2015

Michelin starred restaurants contravene food safety and hygiene regulations

By Pete Whyatt

Two out of the six Michelin starred restaurants in Fitzrovia failed to impress food hygiene inspectors who carried out checks in August and September this year and asked the proprietors to take immediate action to comply with legal requirements.

Ollie Dabbous' self-named restaurant, which has been praised for its cuisine by the *Evening Standard's* Fay Maschler and broadcaster Jeremy Clarkson, closed for four days in the summer to address serious failings at the Whitfield Street premises.

Kitchen Table at Bubbledogs was also criticised by food inspectors who asked the management of the Charlotte Street restaurant to take immediate action to comply with regulations.

In a report seen by *Fitzrovia News* inspectors from Camden Council visited Dabbous at 39 Whitfield Street in August and found a catalogue of failings. Dabbous was awarded a Food Hygiene Rating of zero out of a possible 5.

Most of the concerns were with pest control and inspectors demanded that "immediate" action be taken. "There was evidence of mice activity throughout the entire premises. This presented an imminent health risk, that resulted in a voluntary closure. The activity, although being treated and monitored required further measures to bring it under effective control."

Inspectors also found that cleanliness in other areas was poor. The report noted that equipment was not clean and that "immediate" action should be taken.

There was also concern about cross-contamination from preparation of raw foods and "immediate" action should be taken to "prevent harmful bacteria spreading".

In the report Dabbous was "strongly advised to seek the assistance of a food safety consultant".

In a candid response Ollie Dabbous told *Fitzrovia News*:

"We are situated in an old building in central London, so pest control is something that quite literally goes with the territory. We did have some concerns and were unhappy with the services provided by our previous pest controller. We immediately instated a new one, but unfortunately we could not remedy the situation in time.

"We needed to undertake some building works to effectively seal all possible access points. We closed for four days to enable this, and spent thousands of pounds to make

the necessary structural improvements.

"Any other issues that arose were regrettable but dealt with straight away," he said.

"We accept the concerns about cross contamination and have looked to improve accordingly. Every chef in the kitchen takes a food hygiene course and a health and safety course upon induction and every section in the kitchen uses sanitiser.

"The food safety consultant scored us 80 percent just a week after the inspection was carried out.

"The poor score is incredibly disappointing given we scored 5 three years previously, and the professional pride we have. We made some mistakes and there was definitely naivety on our part, but as much as we are disappointed by our current score, we are confident our next inspection will be a totally different story," he said.

In September Camden Council's food safety inspectors visited Bubbledogs at 70 Charlotte Street and rated the premises 1 out of 5 after they found that "staff were unable to demonstrate adequate cooking and reheating procedures".

Kitchen Table is located behind a curtain at the back of Bubbledogs and where head chef James Knappett and his team create a meal to diners seated around an open kitchen. It gained its Michelin star last year.

But food safety inspectors were not happy by the level of food hygiene awareness of staff.

The management of Bubbledogs were told to "immediately" put in place "effective control measures" because "undercooking or not thoroughly reheating these products could lead to food poisoning".

The inspector said: "I strongly recommend that you draw up a cleaning schedule."

In a response to *Fitzrovia News* Sandia Chang of Bubbledogs said: "The details highlighted in the report were rectified immediately at Bubbledogs and the council has confirmed that we have met all requirements. We have requested a re-inspection for Bubbledogs and look forward to a significantly higher rating at the earliest opportunity."

Fitzrovia's four other Michelin starred restaurants scored well on food safety. Hakkasan in Hanway Place scored 4, Pied a Terre in Charlotte Street scored 5, Lima in Rathbone Place scored 5, and Portland in Great Portland Street also scored 5.

The Food Standards Agency ratings range from 0 to 5. Each business is given their hygiene rating when it is inspected by a food safety officer from the business's local authority. Anyone can check the food hygiene rating of restaurants, pubs, cafes, takeaways, hotels, supermarkets and other food shops at food.gov.uk/ratings.



Heroes for a day

All Souls Primary School pupils, Oliver dressed as a knight (left), and Lorenzo as James Bond on Children in Need Be a hero day 13th November. Photo by Etienne Gilfillan



Roland Collins
Fitzrovian artist
centre pages



Lenin in Great Portland Street
page 17



GIGS

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Write to letters@fitzrovia.org.uk or post to Fitzrovia News, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, 39 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RX

Construction sites are endangering children's health

Local families are concerned about the sheer number of large construction projects in the area and the detrimental impact they are having on their children's health and well-being. Neither Westminster nor Camden planning decisions appear to take into account the number or size of projects in the neighbouring borough.

All Souls Church of England Primary School is just on the Westminster side of Cleveland Street and is surrounded by numerous building sites. The large numbers of heavy vehicles, constant noise, poor air quality and blocked pavements are endangering children's health, hampering their journeys to and from school and disrupting their learning.

The school governing body have written to local MPs, Mark Field and Kier Starmer, on behalf of parents requesting they work together to persuade both Westminster and Camden Councils to risk assess and monitor these projects to ensure better air quality management and improved road safety measures. In the longer term it is hoped that there will be stricter limits to the number of projects in any one area.

Emily Evans, Parent Governor

Banned from eating in a public place

Today myself and a colleague went to the new Fitzroy Place. It was dry for an hour so we decided to sit down in the public square and have our lunch. We were approached by a security guard who told us we couldn't have lunch here and we needed to move on. "It's private property," he kept repeating.

When challenged that this was supposed to be open to the public he kept repeating: "It's a private square, private property." We packed up our lunch and left.

Is this the future of Fitzrovia? Corporate plazas that aren't allowed to be used by the public?

I'm sure you'll be as concerned by this Canary Wharf-esque attitude as I am.

Name withheld.

Bring back black bins

Could *Fitzrovia News* please campaign for the return of our large black bins at the end of Gosfield Street. Since their removal a few months ago the entire area is covered in bin bags with litter all over. I know several of my neighbours are upset also.

The last collection is Friday morning and the rubbish really builds up over the weekend.

I am sure mice and rats etc must be on the increase too.

We love our street but the removal of the bins has had a real impact on the quality of our life.

Gosfield Street resident.

A bench for Ruby

Ruby Root sadly passed away on 29th September 2015 at the age of 13, following a brave fight against cancer. Ruby was an outgoing girl with a great sense of humour. She enjoyed socialising and being among her friends. Ruby is much missed by her friends who are fundraising to have a bench installed in her memory. The bench will be located in the Warren playground, right opposite the home where Ruby lived all her life and where she often used to play as a child, so that her family and friends will have a special place to remember her.

<https://www.justgiving.com/A-bench-for-Ruby>

Is the centre still for community use?

I would like to ask why the word "community" has been dropped from the name of the Fitzrovia Community Centre at 2 Foley Street.

Is the centre still intended to be for the whole community?

I thought that was a condition when planning permission was given to the former hospital building for community use.

Name and address supplied.

Police heritage destroyed

I wrote a couple of pieces a few years ago about my father's time as a PC at Tottenham Court Road 1929-39.

I'm promoting my novel, 'Go North, Young Man' by Simon Glyndwr John published by London League Publications (LLP). LLP is only publishing it on Amazon as an ebook. A free downloaded sample of the ebook can be read on any device - PC, Ipad etc.

My association with the area is that I was born in the Middlesex Hospital, and lived in the police flats in Huntley Street until 1968. Those flats are of course now Bloomsbury Terrace. The names of the five policemen that adorned each stairwell have been erased - presumably one can't have expensive flats bearing the name of a policeman.

I have read that those flats house UCH staff but that was only from 1970. My grandfather, another policeman, remembers the flats being built in about 1920 which means the lease would have been up about 1970 hence the change in occupation.

Simon John (<http://simongjohn.com>).



Fitzrovia Youth in Action is supporting this appeal Ruby's friends have already collected over £500. Please help them raise the rest to create a bench for Ruby. All donations are needed and most appreciated!

Free pub lunch for Fitzrovia News deliverers

Fitzrovia News is offering a free pub lunch to anyone who delivers the paper for an hour on Sunday, December 6, and the following issue on Aunday March 6.

Why not bring a friend to help deliver the papers and then enjoy a Sunday roast and a drink with the rest of the team?

Assemble at the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street, between 12 and 12.30pm. Bring a shopping buggy, trolley or bag if you have one.

Fitzrovia News deadlines

Our deadline for news, features, letters and adverts is normally two weeks before publication. Sometimes we accept articles later.

The next issue of *Fitzrovia News* will be out on Tuesday 1 March. Deadline is Friday 12 February.

news@fitzrovia.org.uk

Corrections and clarifications

In News in Brief on page 2 of FN138 we incorrectly stated that Saatchi & Saatchi had "said goodbye to Fitzrovia" and that demolition of the 80 Charlotte Street and 65 Whitfield Street would commence in September. However, Saatchi & Saatchi is not due to move to Chancery Lane until spring 2016.

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

Many news articles first appear on our website which is updated weekly. Edited versions are then published in the printed paper which is published quarterly.

The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association annual general meeting Monday 14 December 2015 from 6:30pm

Venue: FCB Studios, 20 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RG.

Anyone who lives and works in Fitzrovia is invited to attend Attendees are invited to arrive from 6.30pm for drinks and snacks before the formal meeting takes place from 7pm to 8pm.

The meeting will review the work of the charity over the past 12 months, its accounts, and discuss the future of the organisation as well as the changes to the neighbourhood.

At 8.30pm after the formal business of the meeting is dealt with attendees are invited for drinks, snacks and to socialise at the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RX.

Developer buys Oxford Street and Hanway Street buildings in Crossrail 2 land grab

One of London's largest property developers has announced that it has bought a number of small properties on the corner of Oxford Street and Hanway Street, triggering speculation that it is planning a large scale redevelopment on the back of proposals for Crossrail 2.

Derwent London acquired the buildings situated above the Tottenham Court Road station which connects passengers to the Central and Northern tube lines as well as Crossrail and a proposed Crossrail 2 line.

This autumn Transport for London (TfL) announced that buildings on the corner of Oxford Street and Rathbone Place would be demolished to make way for a new station entrance and a Crossrail 2 tunnel construction site if the proposals get the go ahead. *Fitzrovia News* was told by TfL that the Hanway Street buildings are not included in the area and not under threat of demolition.

However, Derwent's latest land grab is east of and immediately next to the Rathbone Place area and consists of 50 Oxford Street, and 36-38 and 42-44 Hanway Street. In an announcement last week the real estate investment trust (REIT) said it paid £14.5million at £2,395 per square foot for the mostly Georgian buildings "adding to our significant Fitzrovia Estate."

The news will cause alarm for residents and businesses in the Hanway Street area, as well as conservation groups.



50 Oxford Street (middle of picture) and neighbouring buildings in Hanway Street

The intimate little warren of streets straddling two conservation areas is currently under siege from various property developers capitalising on land values and the Tottenham Court Road "opportunity area".

Derwent has a reputation for acquiring properties only to demolish them. The developer may be wanting to consolidate its property around the Tottenham Court Road Station ahead of Crossrail 2 works. It already owns commercial and residential buildings in Rathbone Place and Gresse Street, all of which would likely be compulsorily purchased and demolished to enable Crossrail 2 to go ahead.

Previously at nearby Charing Cross Road, Derwent bought the Astoria Theatre ahead of its compulsory purchase and subsequent demolition for Crossrail but held an option to buy the site back again for development.

Derwent may be looking to acquire a cluster of buildings next to the proposed station entrance to enable it to redevelop several buildings, maximising and consolidating floorspace after construction of Crossrail 2.

We asked Derwent London about their intentions and to comment on our report but they declined to make any statement.



Bradley's Spanish bar on the ground floor and basement of 42-44 Hanway Street.

News in brief

Camden Cyclists have praised Camden Council for closing Tavistock Place to motor traffic westbound and for doubling cycling capacity. Meanwhile **London's taxi drivers** have been less generous. Many of the comments about Camden's environment chief Phil Jones are not fit to print.

Derwent London, the property developer which has been chomping its way through buildings in Fitzrovia, has also angered **London's taxi trade**. In neighbouring Islington, Derwent has told the **Knowledge Point Cab Driver** school in Caledonian Road that it has to leave its premises by 18 December to make way for much needed luxury flats.

Up-and-coming Charlotte Street based property developer **English Rose Estates** has told **Camden Council** that it cannot afford to pay an affordable housing contribution on a luxury flat scheme in Covent Garden. English Rose is offering £250,000, much less than the policy-compliant £1.4million. A planning inspector is due to settle the dispute.

Dukelease Properties has sold its interest in 31-36 Foley Street despite gaining planning permission to convert the offices into luxury flats. **Kier Property**, in a joint venture with **Investec Bank**, plans to refurbish the existing offices, and extend the building to house technology, media and communications businesses.

In an article in the *Evening Standard*, **estate agent** Tony Dobbins at **Hudsons Property** in Charlotte Street seems to have got lost while looking for buildings to flog. He wrote about drinking coffee in Kaffeine on Eastcastle Street which he says is in Soho.

University College London (UCL) will carry out construction work on the Courtauld

... Continues on page 5

Something to smile about

FNA get comic relief grant



FNA Centre workers Barb Jacobson, Rumanna Akther and Samina Dewan

The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association is very grateful to Comic Relief which, along with City Bridge Trust, is providing the match-funding needed to continue providing welfare, housing and debt advice for the next three years. The Centre is also very happy to welcome back advice worker Rumanna Akther on Tuesdays!

Sessions are: General drop-in 10am-1pm Tuesdays; Women's drop-in 11am-1pm Wednesdays. Other times by appointment only, call 020 7580 4576. The grants will also enable evening sessions with Law Works in the new year to provide some private rental and employment advice with a solicitor – watch this space!

Barb Jacobson Co-ordinator, Older Fitzrovia, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre 39 Tottenham Street W1T 4RX 020 7580 4576



Fitzrovia in bloom. Is this the best roof garden in Fitzrovia? asks Sue Blundell who received this picture in response to our appeal in the last issue. It is at 87 Great Titchfield Street, where the residents include Tony Craig, Ellie Green, and Gwilym Harbottle and his wife Helengal.

Plaque to be erected for life saver

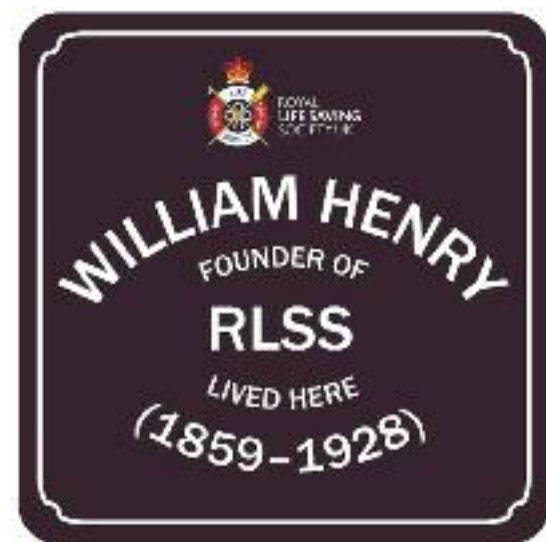
The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), the drowning prevention charity, has applied to Camden Council for Listed Building Consent to erect a sign on the front of 8 Bayley Street. The plaque is in preparation for the 125th anniversary of the charity in 2016.

Champion swimmer, William Henry was one of the organisers of the aquatic events in London's 1908 Olympic Games. He formed The Swimmers' Life Saving Society in an attempt to reduce the number of lives lost each year in drowning accidents in the UK.

He spent the next 40 years devoted to the cause of lifesaving, but he also led a fascinating and successful career as a sportsman. In 1906, at 46, he became the oldest ever Olympic medal winner in swimming as a member of the British relay team which won the Bronze medal.

William Henry was of Polish ancestry and was born Joseph Nawrocki.

Today RLSS UK has around 10,000 members and continues to work in educating to prevent



drowning and reduce the number of deaths from it across the UK.

Charlotte Place features on cover of Rowling crime novel



The cover of *Career of Evil*, the third *Cormoran Strike* mystery, features a photomontage of Charlotte Place and *The Duke of York's* sign is replaced with *The Tottenham*.

by Helene Parry

Oxford had Inspector Morse, Glasgow had DCI Taggart. Now *Cormoran Strike*, private investigator, is patrolling the mean streets of Fitzrovia.

You may not have heard *Cormoran Strike's* name before, but you will certainly recognize that of his creator — JK Rowling. Writing under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, the wizard storyteller has produced three detective novels set in contemporary London. Mr *Strike*, a private investigator based in Denmark Street, delves into shocking crimes that lead him through Mayfair, Soho, and into the darker side of Fitzrovia's literary haunts.

Cormoran Strike has featured in three Galbraith novels so far — *The Cuckoo's Calling*, *The Silkworm* and *Career Of Evil*, the last of which was published this October. This latest book in the series offers more than word pictures of late-night Fitzrovia — its cover features a photomontage based on Charlotte Place.

Other venues in and around Fitzrovia feature in the series. *Cormoran Strike's* office is upstairs above the 12 Bar Club music venue in Denmark Street, and *The Tottenham* pub (now renamed *The Flying Horse*) on Tottenham Court Road also appears.

Next year, the British viewing public will be able to shadow Mr *Strike* around his Fitzrovia haunts. The first two Robert Galbraith novels are to be adapted for a BBC One drama series. JK Rowling will be an executive producer on the series, which will be produced by Dan

McCulloch and directed by Julian Farino.

Danny Cohen, Director of BBC Television, says "It's a wonderful coup for BBC Television to be bringing JK Rowling's latest books to the screen. With the rich character of *Cormoran Strike* at their heart, these dramas will be event television across the world."

JK Rowling is not the only contemporary novelist to have been inspired by Fitzrovia. Humourist Danny Wallace's debut novel, *Charlotte Street*, begins with an accidental encounter in that very thoroughfare, and regularly mentions the Fitzroy Tavern.

"It had been a hub for artists and intellectuals and bohemians in the 20s and 30s and 40s," says the novel's hero, Jason. "They'd crowd each corner... swapping ideas, arguing drunkenly, fighting and loving, until the pub came to define the whole area. George Orwell drank here, Augustus John. Now it was people like me... You couldn't help but think that if a pub could look a little disappointed, it would be just a little disappointed right now."

It's plain that Danny Wallace conducted serious research into the hostelrys of Fitzrovia. Of his visits to the Newman Arms in Rathbone Street, he jokes: "People must have been much smaller whenever it was built!"

For more on the *Cormoran Strike* murder mysteries, see robert-galbraith.com.

Charlotte Street by Danny Wallace is published by Ebury Press.

Community dinner

Local charity Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) are holding a free Christmas community dinner for local people. There will be a full roast dinner (Halal) cakes and drinks as well as entertainment on stage, and bingo and prizes.

Christmas Community Dinner, 1pm to 4pm, Monday 21 December at Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 6AQ. Limited spaces available. Please book by contacting youth@fya.org.uk or calling 020 7388 7399



Late hours cut for five star hotel in Berners Street

Residents living near the The London Edition hotel, 10 Berners Street complained of noise nuisance from people entering and leaving the premises at a late hour, from customers smoking outside and from taxis and cars picking up or dropping off patrons.

The Licensee denied that a public nuisance was still being experienced by residents late at night saying it had taken measures to address this. It was stated that the music nights held in the basement had been discontinued at the end of June and there were now different uses of the function room.

At a review of the premises licence held on 17 September Westminster City Council's licensing sub-committee agreed that public nuisance was caused by the dispersal of patrons. In addition to attaching specific conditions, the committee reduced the terminal hours for licensable activities in the basement on a Sunday to 22:30, from Monday to Thursday to midnight, and on Friday and Saturday to 01:00.

The hotel was previously allowed to sell alcohol and carry out other licensable activities until 01:00 seven days a week.

Residents were supported with their concerns by West End Ward Councillor Jonathan Glanz who said:

"After consulting with residents, it was clear that the level of nuisance felt by residents locally was not acceptable. I lobbied the committee meeting to oppose the license or impose suitable conditions."

Enchanted grove in Fitzrovia

The Mary Ward Centre, college of adult education, led a project, working with British Museum community arts group and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association womens art group. The project *Celts: The Enchanted Grove* gathered inspiration from the patterns and designs of early and modern Celtic artefacts whilst exploring their hidden and often magical references. The idea was to create a mystical grove of trees decorated with illuminations. It sits amongst a bed of leaf patterns using leaf shapes important to Celtic life such as oak, ash and thorn.

The groups researched and explored different aspects of Celtic art to create their designs to make the woodland. It looked at imagery on the Gundestrup Cauldron, considered patterns on Celtic coins, experimented with interlacing work and knot patterns, and made artistic reference to the Celtic illuminations from the Book of Kells. The *Enchanted Grove* illustrates how the groups have re-created these designs and concepts into the leaves and surface textures of trees including lichens, moss and bark whilst giving consideration to the playful concept of hidden animals and beasts so apparent in Celtic art.

The art project was displayed at the British Museum Great court from 1 December 2015 for two weeks.

Is this Fitzrovia's most expensive let?



Archive picture of 33 Fitzroy Square when it was London Foot Hospital

A house in Fitzroy Square can be rented for £3,468 per night. Yes, per night - not a month or so.

Mind you it sleeps eight people and has four bedrooms and three bathrooms.

It is the Georgian townhouse at Number 33, advertised on the website www.tripadvisor.co.uk as: "Spread across six storeys, with both an elegant central staircase and a handy lift to whisk you from the wine cellars to the second floor. The drawing room has golden pillars, while the adjoining dining room seats eight beneath a tangle of crystal.

The cinema room is particularly slick, with nine Eames chairs in front of its huge screen, and the four bedrooms are similarly indulgent. And whether you'd prefer to luxuriate in the freestanding bath or beneath the cascade from a double waterfall shower, this home may just be your rest cure.

Additional amenities include: concierge service, 24 hour on call maintenance, breakfast bar, hob (gas), communications/internet, entertainment."

The rooms can also be hired for events, parties, press launches or receptions. The website www.appearhere.co.uk states its 12 rooms over five floors can be hired for £7,000 a day, plus a £2,000 deposit against any damage. There is a maximum capacity of 120 people and no loud music is allowed after 10.30pm. The landlord needs to approve all projects with the local residents association, therefore this may take some time.

33 Fitzroy Square was in the early part of the century home to Roger Fry and the Omega Workshop it was converted to a foot hospital in the 1920's and in 2005 the owner was granted planning permission for use as a private dwelling house.



Some of the Celtic craft items produced by the FNA women's art group.

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In central London's first new square in over 100 years you are not allowed to eat or drink

Property developer Exemplar boasts that its Fitzroy Place scheme has the first new public square in central London for over 100 years. But it turns out the public are not allowed to sit down and eat a sandwich there.

In fact Pearson Square which has City of Westminster signs on it may be a pedestrian thoroughfare but it is being treated as a private space and patrolled 24 hours a day, seven-days-a-week by security guards working for the estate managers Jones Lang LaSalle who will monitor any infringement of its petty rules.

If you fancy a picnic on a sunny day, as many of the thousands of people who live and work in Fitzrovia do, you won't be welcome and the uniformed bouncers will politely tell you to go away.

One office worker wrote to *Fitzrovia News* to relate his experience on a lunchtime in November.

"Myself and a colleague went to the new Fitzroy Place, it was dry for an hour so we decided to sit down in the public square and have our lunch.

"We were approached by a security guard who told us we couldn't have lunch here and we needed to move on — 'it's private property' he kept repeating.

"When challenged that this was supposed to be open to the public he kept repeating 'it's a private square, private property'.

"We packed up our lunch and left.

"Is this the future of Fitzrovia? Corporate plazas that aren't allowed to be used by the

public?" he wrote (see letters page 2).

It seems very different from what architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands proudly described as "an impressive new public space" which promised to open up the site to the surrounding streets and create new routes.

But more importantly, planning permission for the 95,000 square metre residential and office development was granted because it met criteria set out in Westminster City Council's policy which welcomes provision of public open space — space that is essential for a growing working and residential population.

The City Council's planners in their assessment of the plans stated that while the public open space would have 24 hour management by security staff and CCTV, the plans as presented to the planning committee were described as having "seating for adults to relax and space for children to play".

Planning officers considered it to be "a major benefit to the community and in accordance with local planning policy that seeks to encourage new amenity space provision".

However at Pearson Square that provision has been curtailed by a style of management which is controlling behaviour with ridiculous rules, and would appear to be in breach of the planning permission given.

The space was partially opened as a walkway between Riding House Street and Mortimer Street in November and the route through to



Pearson Square in Fitzroy Place. "Is this the future of Fitzrovia? Corporate plazas that aren't allowed to be used by the public?"

Cleveland Street and the children's play space is expected to be opened in early 2016.

Fitzrovia News tried to contact Kim Southgate of Jones Lang LaSalle who manages the Fitzroy Place estate but she has declined to return our calls or email.

However we understand

from talking to the security guards that while people are welcome to quietly walk through and sit down, there would be no skateboarding, eating, drinking or smoking allowed. Dogs can be walked but you will not be encouraged to linger, we are told, because of the risk of fouling the pathways.

News in brief

... Continued from page 3

building from February 2016 until the end of summer 2017. There will be a permanent road closure along **Riding House Street** between Nassau Street and Cleveland Street while they cause noise nuisance and deface the building.

Dr Lucy Thomas is leaving the **Fitzrovia Medical Centre** in December after more than 10 years in post.

The promised **new open space at Alfred Place** — part of Camden's West End Vanity Project — maybe "temporary", until it is permanent (whatever that means) according to Camden Council.

Winter Party

Fitzrovia Centre in Foley Street is throwing a Winter Party in December. Enjoy seasonal nibbles and drinks; with music performed by the talented musicians of FitzFest.

Winter Party, 6pm to 9pm, Thursday 10 December, Fitzrovia Centre, 2 Foley Street, London W1W 6DL. Free event, but please confirm you will be attending, by contacting arts@fitzroviacentre.org

Flood at new school hall

A new hall built in the Fitzroy Place development for All Souls Primary School has been flooded this autumn.

"It has happened twice," confirmed the school, "but we are working well with the management company which is doing its best to resolve it."

The school is also looking for a Premises Manager. Apply: office@allsoulsprimary.co.uk

City West Homes apologises to residents for delayed maintenance on homes

Residents in Hanson Street are furious with City West Homes for the shambolic way it has carried out maintenance works on Westminster Council housing stock, writes Linus Rees.

City West Homes (CWH) manage the properties under an arms length management agreement (ALMO) for the City Council. Maintenance works for seven housing blocks in Hanson Street should have been completed by the end of July but the work has dragged on and will not be finished until mid-January — more than five months late.

One local resident has taken to blogging about the experience and describes what he and his neighbours have had to put up with for months on end. In his blog he has described the chaotic way CWH and its contractors Axis Europe have been carrying on and how scaffolding and green netting has covered the the buildings leaving residents in near darkness.

"Seven buildings, each with about 11 flats, are home to a mix of households, including many elderly and disabled people. Over one hundred people who for more than six months have been deprived of natural daylight."

"The access points to the scaffolding have been situated in front of the doors to the flats. As a result when the ladders are in place the entrances to the flats are obstructed.

"The scaffolding obscures the house names and street numbers which means delivery services can't identify the addresses they need, and deliveries have been delayed. At the request of residents Axis Europe, the contractor



carrying out the work for CWH, put up signs with the house names, but not numbers.

"Between May and August no real work took place. People living in Hanson Street lost their summer. For elderly and disabled residents, unable to escape the confines of their flats, life must have been grim. And it still is," he says.

Only after residents got together and wrote to the CEO of CWH did they get anywhere. But even after they met with managers the chaos continued.

Quality of work has been so bad that a new team of decorators had to be called in for work to be done again. And it took Axis Europe a very long time to admit that the work was not good enough, say the residents who

describe the relationship with CWH as difficult, and at times workers on site have been careless and unfriendly.

In a statement to *Fitzrovia News* City West Homes apologised to residents for the delay saying:

"Unfortunately the major works programme at Hanson Street has been delayed until January 2016. This is due to unforeseen roofing works. CityWest Homes was unable to proceed with works until the roofing had been rectified and we apologise for the delay caused.

"The full scope of works at Hanson Street includes roofing, window overhauls, replacing tenant front doors with fire standard doors, communal decorations, external masonry and external painting.

We are meeting with residents of Slowley House every week to update them on the progress of works. The quality concerns raised by residents have been fully investigated and we've taken immediate action to resolve the issues raised.

"While scaffolding has been on site, the fire exits / main doors have been fully accessible. It was necessary to put scaffolding up and over the roof, as the properties are in a narrow street in the heart of the West End.

"The comfort of our residents and the high quality of works are priorities for us. We hope that residents will continue to talk to us with any concerns they may have to help us ensure the work is completed to the highest standard," they said.

Fitzrovia News understands that Jonathan Cowie, CEO of City West Homes, has now agreed to meet with residents to address their outstanding concerns.



Mosaic murals set to brighten up school side in Riding House Street

The parents and governors of All Souls Primary School have applied to Westminster City Council for listed building consent to place three mosaic murals on the school wall at Riding House Street. The idea came from a parent and the mosaics were designed by children over the summer using the theme "London our community" and feature London landmarks The London Eye, BT tower, The Shard and London buses. The murals are being co-ordinated by artist Tamara Froud who specialises in collaborative projects engaging community groups. This project is part of the "Fitzrovia Community Fund 2015" funded by property developers Derwent London. Westminster Council officers are recommending the application for approval and the application should be determined by mid December.

Opening and closing shops

Closed

Christine's Express convenience store
132 New Cavendish Street
Apostrophe coffee shop
Market Place 40-41 Great Castle Street
In Spaces marketing/displays 3 Tottenham Street
Thai St restaurant 23 Foley Street
Perugino café 10 Tottenham Street
Sushi So restaurant 339 Euston Road
Black Truffle shoes, handbags 52 Warren Street

Opened

Diligence Security Solutions 55 Warren Street
Oliver Bonas fashion, jewellery, homewares
37 Eastcastle Street
Mimi's bar and lounge 20 Newman Street
H Mart Korean supermarket
115 Tottenham Court Road
The Ninth restaurant 22 Charlotte Street
House of Ho Oriental restaurant 1 Percy Street
Patara Oriental restaurant 5 Berners Street
Italiahome furnishings 22 Eastcastle Street
Tokyobike bikes accessories 14 Eastcastle Street
DF Mexico dining Unit H Tottenham Court Walk
Leon healthy fast food Unit G Tottenham Court Walk



Piquet restaurant 92 Newman Street (see dining detective page 15)

Hotel Chocolat Unit F Tottenham Court Walk
T2 tea and tearware Unit E Tottenham Court Walk
Planet Organic food store café Unit D Tottenham Court Walk
Oasis clothing Unit C1 Tottenham Court Walk

Opening soon

Nationwide Building Society
220 Tottenham Court Road
Detox Kitchen 10 Mortimer Street



Playground gets a makeover

Six members of the Fitzrovia Trust spent three hours moving a mountain of new bark on to the playground surface in the Whitfield Street playground. So the Fitzrovia Community Playground is now better than ever. Next spring there will be some more replanting. Photograph by Nick Bailey.

Waiter became a billionaire

A billionaire property developer whose first job was as a waiter in the White Tower restaurant, 1 Percy Street, has died aged 69.

Chris Lazari was born in Cyprus, where he went to school with its current president, Nicos Anastasiades. Lazari emigrated to London at the age of 16 with just £20 in his pocket.

He saved up his money from working in Percy Street to pay for studying fashion design. This he used to set up the Drendie Girl clothing business which became very successful.

These profits he invested in small properties in 1978 "to secure my young family's financial position."

By 2002 he owned considerable commercial and residential properties in the West End including two acres in Tottenham Court Road. Last year he bought the Brunswick



Centre in Bloomsbury for £135 million.

His fortune was estimated to be £1,450 billion, and he was ranked the 65th richest person in the UK.

He died a few hours after dining in Andreas restaurant at 40 Charlotte Street where he was a long time friend of the proprietor.



Save BBC campaign seeks support

A campaign to save the BBC from government attacks has been launched by the National Union of Journalists and has the support of its members at Fitzrovia News.

Called "Love It Or Lose It" it states that the green paper threatens to downsize the BBC. People are being urged to contact their MP (including via the Write to Them website) and to use the hashtag LoveitOrLoseitBBC.

More details are available on the union's website: nuj.org.uk/campaigns/love-it-or-lose-it.

From dockyard worker to top lecturer

Keith Crook, the dockyard worker who became assistant principal of Cavendish College in Alfred Place, has died aged 66.

From a large working class family of eight children he started working in Portsmouth shipyards which, according to his brother Danny, "bored him to tears."

So he came to London in about 1970, living in student halls in Charlotte Street, and graduating from the London School of Economics and gaining a masters degree in economics, marketing, and international relations. Then he became a school teacher but soon gave this up to become a successful adult lecturer.

After a brief stay in Berwick Street he moved to Hanson Street and then Newman Street where he spent the rest of his life.

"He was a radical leftwinger that we all loved," said Danny. "He marched with the miners on strike against Thatcher, and wanted to be



Keith Crook

buried next to Karl Marx in Highgate." Sadly that was not available so he was buried near family members in Milton Cemetery in Portsmouth with a red flag draped over his coffin.

"He had a cancer operation ten years ago, and over two years ago

they gave him six months to live. The old bugger lasted well over that. He had a high tolerance of pain."

Many would know him and his wife Ann Goodburn from the Duke of York pub in Rathbone Street where they would sup Guinness and do crosswords most nights. The pub hosted a "pre-funeral wake" for him where customers paid tribute to him.

His friend John Westwell admired Keith's grasp of economics and recalled betting with him that the Greeks would drop the euro and return to the drachma. "The stake was a pint of Guinness. Needless to say it was Keith that won."

On a trip to Belgium with some other friends he recalled strolling along a beach with a rough sea. Keith failed to jump fast enough from a particularly large wave, which drenched his leather shoes. "He found this amusing and never grumbled about it despite his cold and wet feet. I shall miss his dry sense of humour."

Is there such a thing as community in Fitzrovia?

We sent our reporter and photographer Etienne Gilfillan (right) in search of the views of local residents



Angela Nicholson

It is about everybody looking after each other

"Community spirit is about everybody being together and looking after each other," said Angela Nicholson, who has lived in the area for 15 years.

"The neighbourhood centre is important for this and you can go there for advice.

"There is a need for that, especially for the transient population who maybe don't know the people or the area yet.

"It is a matter of pride to be part of a community. And it is especially good if you have got a family so the children know they are not alone.

"All Souls School is a little community in itself, and all the parents get to know each other as well as the children.

"Also Fitzrovia Youth in Action do a lot of good and hold street parties every year.

"It is not only about the people who live in the area but also those who work and shop in it. The shops and restaurants and pubs are all good for getting to know people.

"You get to know your neighbours and there is never any kind of hostility."

She added: "Living in a community surrounded and overshadowed by a vast amount of businesses, some of whom don't even know that there are pockets of communities, can sometimes seem daunting. But without some of their support from time to time communities and charities wouldn't survive."

Joint action got us play areas

"It was joint community action by the Neighbourhood Association, the Charlotte Street Association and the Play Association which got The Warren and the Crabtree Fields play areas opened," said Jean Sveinsson, who lives in Percy Street.

"Both of these are essential for my eight-year-old grandson Lemar.

"Community spirit is very important as it gives you a sense of place. The great thing about the area is you meet diverse people and anything goes between them.

"It is a difficult situation for rents now, and for new people coming in it makes a bigger problem as they don't know anyone. They need advice and that is why the Neighbourhood Centre is at the hub of it all, and why we must keep it.

"As more people are strapped for cash they need to know where they can go and relax, and get advice, which is another reason to keep the Neighbourhood Centre going.

"We need to guarantee people living here are not forced out by rich people coming in and buying luxury flats. In all, the area caters for everyone rich and poor at the moment and it is a good community. It is important we all stick together and keep it that way.

"Other places have community halls that are virtually free for access, whereas we have not really got anything like that. And it is a shame there are no libraries, the nearest one was in the Regent's Park Estate and that is now closed.

"There is a fantastic community spirit in the schools and churches, including the Clubhouse.

"All Souls School is excellent at raising funds to take the children to the theatre, and it is currently doing a project with the National Gallery.

"Fitzrovia Youth in Action motivate a lot of kids, but should publicise their activities more because it is all free."



Jean Sveinsson



Mustafa Schzade

My neighbour did my washing

Mustafa Schzade has lived in the area for 45 years and thinks the community spirit was stronger when he first came than now.

"The area was like a village then with market stalls in Great Titchfield Street, a butcher, a hardware shop and a launderette," he said.

"Everyone knew each other and helped each other out. I remember my neighbour, a retired nurse from Middlesex Hospital, did my washing for me because I was at work all the time in the catering trade.

"Now I know only one person in my block of ten flats. You meet one or two but the rest seem to rent a flat for just a week.

"There are rich people who only live in their flat a few days a week and don't mix with people.

"Whereas we used to go to the local pubs and meet there. I used to almost live in my local, the Yorkshire Grey in Langham Street. We always met there for a roast meal on Sundays, when I would open fire. The pub even had its own cricket team.

"The area has completely changed and people don't know each other so much."

Aged 68, he is now retired, cooks at home, and walks five or six miles a day in a different direction each time.

Tell us your views. See page 2 for how to contact us.



Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her family



The Magician

Dozens turned out for the unveiling of a plaque for the late **Richie Parkes** at the One Tun in Goodge Street. Inscribed Richie Parkes "Magician" it was unveiled by his good mate **Joe Matthey** (above), who recalled that Japanese television producers misheard his profession of musician as magician and captioned him as such on screen. Some of Richie's tales in his favourite pub were indeed magic, if a little tall at times.

Present at the unveiling were pub regulars and colleagues from the Performing Rights Society formerly in Berners Street where Richie worked before opening time. They provided an early photograph (below) of a young Richie producing a performance of his own (singing rather than playing the harmonica).



Continuous sale

I am glad to see that the "closing down sale" notices have finally been removed from Wallers mens outfitters in Great Portland Street, many months after the threat of closure was removed. Now they advertise a "stock clearance sale."

Radio fun

The *Yorkshire Grey* in Langham Street is known as Studio YG1 by nearby Broadcasting House employees who frequent it. One of them was the recently deceased chief radio newsreader **Peter Donaldson**. Fellow newsreaders paid tribute to him in *Radio Times*.

Corrie Corfield recalled how he wrote out his annual appraisal of her on a beer mat in the pub in front of her.

Charlotte Green remembered him calling her Carlotta Verdi, then taking her to the pub to crack open a bottle of merlot.

And **Libby Purves** related how for a joke he announced himself as Donald Peterson one morning on the radio.

Other comical errors included referring to President Clinton having a meeting not at the White House but the White Horse (his favourite pub), and on Britain leaving the exchange rate mechanism instead of "in the city" he mispronounced it as "in the sh*ty" (which was equally accurate).

He would also have been the newsreader in the event of a nuclear attack. During a rehearsal in 2005, he recalled: "A party of BBC people were sent down into a bunker for rehearsal and were faced with male and female dormitories. They were told there was to be no fraternisation between sexes, to which one wag replied that it was unfair on the single men. When asked why, he replied that married men were used to having no sex for weeks on end."

All agreed he was the best boss ever.

Special offers

Pub humour is being expressed in advertising locally. Announced outside the **Carpenters Arms** in Whitfield Street recently was: "Today's Special Offer. Choose any two drinks... and pay for them both!"

And the **Kings Arms** in Great Titchfield Street came up with: "Free beer, topless barmaids... and false advertising."

Lookalike

What have **Michael Caine** (the clean shaven bespectacled film star) and **Terry Waite** (the bearded unbespectacled envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury who was held hostage in Beirut for four years) got in common?

They both apparently look like recent Nassau Street resident **Chris Kaufman** (pictured below), the bespectacled chorister who has recently shaved off his beard. He was once mistaken for Waite by an autograph hunter and duly signed in his name. Now he has been signed up as a Michael Caine lookalike by an agency which pays up to £200 a time for appearances.

Kaufman's daughter, Sophie, a film writer, recently interviewed Caine in Cannes and showed him a photograph of her father. Caine remarked: "Oh, he does look like me; our facial configurations are similar."

Kaufman's ex-flatmate, the late **Mac Sveinsson**, fancied himself as looking like **Frank Zappa**. So he was slightly miffed when an autograph hunter mistook him for none other than **Rolf Harris**!



Even my miserly brother **Mortimer** was moved to give a quid to this creative sand sculptor in Oxford Street by the corner of Great Titchfield Street recently. It is good to see a little imagination by those seeking our "spare change" to make a living.



Illustration by Jayne Davis

Film fun

A fascinating tale of "Britain's most influential film critic of the 20th century" was told on **Radio 4 Extra** recently. The influence of **Harold McCarthy** (1890-1970) of **Whitfield Street** was purely with cinema owners however, when thousands of them were independent.

They were obliged to show a certain proportion of British films, determined by length of footage. Lots of British dross was churned out on the cheap to take advantage of this.

Harold watched four films a day and produced a single sheet about each one - not about its artistic merit, but the length of its footage and how he thought it would appeal to different categories of audience. So the tattiest of nudist films and the greatest classics were judged purely on these criteria.

These were bought by cinema owners all around the country and Harold made a living out of this one man business for 34 years until the big chains finally took over the cinemas in the 1960s.

His office was at the "unfashionable end of **Whitfield Street**" in the medical supplies company owned by his family. This could be the surgical footwear makers at 153 **Whitfield Street**.

Cock tale

It takes a lot to make my sister **Margaret** blush, but **David**, the London Walks guide, managed it on his tour of Bohemian Fitzrovia. Apparently **The Cock** in Great Portland Street became known as the "whores' lament" during the war, because US officers picked up "ladies of easy virtue" there, said David, an American himself. It was a most

informative walk which is being repeated again on December 5 and March 12 (see listings on back page). It was David who pointed out to us the angel and doves which are in our picture puzzle on page 13).

Impolite notice



Officious notices make my brother **Percy**'s blood boil. A current one is repeated several times in **Percy Street** (which is also his name by a strange coincidence). It proclaims: "Polite notice: Bicycles etc. chained to these railings will be removed without further notice."

Percy fumed: "Polite in my dictionary says showing regard for others and showing courtesy, not making unpleasant threats like this. What harm do they do anyway?"

Ghostly music

There will be ghostly echos of palm court orchestras and Spanish flamenco music in Hanway Street.

The wreckers' balls have destroyed the site of two large restaurants where diners could dance to live music.

The palm court orchestra played at **Frascati's** at Nos 19-45 just over a hundred years ago when it was frequented by murderer **Dr Crippen** and his lover **Ethel le Neve**.

"I see ourselves in those days of courtship, having our dinner together after our day of work together was done, or sitting sometimes in our favourite corner in **Frascati's** by the stair, all the evening listening to the music," wrote **Crippen** to **Ethel** from **Pentonville Prison** on November 6, 1910, where he was hanged just over two weeks later.

The fflamenco music and dancing took place until just last year at the **Costa Dorada**, in the adjoining Nos 47-55. It had a large dance area where diners could burn up the extra calories to live flamenco dancers or disco music. My brother **Warren** used to amuse people with his peculiar dancing technique here on many occasions. It was a very popular venue open until the early hours and is missed by many.

Those interested in burning off their Christmas excesses, and are interested in **Crippen's** other local links, should attend a guided walk on December 27 (see listings on the back page).

Charlotte Street

Brian Keats: Man of many parts

By JOHN AXON

Fitzrovia lost one of its great characters in August with the death of Brian Keats (pictured right). Born in University College Hospital in Huntley Street, raised in Gower Street, for many years a fixture in Goodge Street and latterly a resident of Hampstead Road adjacent to Euston Station, he was 80 years of age.

That is the basic summary of his life but the reality is far more interesting and exotic than the bare outline. Brian was a man of many parts: raconteur, antique dealer with an exhaustive knowledge of the business, particularly of English furniture and silver, bibliophile, linguist, a social historian whose connections, friends and associates formed the strata of a vanished slice of post-war London often straddling a vague, meandering line that was a demarcation between the legal and the downright nefarious.

The most common applicable euphemism is "colourful" and Brian certainly was never a man who could be portrayed in black and white, apart from the possible exception of occasionally published court reports. Print the Legend, the movie advises, so let us do just that.

I first encountered Brian some 30 years ago, in the tight and often suffocating confines of the Northumberland Arms, now the Draft House, a pub famed for the wide and varying background of its clientele. Brian was in the process of completing the Daily Telegraph crossword. I feel obliged to point out that in our subsequent lifelong friendship that this was the only cross word we ever shared.

Brian's mother worked in the famed Criterion restaurant in Piccadilly and regaled her son with eavesdroppings from the great and (often the less than) good; he always explained that this shaped his own relationship with people and never let him take face value as fact, "healthily cynical" became his approach to princes and paupers alike.

A private education, wartime evacuation and the inevitable National Service followed, spent profitably in Egypt (where in remarkable role reversal he sold petrol to Arabs) and finally West Germany where he acquired an unofficial NAAFI cigarette concession, a German wife and soon enough two children.

UNORTHODOX

Back in the UK he continued his unorthodox entrepreneurship with the occasional enforced and unwanted hiatus, time he put to good use examining the penal system of England, learning fluent German and passable French and while colleagues self-medicated, Brian self-educated and later formed an early version of the Antiques Roadshow, traversing the Kingdom with one aim. Flog it.

He bought and sold prodigious amounts of objets d'art and crossed the Channel more often than an asylum seeker with no sense of direction. Export or die was the motif of the time as Brian happily exchanged antiques for Deutschmarks.

His vivid recollections of Sixties London could have made him a natural entertainer, indeed he dabbled in the world of film and TV, fleeting appearances in Danger Man and a brace of Michael Winner films whetted his latent show business appetite but he was happier wheeling and dealing antiques from Gray's indoor market off Oxford Street, and this became his metier.

His list of clients became a catalogue of Beau Monde London; actors, writers, MPs, barristers, Peers of the Realm and other villains, all became firm fiscal friends, first in Hampstead and for the last thirty years in Fitzrovia where he kept a flat in Chenies Street.

OUTRAGE

His bon mots and one-liners were legendary, delivered in a soft timbre with a smile curling from his lips as his audience reacted with faux outrage. They are way too many to list here; a subsequent piece will reveal some of the more outlandish, my learned friends permitting.

Ill health dogged Brian for the last few years of his life but he continued to hold court in the One Tun, delighting, outraging and sometimes exasperating his devoted coterie of friends while seated alongside a brass plaque on the bar that announced his name. The man is gone, the plaque remains and so do some wonderful memories.



A picture of restoration work was displayed in the Middlesex Hospital Chapel on Open House Day. The chapel was retained when the hospital in Mortimer Street was demolished to make way for mostly offices and housing. It is due to open again in the new year when the chapel is handed over to the new trustees. Photograph by Ann Goodburn.





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Roland Collins: artist,

By Janet Gauld

Roland Collins, artist and long-time Fitzrovia resident, has died at the age of 97. A fine painter of places in the realistic tradition of the English Romantic watercolourists, he was prolific but did not become well-known until the last two decades of his life, when he held several exhibitions which led to popular and commercial success and a substantial publication which introduced his work to a wider audience. Critics said that his work displayed a “quietness” and praised his “fresh bright landscapes in gouache and the purity of his line drawing”

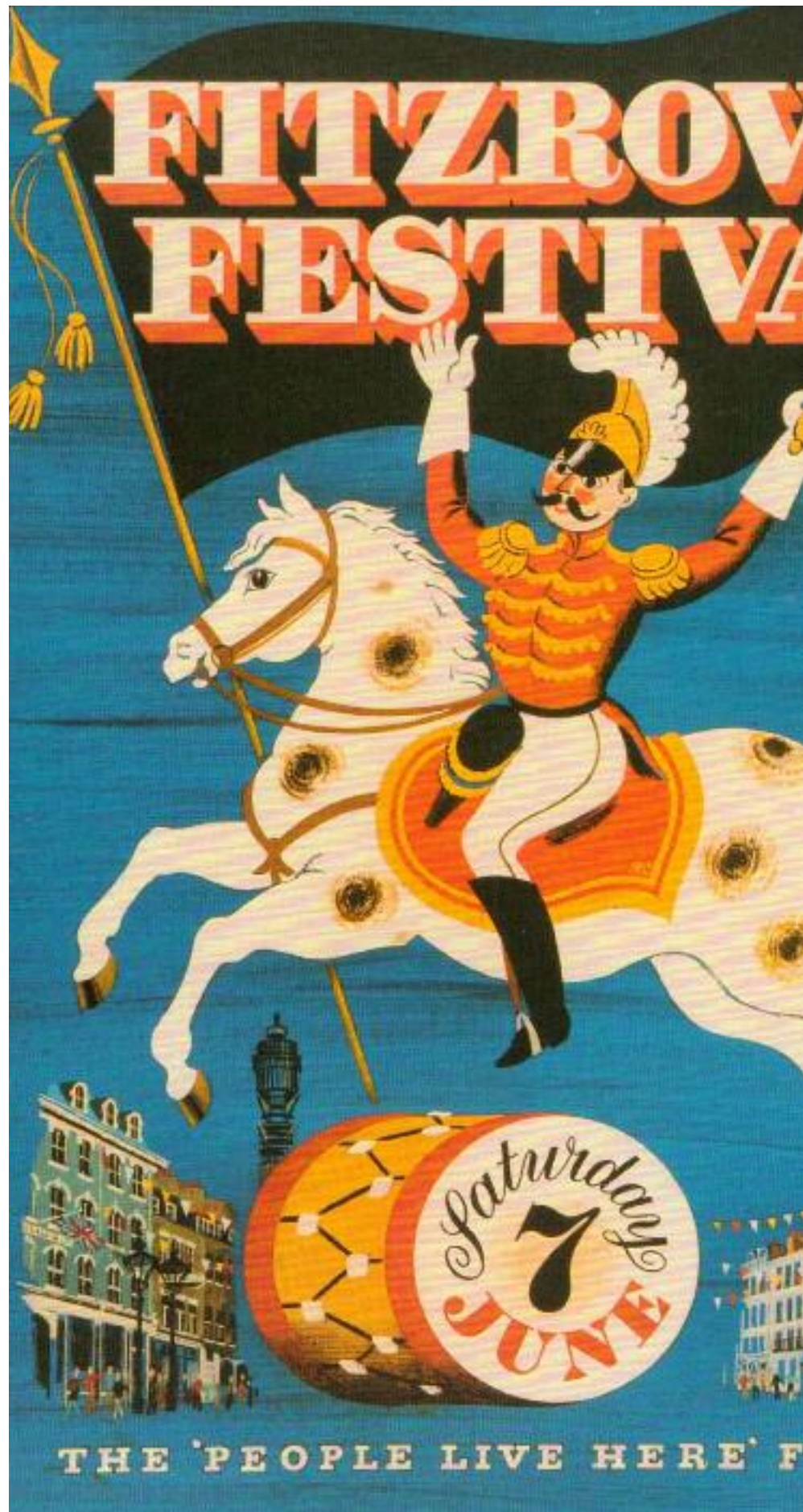
Born in Kensal Rise, Roland attended Kilburn grammar school and after showing early artistic aptitude, he was encouraged by the art teacher to go to St Martin's School of Art (now Central Saint Martins) with the help of a London county council grant. After college he worked as a studio assistant in an advertising agency, preparing layouts and designs. He was developing his skills as an artist, while continuing with his painting. In 1937 he first exhibited a pen-and-ink drawing at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. When the second world war broke out Roland registered as a conscientious objector. During the war he got to know Fitzrovia and in 1940 took a studio at 29 Percy Street, which he kept until 1983. Many artists worked in this building which became a centre of artistic activity. Meanwhile he and his wife Connie, a poodle breeder, moved in to Colville Place in 1967. In 1990 they moved to Padstow in Cornwall, returning to London five years later. Roland, a Londoner through and through, regarded living in Cornwall as ‘exile’.

Artistically versatile, he relished turning his hand to other projects, working as a designer, photographer, painting a mural for a local Greek restaurant and even a travel writer. His chosen medium was gouache, a form of water-colour. He painted landscapes and seashore scenes, and above all the buildings and street scenes of his favourite place, London, and also Dieppe and Whitstable. In 1945 he designed the sleeve for the first British LP issued by Decca: Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka*. In 1951 he wrote the text for *The Flying Poodle*, a children's book.

In 1966 Roland had held his first one-man show in the Fitzroy Tavern. Over the years this was followed by shows at the Curwen Gallery and several at the Parkin Gallery in Belgravia. He also exhibited at the Royal Academy. His final exhibition, which sold out, was at Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood. To his great distress Roland witnessed many of the sights he had most relished painting being swallowed up in post war redevelopments. The unintended consequence was that his earliest work became an



Roland's design for Decca records LP recording of *Petrushka*



Roland's poster design for the 1975 Fitzrovia festival courtesy of Michael Parkin Fine Art

archive of a vanished Britain. He had an eye for overlooked detail, his work was filled with pub signs, rusting anchors, horsecarts or even disused wheel boilers. He leaves a large body of work whose quality has finally been recognised.

Roland was also known to Fitzrovians for his work for the Charlotte Street Association, founded in 1970 to protect the area against the increasing threat of development, especially in Charlotte Street, and to preserve its mixed-use, small-scale character. He was a founder member of the Association and was its first Secretary, later becoming Chair, alternating the two positions with Max Neufeld. For

the next 20 years he worked tirelessly against developers and planning authorities against the redevelopment of the area. This was followed by many years of work.

Many of Roland's friends and colleagues gathered at the Art Workers' Club. He was a modest man but very well lived. His life and work were well documented. Roland Collins: found landscapes, built a life, wrote an obituary in The Guardian. Roland is survived by his wife Connie.

Fitzrovian campaigner



Motcomb Street London SW1 1953



St Remy Dieppe 1995

1987. She looked after him devotedly in his later years and was able to take him in their car to many of the places he wished to visit. Although living in South London, they kept in touch with Fitzrovia and made frequent visits. Roland will be much missed.

Max Neufeld adds:- Roland had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the area, he was active and committed for many years in the CSA. As part of the campaign to secure Crabtree Fields as a park for Fitzrovia he designed and printed on his litho press the "Go green for Fitzrovia" stickers which were displayed in windows and shops. Every Christmas he produced his own screen-printed Christmas cards.

(some of which are shown on the edges of these pages)

"In part he had benefited from the re-emergence of landscape as an acceptable subject for art which has refocused attention on those who have continued to make paintings about buildings and places, irrespective of fashion."

"Collins had a real feeling for vernacular architecture, particularly in the city and by the seaside, for canals and the Thames, for fishing boats and sea defences. He loved to paint the unusual or overlooked: costermongers' barrows, a disused whelk boiler, barrels, fish carts, marine debris, pub signs, street and boat signage. Much of what he depicted has since vanished, so his work is historical record as well as aesthetic statement. His evident delight in wooden fences, gates and odd-shaped buildings was set against the drama of his skies: often full of driving cloud poignantly patterned."

Andrew Lambirth The Guardian



tirelessly and effectively in battle-planners. The first big battle, of the Gort Estate, was lost but victories.

attended his funeral at on 27th October, followed by a Guild in Queens Square. He talented, and his long life was is celebrated in 'Roland by Andrew Lambirth, who also gardian. onnie, whom he married in

Bullets, Beatles and booze

By MIKE PENTELOW

The eccentric antics of fellow news readers and his old school friends, the Beatles, were observed by Peter Sissons, who was based in ITN House at 48 Wells Street from 1968 to 1989.

While covering the civil war when Biafra tried to break away from Nigeria in 1968 Sissons was shot through both legs, as he recalled in his 2011 autobiography *When One Door Closes*.

The bullet was later removed at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at 54 Bolsover Street by the surgeon David Trevor, who pioneered a tendon transplant in his treatment. He later became president of the Royal College of Surgeons.

"Friends came with bottles of wine or beer, which they then proceeded to drink as I was not allowed to," Sissons wryly recalled.

SMUGGLED

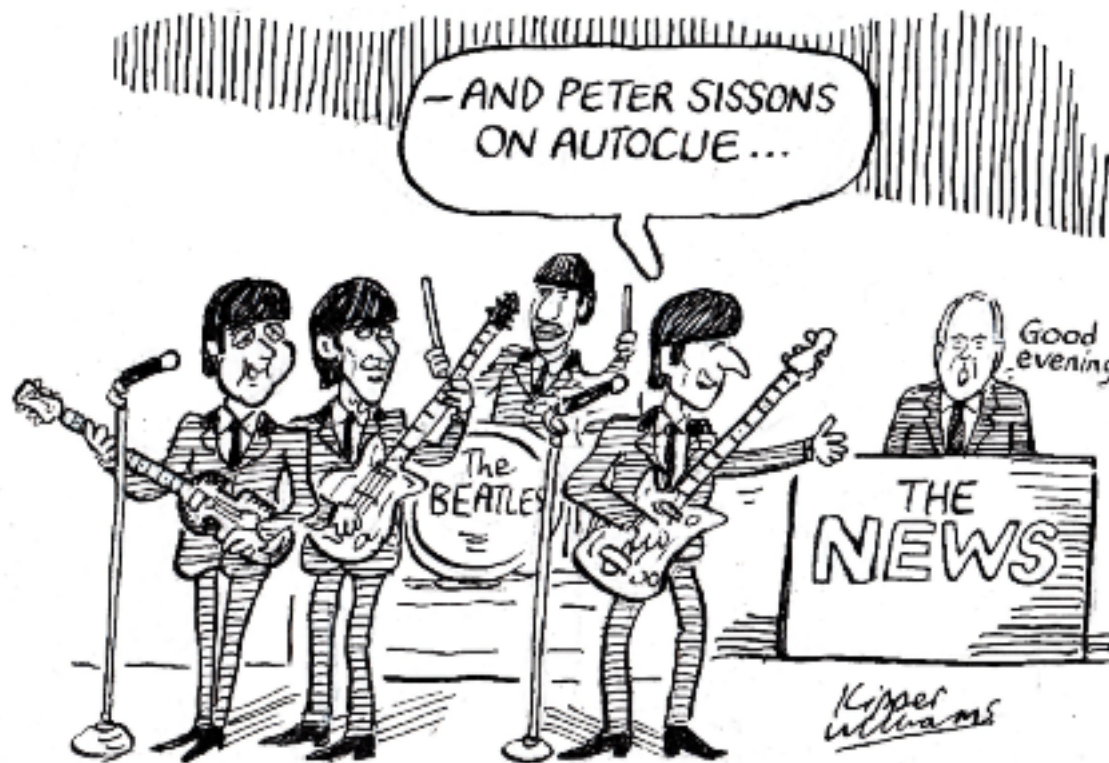
One day however newscaster Ivor Mills and producer Steve Wright smuggled him under an overcoat to the Green Man nearby on the corner of Bolsover Street and Euston Road. There he enjoyed his first pints for over two months before being smuggled back to the hospital where there was consternation at his absence.

The main wrath, however, came from his Auntie Kay, a retired senior nurse, when she discovered a crate of empty bottles under his bed, and then more in his wardrobe. The hospital, incidentally, was originally called the National Orthopaedic Hospital for the Deformed.

The aforementioned Ivor Mills was such a regular diner in Bertorelli's at 19 Charlotte Street that a dish was named after him - Scampi Mills. One of the waitresses, Anna, discouraged him from eating this, however, because, she explained, "you are getting too fat" (she was regarded as the rudest waitress in London).

One morning Ivor arrived at the studio, walking strangely. It

Newscaster experienced them all



Cartoon by Kipper Williams

emerged he had been to an orgy, and the only trousers remaining when he left were not his and they fitted very badly.

Their programme editor at ITN, Alex Spink, liked to hold meetings at another Green Man pub, round the corner from the studio at 36 Riding House Street. Once he was feeling a bit thirsty just before noon and nipped round there for a quick refresher, when he should have been outputting the News at One. As the staff were in the cellar he went behind the bar and pulled himself a pint. Just then he walked two of his bosses, so he nonchalantly asked them what they wanted to drink, served them and made a swift exit before they had time to react.

Sissons reveals that his fellow newscasters liked a drop to sustain them when actually reading the news on air. Alistair Burnet had a glass of scotch



Peter Sissons leaving the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in 1968. Does anybody remember who the nurse was? Printed by permission of Peters Fraser & Dunlop (www.petersfraserdunlop.com) on behalf of Peter Sissons.

while Reginald Bosanquet favoured a large red wine in a paper cup.

Bosanquet also enjoyed a bottle of Freixenet and several games of bar billiards in Wolsey's Wine Bar, opposite the studio at 52 Wells Street.

He became nicknamed "Boozenquet" for appearing tipsy on screen. Once the press office denied a complaint that he had been "pissed again" claiming that his slurring was a result of his speech impediment. They failed to explain how he became a news reader with a speech impediment.

In the late 1970s the ex-Beatle George Harrison turned up at the studio with half a dozen Hare Krishna followers in their robes to see Sissons (who had been at the same school as him in Liverpool).

"Pete," said George, "we've got a big news story for you, and we want you to get it on

tonight's News at Ten. In fact, it has to be their lead story."

When asked what it was he looked Sissons closely in the eye and said one word: "Peace". He repeated the word two or three times but added nothing before heading back to chant in Oxford Street.

Sissons went to Liverpool Institute in the same year as Paul McCartney, and a year ahead of George. Also at the school was Ivan Vaughan, who was born on the same day as McCartney, and lived in a house backing on to the one where John Lennon lived.

JOHN LENNON

In fact it was Vaughan who introduced Lennon and McCartney at a church fete in 1957, and he played a bass made from a tea-chest, broom handle and twine for Lennon's group, the Quarry Men.

Ivan, who later lived in Great Portland Street in the early 1960s, was "totally, outrageously uninhibited in his humour and his attitude to life" according to Sissons. He fashioned his school uniform into a Teddy Boy suit, fastened the school badge loosely with a paper clip to his breast pocket and painted his only pair of shoes in glossy yellow paint. When frequently absent from school, his only ever explanation was that his shoes were at the menders, which the teachers never dared challenge (Ivan being over six feet tall).

One of these absences was when John Lennon took him to his school (Quarry Bank) and introduced him as a new boy. Ivan had his name put on the register and was issued with books before being rumpled.

Sissons left ITN to become the first presenter of Channel Four News in 1982 and although it was based at 60 Charlotte Street, the news broadcasts continued from Wells Street.

Then in 1989 he moved to the BBC where, he remarks ruefully, he became familiar with its management policy (when scapegoats were needed) of "deputy heads must roll."

Poetry corner

Like Brings Like

Content chosen, sealed,
Bond firm,
Clasp tight.

You, drawing near him,
Silently weighing matters,
Special moment, this.
How strange, shedding tears
Wrapping gift as well as card!
Even so, you have.
Shouldn't you wow him?

Him: "Wow! You shouldn't have!"

You, so even: "Card as well!"
As gift-wrapping tears, shedding,
Strange how this moment, special,
matters, weighing silently!

Him, near,
Drawing you,
Tight clasp,
Firm bond sealed,
Chosen,
Content.
Helene Parry

Mirror, Mirror
Magic mirror
(True reflection),
Audience,
Stage lighting,
You, no actress,
Amateur heart beating
In theatre wings.

On toes,
Taking breath,
Act your part now, Wicked Queen!

The shriek, thrilling children,
Excited row,
First among stars, sparkling cast –
You, outshining everybody!

Pose, hold note – louder –
Getting laughs.
Dance moves making you not so scary,
Turn, forward step.
Time this move –
Prompt calls: "Curtain!"

Curtain calls.
Prompt move, this time!
Step forward, turn scary – (so not
you...!)
Making moves, dance.
Laughs getting louder,
Note: hold pose.
Everybody singing out.
You cast sparkling stars among first
row –

Excited children, thrilling, shriek:
"The queen! Wicked!"

Now part.
Your act – breathtaking.
Toes on wings.
Theatre in beating heart.
Amateur actress?
No – you, lighting stage!

Audience reflection
True mirror –
Magic.

Helene Parry

I came to look at you

A SHORT STORY BY
SUNITA SOLIAR

I came to look at you, that's all, but there is this stupid crying now. I imagined I'd spy through the glass bit in the door: you would be in the first bed, all of your tall, bony height laid out horizontally. I didn't think that wards had open doors, and that there would be three sets of blue curtains that opened and closed like concertinas and which one are you? Bed thirty-three is not easy to find when there are no numbers. The nurse says, 'Can I help you?' and I can hear Mum's voice, so I tell the nurse stupidly, 'I can hear my Mum,' and she sees me through a gap in the curtain. 'Come,' she says. I beckon her with my head: you come here. I must stay on my side of the curtain where you cannot see me.

These tears. Like bad T.V. I must keep up with the overacting of my face. 'Is he dying?'

Mum loves a good bit of sentiment. Her face makes the right shapes; she looks to one side.

'How long has he got?' There's nothing like your own tears – and they won't stop – to bring out the hammy actor in you.

'Weeks.' She puts her arms around me.

So it's real. You're dying. On my way here, I thought, what a farce if you're not. It took me ages to get ready. Should I go? Should I go? I was putting my make-up on. Thick layers. If you wear make-up you can't cry. That's my rule, my defence, and yet here I am breaking the rule for you. Except I'm not crying for you. I couldn't decide what to wear and that nearly stopped me. You'd think I could pull on a pair of jeans and a jumper as I do every day – I don't dress the way I used to. But it was warm

'Then I hope your God forgives you.' These are the last words I ever say to you. Instead of pain, I am embarrassed.

for October, and I thought maybe I'd wear a low V-neck sweater. Or should I wear an ankle-length skirt like a puritan. I couldn't decide who to be. And all the while, should I go? Should I go? It sounds like you want to go, Jack said. Jack is my husband. You never met him. He is good to me – that means too many things that you wouldn't understand. Jack said, I think you want to be comfortable. So I did. I came as a grown woman, not the twenty year old I was when you last saw me. Thirty years is a long time.

'I don't know if I want to go in,' I tell Mum.

'He keeps asking for you.'

The curtain pulls back from inside. Tricked! I didn't know there was someone else in there. Another nurse. I dart out of



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIFFORD HARPER

sight. Your eyes are closed and I want to stare at you. You have very little hair. It grows in grey tufts on the top of your head, as though the only place you have any is where it was once bald. Your feet stick out at the end of the bed as they always used to. Red socks with some sort of snowflake pattern embossed in white. You would hate them – it isn't even Christmas. Mum must have put them on you. I'm glad you've got something on though. I couldn't bear to see your feet. Mine are the same. Low arches, jutting knuckle on the big toe. I wear nail polish all the time to disguise them so that they aren't yours.

Your eyes open, and I try to scoot aside again, but you see me. 'Does he know who I am?' I ask.

'I don't think he'll recognize you,' Mum says.

Better that way. But your eyes open again and you frown, wag your hand about. 'Give me my glasses,' you tell Mum. Of course she fetches. Good old Mum.

'Naomi?' you say.

So you do recognize me.

Wouldn't Mum have loved it if you didn't?

You summon the nurse.

'Water.' And to me, 'Come sit.'

I don't want to sit. I don't want to come into your room. I didn't come here to be commanded by you. I nearly didn't leave the house. And when my bus was late, I nearly turned back.

'He's alright,' the nurse in your room says. 'There's no need to cry.' I wish she would shut up. 'He'll be fine,' she says.

'I'm not crying because of that,' I say, and I'm looking at you.

'Then why are you crying?'

I'm looking at you.

'I'm glad you came,' you say, then something else that I can't understand, like you're talking with a bridle in your mouth.

'What?'

Your neck strains. Your eyes are like frightened birds. 'I'm coming to the end of my days.'

I'd forgotten where my hammy streak comes from.

'Do I look very different?' So typical of you to think of yourself. What do I say to that. 'Are you happy?' you ask.

'Sometimes,' I say.

'And your work? How is it?'

I'm spluttering again.

'Don't cry,' you say. 'What will happen will happen.' You are all you can ever think of. So scared of dying. 'I'm glad you came.'

I can't help it. 'I didn't come because you wanted me to.'

'Don't say anything else,' Mum says. 'You'll upset him.'

I want to upset you. But it is hard to take things out on your old body. What would a word or two do to your heart? Mum would never forgive me. She would forgive you anything, but I am a different kettle of fish, as you would say. If only we could ever say the truth, you and I. We don't have the language. Yet I am looking so hard for a way to forgive you, can't you see? Help me.

I say, 'You did make me frankfurter sandwiches. You tested me on my Latin.'

But you like that too much. 'I looked after you very well. I don't know what all this is about, but the past is...'

I can't bear to hear you finish it. It's for me to decide what the past is, and I can't hear any more. I am turning to go, but this can't be the moment. The nurses are milling, pretending not to listen. Will they treat you differently afterwards? I like the audience. I want them to hear. Ever the little performer, just like you.

I say, 'Are you religious?'

'Yes.' You are eager as a kid with a begging bowl.

'Then I hope your God forgives you.' These are the last words I ever say to you. Instead of pain, I am embarrassed. Trite, flamboyant words. The sort of words I don't say anymore, or try not to. Words that you force out of me, that are the only way we can speak to each other, bricking up anything real.

Picture puzzle



How well do you know Fitzrovia?

Can you recognise the angel and doves (above) and identify where they are? Answer under the Dining Detective picture on page 15.

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

Puppeteer enacted exciting sword fights in toy theatres

The famous puppeteer George Speaight, who was manager of toy theatres at Pollocks in Scala Street, has been rediscovered by one of his pupils.

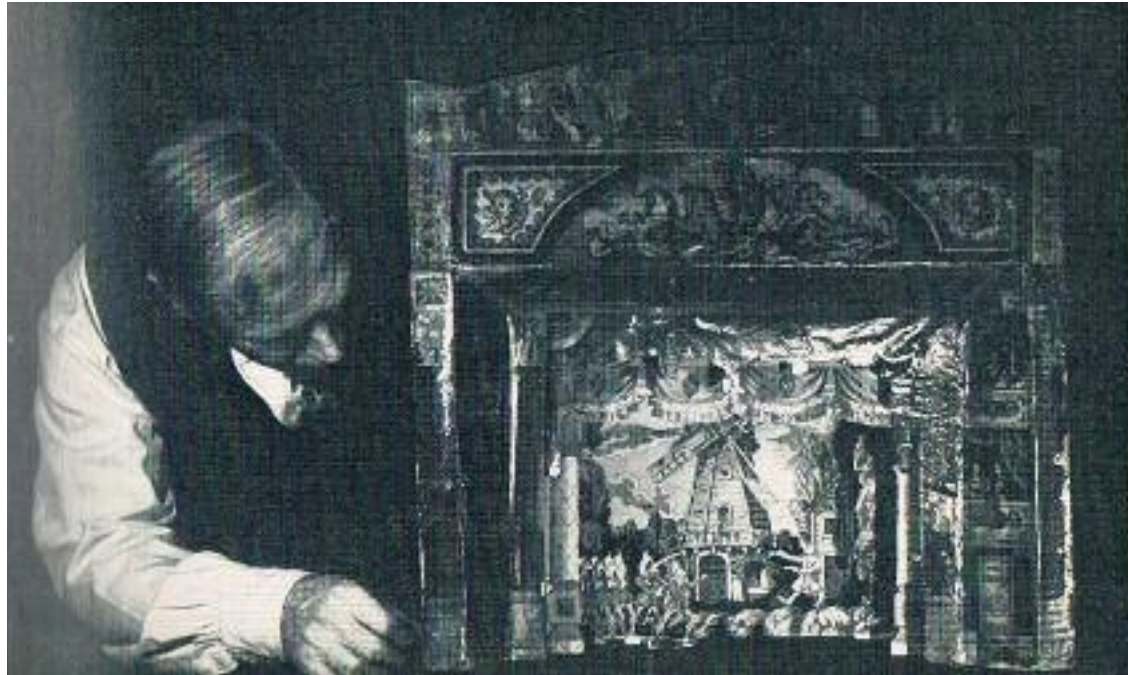
Catherine March, who was raised in the Fitzroy Tavern, is in the process of putting the now out of print Dictionary of Puppetry on line.

It was published in 1969 by A R Philpott, popularly known as Pantopuck the Puppetman.

"As a young student of puppetry I was lucky enough to enjoy a lively correspondence with Panto, who directed me to certain books on certain shelves in the Westminster Central Reference library, giving me frequent, perceptive feedback on my projects and researches," said Catherine.

"His wife Violet gave me my first job when I was 12, touring London parks with her Cap and Bells puppet company. Panto and Violet gave me his copy of the dictionary, full of his margin notes, when I was about 16, suggesting that one day I might work on a re-edition.

"Unfortunately I wasn't able to do this during their lifetimes, but now, given that we're approaching the 90th anniversary of the formation of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild, perhaps it's time to begin the process of getting



George Speaight performs The Miller and His Men.

Panto's dictionary on line, and inviting response to his notes, as well as ideas for new entries."

In the book she has found an entry about her friend George Speaight. Born in 1914 he worked at Pollocks as a teenager demonstrating its toy theatres "with such skill and gusto that he inevitably progressed to become a performer in his own right," said Catherine.

He was best known for performing such classics as The

Miller and his Men (pictured) behind a 21 inch theatre, sliding the cardboard figures around the stage and speaking the parts and making sound effects with a tin tray, kettle whistles and a Victorian musical box. The Miller had sword fights and plenty of action so was always popular.

He rose to become manager at Pollocks which moved to Scala Street in the late 1960s. In his spare time he published

books about toy theatres and puppets, and circus and bawdy songs. A founder member of the Society for Theatre Research he was also vice-president of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild.

His final performance of The Miller was in 2003, and he died in 2005.

Catherine says the task of putting the dictionary's 291 pages on line is quite a task. Those willing to help her with the task should contact her on cathmarch@me.com



Author who revived the canals is honoured in Gower Street

A plaque has been erected by the Inland Waterways Association at 11 Gower Street in memory of its co-founder Robert Aickman (1914-1981).

An author of supernatural fiction by profession, Aickman founded the association in 1946 to restore the then largely derelict canal system, with great success.

Among those to join the campaign was the naturalist Peter Scott, whose wife, Elizabeth Jane Howard, became its part-time secretary in Aickman's Gower Street flat, where she had an affair with him (described in her 2002 autobiography Slipstream).

Aickman died of cancer after refusing to have conventional treatment.



All fired up

Store Street was lit up literally during the Bloomsbury Festival on October 23. Crowds mingled among the pyrotechnics and were entertained by various singers and musicians.



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6pm Choral Evensong and Benediction

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www.allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk

Parish office: 020 7636 1788

Please tell us if you came to All Saints after seeing this advertisement.

Blitz destruction recalled

The destruction of two Jewish buildings in Alfred Place during the blitz on the night of April 16-17, 1941, is described in the current issue of *Camden History Review*.

A parachute mine had a direct hit soon after 3am, destroying the West Central

Jewish Girls' Club at 31 Alfred Place, and devastating the Western Synagogue next door, killing 38 and injuring 15.

Pictured is the ruins of the synagogue on the left, and the site of the girls' club on the right (courtesy of Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre).



The *Camden History Review* 39 (with the article by David and Ruth Hayes) is available in the archives centre at 32-38 Theobalds Road, Holborn.

This is also where the original of this picture and others of the bombing can be viewed.

United Nations adviser and husband host world guests

Until recently the vice president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was Martha Jean Baker, who lives in Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place.

As well as her involvement with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom she has also been international vice president of the European Women's Lobby, and on the United Nations committee on violence against women.

In these roles she has put up guests from Cuba and around the world in her flat and has got to know such activists as Angela Davis from the USA, and Rashida Manjoo from South Africa.

She and her husband, Malcolm Katz, have lived there for 16 years.

Both were born in the USA where they qualified as lawyers, and both have been British citizens for 13 years, and are active in its labour movement as members of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers.

Martha came from a family that were not socialists but campaigners for social justice, such as racial integration and peace. "We were active against the war in Vietnam almost before people had heard about it," she said.

"I came to be a lawyer late in life, starting to study it just



Malcolm and Martha in their Gordon Mansions flat.

before my 50th birthday," she continued. "I was interested in human rights and arguing for them and people kept asking me what was my authority in law.

"So I qualified as a lawyer and then took my masters in law at UCL (University College London)."

Malcolm described himself as "a newcomer to the socialist movement" and is a tax lawyer.

Both are members of the Labour Party and volunteered to help Jeremy Corbyn become its leader.

They are also members of the Gordon Mansions Residents' Association, and are interested in cooking and travelling. They have been in every continent except Africa, taking in such

countries as Cuba and China, where Martha has kept detailed diaries.

They both think the UK could benefit from a form of federalism and it would be worth examining different models in the world, such as in Germany, the USA, Canada, and Australia.

"We are involved in a new constitutional group discussing how to allocate powers between the different countries in the UK, and between central, federal and local governments," said Malcolm.

Martha added: "In the UK it will be easily changed by act of parliament, whereas it is much more complex to change in most countries that have a written constitution."



Nail On The Head directors (left to right): John Willacy (commercial), Damon Earnshaw (managing), and Miff Daniels (creative).

New television production firm starts in the area

Watch out for programmes on Channel 4, BT Sports or BBC Worldwide credited to Nail On The Head Productions.

They are a new company which opened at 33 Percy Street in September by three media people all with local connections.

The managing director is Damon Earnshaw, who has been an art director on many films, including Swept Away starring Madonna and directed by Guy Ritchie. Damon lived for ten years in Cleveland Street, where his wife Emma had the Flying Hare hairdressers, and their son

went to All Souls school in Foley Street.

The creative director is Miff Daniels who has written, produced and presented television and radio programmes for several channels, including Thames TV where he often filmed in Stephen Street, and Talk Radio at 76 Oxford Street. At Talk he hosted a show from midnight to 7am seven days a week. Asked if it ruined his social life he replied: "It ruined my sanity!" He has also worked for BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Sky, and Live TV (being an "unqualified agony aunt" at the latter for seven shows a week).

The commercial director is John Willacy, who has worked on advertising and marketing in the media at Gresse Street and Newman Street.

The new company specialises in Advertising Funded Programmes - of which Harry Hill's TV Burp programme, produced by Miff, was an example.

"There is a big growth in these programmes with mobiles, online and other new media," explained John. "Advertising clients want to advertise on television around a format, so they can demonstrate their product and create a context for their key customers."

At present they are working for national broadcasters on two history series, entertainment, music, and sport (the latter might be online).

They are all delighted to be in Fitzrovia. "It is great as an area and everyone in the media is here as well," said Damon. Commercial companies are also really taking off in the area, said John.

Miff concluded: "Let's hope we keep Fitzrovia local and individual and don't move the dreaded developers into the area."

For further information visit the web:

thinkbox.tv/server/show/nav.957
The company can also be contacted on info@nailonthehead.tv

Early bird meal is a bargain

PIQUET, 92-94 Newman Street

Piquet, at the bottom of Newman Street, near Oxford Street, is another of the new places opening near one of the many huge building-site parts of Fitzrovia, no doubt hoping the good times are coming.

I wasn't going to go to Piquet, as it seemed too expensive for the budget I still try to live by (£70 for dinner for two with wine, more and more unlikely) but a friend noticed there was an early evening three-course dinner offered for £19.50 between 5.30 and 6.45 which is perhaps a funny time to eat - but then who is to say what is the 'correct' time to eat? So in we went.

We were the only customers in the dining-room at the time but the bar upstairs (which sells wine and 'tasting plates to share') had a smattering of people in it.

It wasn't quite clear to me from the menu what kind of restaurant it was: an (Italian) waitress confided in me that they had an English chef, doing French classical cooking.

Well, I can assure you, we sent that chef our compliments: we could see him and his staff in



By the DINING DETECTIVE

3 Newman Passage.
The photograph on page 13 is at
PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWER:

the big, clean, kitchen, which is downstairs at the front of the pleasant, quite brightly but pleasantly lit, roomy dining-room.

The place is extremely well-ventilated: you may be sitting by the kitchen as we were, but cooking smells weren't wafting over our clothes. We had a very attentive and knowledgeable (Italian) waiter.

The early dinner had two choices for starters: a celeriac soup and a ham pate; two mains: rolled belly of pork with

black pudding, and baked mackerel with beetroot; and two third courses: a sort of pear mousse with crème anglais, and cheese and biscuits. I think from the menu that this is the choice that is offered every day.

The courses were small, but delicious - between us my friend and I sampled almost all that was on offer. Perhaps if I have a quibble it was that the staff were a bit too overly-attentive: if you're obviously right in the middle of a personal conversation, not just idly chatting, you don't want someone hovering over you waiting to ask if you are enjoying the food.

But apart from that we had a very enjoyable meal. Of course we had wine (round about £6 a glass which we were allowed to taste first). There was the usual 12.5 per cent service charge, but we managed, with two glasses of wine each, to almost stay within budget. Our bill was brought to us on the dot of 6.45pm (whether that was efficiency, or reminding us to go, we weren't sure, but we went anyway, pleased with our visit).

If you went for a meal at a time of your choosing it would

be more expensive. The starters include snails (£10), pressed suckling pig with black pudding (£9.50) and crab ravioli (£9.50). The mains are for instance venison (£20), Sea Bass (£19.50) cod cheeks and baby squid (£16.50), Veal Sweetbreads (£22) and Braised shoulder of Lamb for Two (£36).

Upstairs at the Wine Bar the tasting plates include salmon with sour cream (£6), country style terrine (£6.50), and Le Piggy Burger (£10). I spent £84 by mistake at another local wine bar the other evening, taking a friend in for 'a glass and a snack,' but we went on glassing and snacking - so beware!

But I do thoroughly recommend the food at Piquet if you have the time to go early, or the money to go later!

Please mention

Fitzrovia News

when replying to

advertisers

The spy master, fashion designer, and the womanising sociopath

Rendezvous at the Russian Tea Rooms by Paul Willetts
Reviewed by CLIVE JENNINGS

Paul Willetts has serious previous in Soho and Fitzrovia, with a canon that includes: "Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia" (the bizarre life of Julian Maclaren-Ross) "North Soho 999" (a true story of gun crime in 1940s Fitzrovia) and "Members Only" (the life and times of Paul Raymond and basis of the film "The Look of Love").

Set largely in the familiar territory of central London in 1939-40, his latest offering is a gripping thriller that tells the true story of a little known espionage case that probably changed the course of World War II.

Ingeniously, although this engaging page-turner reads like a work of creative fiction, the driven narrative is all fact, gleaned from extensive and exhaustive research.

"Rendezvous" revolves around three main characters whose nefarious activities and intrigues cause their paths to cross. Maxwell Knight was the consummate MI5 spymaster. Cunning, ingenious and secretive, even within his own community, his love of the natural world made him an astute behaviourist and observer. His eccentricity ran to walking his



pet bear cub round the streets of Chelsea and bizarrely, he found fame in later life as children's radio presenter "Uncle Max".

Anna Wolkoff was an embittered White Russian who longed for the good old Tsarist days and saw Hitler as her saviour. Once a celebrated fashion designer with a Mayfair showroom, she resented that her father, who had once been Naval Attaché at the Imperial Russian Embassy, was reduced to running the eponymous Russian Tea Rooms in Harrington Road, South Kensington.

Tyler Kent was a handsome

and arrogant young American who connived to attain a position that would enable him to steal secret papers that he could sell to support his hedonist lifestyle. He was a textbook sociopath: charismatic, sexually voracious and completely lacking in any morals – in the argot of the period "a thoroughly bad hat".

The book paints a very different picture of England in 1939, and documents fastidiously the full extent of anti-war, pro-fascist and anti-semitic feeling that was rife in 1939. What historians have been dismissing for over 60 years as "the myth of the fifth column" becomes very real. Strange bedfellows come to light, with Pacifists and Fascists attending the same meetings in their search for appeasement.

Willetts explains: "It was very much like now with the almost identically named Stop The War movement. It's easy to forget that Fascism appealed to people from across the political spectrum. The British Union of Fascists had a strong socialistic element and Oswald Mosley and its founders were all Labour MPs – in some ways it was a Labour breakaway movement. ... The queen's granny, Queen

Mary, for example, was a close friend of the Wolkoff family."

"Rendezvous" derives from over ten years of meticulous research amassed from more than 30 archive collections across the world, in addition to countless contemporary newspapers, magazines and films. Every fact and piece of dialogue can be traced back to source. Even as it was being written, MI5 were releasing more relevant papers containing first hand accounts that Willetts was able to deftly dovetail into the narrative. Other spy cases are much clearer cut but the secrecy of the Kent / Wolkoff, case combined with the complexity of the research, is such that little has been written about it.

Willetts' love of the West End is evident in almost every page, and the cliché "London is a character in this book" has never been more adroitly applied. We read about The Embassy Club in Bond Street and "L'Escargot Bienvenu" (as it was then called) in Greek Street. The attention to period detail is fascinating: apparently people wore phosphorescent buttonholes in the blackout to avoid bumping into each other and, my favourite, rent for a flat

in Gloucester Place included breakfast and "complimentary cigarettes". The endpaper at the front of the book is a charming street map of London from Kensington to Soho, in the style of the period, with all the main locations marked, and endearingly all within about 30 minutes walk of each other.

In addition to over 75 characters profiled in a Tolstoy style dramatis personae, the extensive footnotes contain a wealth of additional information that refer to tangential connections to everyone from Francis Bacon via Bob Dylan's manager to Helen Mirren, whose Auntie Irene is an important player in the story. Willetts claims that his next book will finally take him away from the West End, as it chronicles the story of a con man in 20s and 30s America.

For ultra-parochial Fitzrovia buffs we learn that Anna's lover was UCL lecturer Lord Cottenham; and that Anna and friends watched a newsreel at Studio 2 cinema, 165 Oxford Street (facing Great Portland Street) and hissed at Winston Churchill on a newsreel. They had dined at a vegetarian restaurant next door.

Published by Constable, £20

Where grave robbers lurked

Commuters and others munching their sandwiches in Whitfield Gardens in Tottenham Court Road are sitting over ground where corpses were dug up by grave robbers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

It was the graveyard of the adjoining Whitefield's Chapel built at 79 Tottenham Court Road in 1756 for Rev George Whitefield (1714-1770), where the American Church now stands.

The chapel was struck by lightning on March 22, 1772 killing Bartholomew Goodson "while sitting near the west door with his child in his arms; but the child was not in the least hurt, though a part of the chapel was damaged."

A less fortunate baby was one buried and then dug up the same day by a grave robber there in 1798. He was caught with the corpses of the infant and eight others. "There had been six funerals on that afternoon and the whole of the bodies were in the sacks. Among them was a woman, who, dying in her lying-in, was interred with her infant. The greatest scene of distress was exhibited round the Chapel by the rela-



One of the graves that was not robbed, and is the only one still remaining in Whitfield Gardens.

tives of those who had lately been buried in that ground."

The ground had not been legally consecrated and burials stopped from 1827 until 1831 during a change of ownership.

But in 1853 the council ordered the closure of the burial ground and locals were outraged when the graves were destroyed by 60 to 70 builders. This led to the composition of a ballad expressing this outrage. Relatives of those buried took out an injunction to protect the graves.

The chapel itself was "almost wholly destroyed by fire" on

February 23, 1857, possibly assisted by relatives of those whose gravestones had been destroyed.

The land was sold in 1862 and the new owner began excavating it and was charged with exhuming without a licence, for which he was fined £5. He had claimed only a few bones had been found but the prosecuting solicitor said human remains had been "cast into a heap 15 or 20 feet in length."

By the 1880s the graveyard had become the scene of "constant rioting and disorder."

A legal case in 1880 had

determined that the Burial Acts did not apply to this land and any exhumations would be against the common law. And the owner was found guilty under this just before he died in 1881. Soil was, however, sold to florists and "one witness said he saw skulls picked out of the ground with a pickaxe."

By 1888 the site was being used by gangs of criminals according to the Earl of Meath, speaking in the House of Lords. He mentioned a rejected injunction to prevent noise from fairs invited to the site by the landowner.

The chapel itself was closed in 1889 as the foundations were giving way, believed to be caused by the construction over the former pond known as the Little Sea and disturbance by burials inside the chapel.

The land was purchased in 1894 by the London County Council and the Vestry of St. Pancras, and was managed as a public garden, which opened in the following year. The coffins and remains were all disinterred in 1898 and reinterred in Chingford Mount Cemetery. Among them were Karl Marx's three young children, Henrich, Franziska, and Henry Edgar. One gravestone survives, that of John Procter of 94 Tottenham Court Road who died in 1834, aged 74, and his wife Mary who died in 1840, aged 77.

The new chapel was built in 1898, and opened in the following year. This was destroyed on March 25 (Palm Sunday), 1945, by a Nazi V2 rocket, reputedly the last to fall on London before the end of the war. It happened at lunchtime and killed or injured 35 people..

The chapel was rebuilt in 1957.

Lenin and Trotsky plotted revolution from a Great Portland Street pub

By MIKE PENTELOW

Lenin and Trotsky spoke passionately for an immediate Russian revolution in a Great Portland Street pub in May, 1905.

The following month the mutiny on the battleship Potemkin in Odessa was followed by the setting up of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies and others in several other cities (Trotsky being chair of one of them).

The meeting in the Great Portland Street pub was infiltrated by detective constable Herbert Fitch (later a detective inspector in the Special Branch).

"That meeting was an historic one," wrote Fitch in his 1933 memoirs, "for at the end of it, after Lenin and Trotsky had made passionate speeches, every sentence of which was wildly applauded, a ballot was taken on the advisability of an immediate revolution in Russia. Twenty-one members voted for it and seven for its postponement."

After the result was announced, continued Fitch, Lenin, shaking with emotion, declared: "Comrades of the Revolution. I have waited and served all my life for this hour. My brother died for it. Within the next few months, in Russia, we shall sweep out our oppressors on a tide of blood. And then Germany, Italy, France, England shall follow. In ten years from today, perhaps, the whole world shall be free, and the people shall possess the earth."

The third congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party had indeed taken place in London from April 25 to May 10 of that year in a hall and the back rooms of various public houses and cafes (it was chaired



Lenin in 1905. Getty Images

by Lenin and formalised the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks).

Fitch recounted how he had attended other meetings at pubs in April and May. He had been told by his inspector to track "Vladimir Uljanoff" who had just escaped from Siberia and was in London and was "dangerous." This was of course Lenin, who was going under the alias of Boroff.

While hiding in a cupboard in the room in the Islington pub where the meeting was held at the end of April, Fitch, took down the gist of Lenin's speech which he claimed was along the lines of: "It must be bloodshed - bloodshed on a colossal scale. My comrades here have advocated politics. I say politics are useless to us. We must revolt, and when we revolt there shall be no mercy. We shall think of our brothers shot and hanged at the caprice of the nobles, or sent to rot in Siberia. The Tsar, princes, dukes, police, civil servants, shopkeepers - all must perish. In Russia first, and then from one side of Europe to the other. It is the bourgeoisie we must fear, in Russia, in Germany, in England. When the day comes, they must perish, down to the man who keeps a stall in the street!"

The next meeting Fitch infiltrated, disguised as a waiter, was in another pub on May Day. This was the first time he had seen Lenin at close quarters and he described him as a "smooth-headed, oval-faced, narrow-eyed, typical Jew with a devilish sureness in every line of his powerful magnetic face."

Beside him was Trotsky, whom Fitch described as "a different type of Jew, the kind one might see in any Soho shop, strong-nosed, shallow-faced, long-moustached, with a little tuft of beard wagging from his chin and a great shock of wild hair."

As Fitch put drinks on the table in his guise as a waiter he accidentally knocked copies of the agenda by Lenin's elbow on



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIFFORD HARPER

the floor. "Clumsy fool!" hissed Lenin. As he picked them up Fitch was able to smuggle one copy away.

TERROR

Perhaps unsurprisingly Lenin's own account of his speeches at this congress (in his Collected Works, Vol 8, p348) vary somewhat from Fitch's. Far from dismissing politics as "useless" he spoke of little else, and acts of mindless bloodshed (such as murdering street stallholders) he described as "acts of petty terror" to be avoided. He did, however, persuade the congress to vote for mass political strikes and an armed uprising against the tsar's autocratic government which earlier that year had massacred hundreds of workers.

Lenin was familiar with Fitzrovia from his visits to the Communist Club at 49 Tottenham Street, then at its new building at 107 Charlotte Street in 1902, a meeting in Charlotte Street in 1903, and a concert in Queen's Hall, 4 Langham Place also in 1903.

Trotsky, in his book about Lenin in 1925, revealed how the latter had showed him around London, pointing out the Westminster Parliament and the British Museum, in 1905.

As for which pub they had spoken at in Great Portland Street it was not revealed by Fitch (or indeed Lenin). But of the ones still there - The Cock (No 27), The George (No 55), the

Horse & Groom (No 128), and the Albany (No 240 and 242), the latter is the most likely as it has a large meeting room. But it could have been one of the five which have since closed: the Blue Posts (No 2), Union Tavern (No 13), Portland Arms (No 40), Bay Malton (No 158), and the Colosseum (No 198).

Fireman killed in blitz at Great Portland Street honoured

Three firemen killed in Great Portland Street during the blitz of 1940 have been commemorated by a new plaque.

They were attending a large fire from a bomb next to the Central Synagogue (131-141 Great Portland Street), on September 16 of that year. This would have been J & A Carter, invalid furniture manufacturers, at 129, or Myers & de Haan, embroiderers at 143.

First to be killed was district officer Joseph "Toby" Tobias while directing operations. Then a further bomb fell on the turntable ladder of their Euston fire engine, killing firemen Thomas Curson and Albert Evans, and severely injuring others.

Two days later, September 18, another fire engine was damaged at Beardmore Motors, 112 Great Portland Street, by another bomb.

Station officer Edward Morgan took charge at the earlier fire and was awarded the British Empire Medal for his part in the action. He was later also awarded the George Medal for rescuing a woman from a blazing basement in another heavy air raid on the night of December 29, and the King's Police & Fire Service Medal for Gallantry for rescuing another family from a flat on March 3 of the following year.

The plaque, sponsored by the Firemen Remembered charity, was unveiled at Euston fire station, but permission is being sought to attach it to the wall of the Central Synagogue.

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Felix's forests and friendship

More Than One, The Extraordinary Life of Felix Dennis. By Fergus Byrne (Ebury Press, £20).

The maverick multimillionaire leaves a lasting legacy in his beloved Fitzrovia. And that is all profits from his international publishing empire, based over seven floors at 30 Cleveland Street, pay for trees to be planted in his Heart of England Forest in Warwickshire.

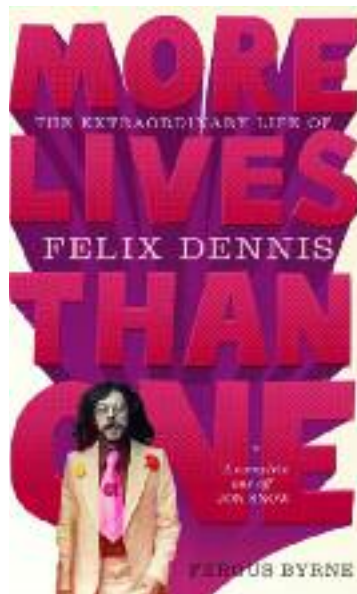
His first taste of Fitzrovia was as a young teenager in the early 1960s as a window dresser for Waring & Gillow department store at 164-182 Oxford Street between the corners of Great Titchfield Street and Winsley Street.

He reckoned he was the only one there who was not gay, and he being the butt of jokes based on "an odd sort of sexism."

UFO CLUB

In 1967 at the age of 20 Felix went to the legendary UFO Club at 31 Tottenham Court Road where he met Mick Farren, who was both the singer of the Social Deviants group and the club's doorman. They both shared a love-hat relationship with the hippie movement and by then Felix was the driving force behind the Oz magazine (having progressed from street seller to business manager).

He and the other editors



were found guilty of obscenity charges in 1970 and jailed briefly before being released on appeal in a highly publicised case. His infamy from this later helped him in his commercial success.

By 1973 he had to reluctantly liquidate Oz, and set up a new company, Cozmic Comics which highlighted OZ in its logo, producing adult comics from 39 Goodge Street, which he described as a "psychedelic slum."

It was not a success at first and he and his business partner Dick Pountain considered winding up. But they were saved by producing a magazine, called

From Oxford Street window dresser to millionaire publishing mogul

Kung Fu Monthly, exploiting the success of the Bruce Lee films in 1974. This incorporated a Bruce Lee Society which was accused of being a massive rip-off by Esther Rantzen to her millions of viewers on the That's Life television show. Felix feared the game was up, but, proving all publicity is good publicity, sales soared and sacks of postal orders and cheques piled up in Goodge Street.

This success enabled them to expand into 14 Rathbone Place.

Then in 1978 they saw a magazine called Personal Computer World was up for

sale. Felix contacted the owner, Angelo Zgorelec, who told him it was too late as he had accepted in principle an offer. Then he was asked if he was the Felix Dennis of Oz magazine fame. When he confirmed that he was, there was a change of heart. It was just as personal computers were becoming popular and Felix vastly increased its circulation and sold it in 1982 for £3 million.

While in New York in 1983 he was summoned to appear as a witness in London against a young woman who had stolen property from his flat above the Goodge Street office. Not realising she was a prostitute when he picked her up he agreed to pay her when she revealed her occupation. He was slightly miffed that after he bought her an "excellent Dover sole" in Wheelers at 40 Charlotte Street she stole his £4,500 wristwatch.

SHOGUN

At this time he put a personal contact ad in the Village Voice in New York which read: "English Shogun seeks Oriental Guisha." he described himself as "a 35-year-old intelligent English millionaire with reasonable looks in full possession of his faculties. Obsessed with his work and a mildly eccentric, adventurous and unconventional person who does not suffer

fools gladly. Values kindness, good humour, with, loyalty and the ability to appreciate silence."

He also described himself as "absurdly generous" which he was to Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and other community causes.

His next big commercial success was a new "lads' mag" launched in 1995, called Maxim, a name chosen by staff in a brainstorming session in the Ship Inn at 134 New Cavendish Street on the corner of Hanson Street.

RUTHLESS

The success of this (under a woman editor) and other magazines enabled them to move the main office from 19 Bolsover Street to 30 Cleveland Street in 2001.

He continued to be a ruthless negotiator and bullied his printers to keep their price the same at a famous showdown in L'Etoile restaurant at 30 Charlotte Street.

At his funeral last year he was described by his colleague and friend, Don Atyeo, as a "free spirit who didn't take shit from anyone" as well as a much loved poet.

"But for me his legacy was his belief that, more than all the money, fame and power, in the end it's friendship that counts."

MP

Twenty four hours on the street where I live

By Wendy Shillam Chair of FitzWest

All of us city dwellers tend to live our lives much more in the public domain, in the streets, cafes and public spaces of our neighbourhood. My twenty four hour diary gives a glimpse of how I use our streets, not only as a thoroughfare, but as a breathing space and a meeting place.

3.00pm Tuesday I bump into a friend. We decide to sit on one of the benches under the trees in Candover Street for a five minute catch up. It could be a lovely spot, but the parking, the rubbish bins and cars screeching round the corner detract from its potential. A shame, because Candover Street possesses some of our finest arts and crafts buildings in central London, including Boulting's Manufactory (1903 by the architect H Fuller Clark). But if I were to step back to admire the architecture, I'd probably be run down! The speed limit in our area is 30mph. Should it be less?

Later: I'm off to the Yorkshire Grey for a quiet pint with my husband. We plan to sit on the benches in Middleton Place,

but this building, like hundreds of others in our area is having a refit, so instead of a quiet corner we have builders' mayhem. We walk around into Riding House Street which is also full of builders gear and completely blocked off to cars. I reckon the street cleaners have abandoned it too.

1.00am Wednesday morning I'm woken by shouts in the street. An arguing couple probably don't realise that I'm in bed only a few metres from where their voices are becoming increasingly raised. I pull the curtains aside. There they are, under the lamp post, oblivious to the fact that all my neighbours can hear them. About 4,000 people live in FitzWest. It is actually one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in the country.

10.30am Wednesday I'm cycling off to do some shopping. New Cavendish Street is to be designated as a cycling quietway, but who knows how they'll manage it. I take my life in my hands, it is so congested. I think we need quiet quarters, not just a few so-called quiet streets. Are any of the through routes really necessary in FitzWest?

Some of my neighbours are still putting out rubbish, oblivious of the fact that the collection is long gone and they are all potentially in line for a £50.00 fine. I'm disgusted when I see two open bags full of food scraps that will undoubtedly attract vermin. But to give them their due, collections are not advertised on my street. Many people would prefer to take their rubbish to a recycling point.



Turning into Langham Street I have to negotiate another hazard. The female Ginkgo trees have dropped their fruit. The council have made an attempt to clean up the pavement, but it still smells disgusting. My heel slips on gunge.

1.00pm Lunch in a cafe. We all value this area because of the cafes and cosy pubs. I love the independent shops, the quirky businesses, the galleries and college activity. But the traffic, noise, pollution and rubbish nuisance that this intensity of use causes is something we hate. This is a beautiful area with huge potential. I ought to be proud of living and working at the heart of this great city; not embarrassed by the mess.

The FitzWest Forum is taking some short term action. We've asked for the Ginkgo trees to be replaced. We've started a dialogue with Westminster City Council, trying to find solutions to the rubbish problem and we've joined with The West End partnership to see if we can make change right across the West End.

Then there are the invisible menaces. Noise is one; pollution another. The invisible pollutants like nitrogen dioxide

and fine particulates are more pernicious than ever the London smog was. They are at their greatest intensity in our area, Euston Road, Marylebone Road and Oxford Street are hotspots. More than 10,000 people die each year in London from pollution (GLA figures). It affects the young and the elderly disproportionately. Calming the traffic and planting would help, but really we must consider restricting air conditioning and discouraging diesel vehicle trips.



In our last public meeting the forum made public space issues one of the top priorities for the FitzWest Neighbourhood Plan.

Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum (FitzWest) will be holding a public exhibition and consultation entitled FitzWest Futures – Have Your Say at the Getty Gallery, 46 Eastcastle Street, W1W 8DX on Monday 11th January from 11.00am-8.00pm. This will be an opportunity for people to see the progress we've made with the FitzWest Plan and give their views.

Have your say. It's free to join the forum here: Fitzwest.org/wordpress





Neighbourhood nuggets

Paved with Gold: Discovering the West End of London. By David Long (Fort Publishing, £20).

An entire chapter is devoted to Fitzrovia in this unusual study of existing architecture and the people who used to live in the neighbourhood..

A few little known nuggets emerge such as the fact that **King William IV** (1765-1837) lived at 32 Mortimer Street in 1809 when he was the Duke of Clarence prior to taking the throne.

He was aged 64 when he became king, still a record at present but which will be broken by Prince Charles if he outlives our current sovereign.

A neighbour of Williams was **Admiral Lord St Vincent** (1735-1832) at 34 Mortimer Street. Born John Jervais he was a friend of Nelson and with him won the sea battle against the Spanish in 1797 at St Vincent from which he drew his title.

The painter and sculptor **George Frederic Watts** (1817-1904) was born in Marylebone and lived at 1 Clipstone Street as a youth, and later at 14 in the same street.

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art at 62 Gower Street owes a huge debt to the Fitzrovia playwright **George Bernard Shaw**. Apart from being on its managing council he donated a third of the royalties for all his literary works to the Academy. A huge bonus was that the entire royalties from *Pygmalion* were also donated, which when it was adapted as *My Fair Lady* for a stage musical and later a film earned RADA a fortune. MP

When is a piano not a piano? When it's a violin!



We are blessed with several excellent Indian or Bangladeshi restaurants in Fitzrovia. To the north is the legendary Agra, founded in 1954 and still run by the same family and still with the wonderful photograph on the wall of Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay as he was then) visiting the restaurant in the 1960s, whilst here to fight Henry Cooper. To the south of Fitzrovia we have several gems such as the Chettinad, the Palms of Goa and others.

One of the more amusing incidents to date in my colourful

career as a pianist took place in an Indian restaurant further afield, which was part of a group including Veeraswamy, which makes our Agra seem rather young, as it dates from 1926, the year of the general strike, and claims to be the country's oldest Indian restaurant (though the Agra is said to be the first to have installed an authentic Tandoor oven).

Every Sunday for some years I was booked to play jazz piano in their sister restaurant in Fulham (recently decamped to St. James's), Chutney Mary. The manager at the time was called Premen, and his mood swings led us rather unkindly behind his back to append the suffix "-strual" to his name. He phoned me early in February in my third



Cartoon by Chris Tyler

year, and pointed out that the following Sunday would be Valentine's Day, "so we want you to play just this week on violin rather than piano, so that you can wander romantically amongst the tables, okay?" I pointed out that I was a pianist, not a violinist, but he kept repeating: "Yes, but it's only one week. Just this one time, play it on the violin, instead, okay?"

The idea was that if you can play one, you can play the other – though it takes years, separately, to master any instrument.

Of course, levels of musical literacy vary and I'm sure I would not last five minutes working in the kitchen at Chutney Mary, but such displays of ignorance are rife – as the number of times an acquaintance has approached me during a performance in some club or bar with their hand outstretched for a handshake by way of greeting, despite both my hands being quite visibly fully occupied on the keys at the time! So let us put out a plea for more musical literacy – and I promise to work on my culinary skills too.

Looking back through our archives

40 years ago

Duchess retires

Legendary landlady of the Duke of York in Rathbone Street, **Blanche "the Duchess" Klein**, retired after 40 years.

Her eccentric husband **Alf "the Mad Major"** had died 11 years earlier. He was famed for snipping customers ties and putting them behind the bar. His gigantic bloodhound, Colonel (named to outrank the Major), starred in the Hound of the Baskervilles film.

The visitors' book of the pub contained the signatures of such stars as **Johnnie Ray, Rod Stewart, Paul Jones, John Lee Hooker, Michael Bentine, and Richard Briers**.

Folk celebration

Dingle's Folk Club celebrated the fifth anniversary of its opening at the Roebuck pub (now The Court) in Tottenham Court Road. It had since transferred to the Adams Arms (now The Lukin) in Conway Street after "structural alterations made dancing dangerous in the Roebuck." It was the only London club at the time to have traditional dancing as well as singing. It was planning an open



Alf and Blanche Klein behind the bar at the Duke of York.

air barn dance at the 1976 Fitzrovia Festival.

A recent singer had been **Willie Scott**, a 79-year-old former border shepherd, and due in January was **Fred Jordan**, a Shropshire farm worker.

Richard Digance

The latest album cover of folk singer **Richard Digance** (Treading the Boards) featured a picture of the Horse Shoe Dining Rooms at 21 Rathbone Street. He had recently appeared on BBC2's *Old Grey Whistle Test*.

Richard Burton had been a regular in the cafe (bread and dripping was 3p a slice) when filming *The Villain* on location in the area in 1971.

The cafe had been run since

1936 by Joan Nessling who had kept the front the same. In fact it had been practically unchanged for 100 years, and the previous owner who had run it for 40 years, remembered stable yards and blacksmiths flourishing nearby. That is how it got its name.

It had been commended by **Jonathan Routh** in a guide to cheap eating places.

Watership Down

Three Americans were converting the derelict building at Suffolk House in Whitfield Place into an animation studio, where they planned to start filming *Watership Down* in January.

Housing scandal

Mrs Mogga, of 43 Fitzroy Street, who owned 17 and 18 Scala Street was ordered to produce rent books for all her 35 Chinese and Spanish tenants or be prosecuted. The 19 tenants at No 18 shared one outside toilet and one bathroom, as did the 16 tenants at No 17.

Elsewhere 40 Chinese tenants shared one bath at 41 Grafton Way where the Chinese landlord was also ordered to give them rent books. He had refused to change the lock on the front door despite burglaries by thieves with a key. A woman in the basement had been bound and gagged and had her cash and jewellery stolen.

Action on all these cases had been initiated by Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre worker, **Patricia Langton**, who also got the Wong and Han families (who occupied just four small rooms 9ft by 10ft) rehoused by Greater London Council. Patricia reported that the waiting list for housing was 13,000 in Camden and 7,500 in Westminster.

Referee scores

The Hope, run by **Paddy O'Donnell** in Tottenham Street, beat the Northumberland Arms (now the Draft House), run by

John Bermiston in Goodge Street, 6-1 in a Sunday morning football match. The North's only goal was scored by the referee!

Crown hosts

Virginia and Gil Gilbert were welcomed as new hosts of the Crown and Sceptre in Great Titchfield Street, following the departure after 15 years of **Vincent Dobbs**.

Bus scare

"Buses could be running both ways along Tottenham Court Road again for the first time since 1961 if the Greater London Council's Speedbus scheme comes into operation as planned within the next three years," reported the paper. It feared that drivers going north-bound would run up Cleveland, Great Titchfield and Bolsover Streets.

It was accurately hoped that "when the scheme is studied in detail by the powers that be, they will realise the folly of driving all this unwanted traffic into residential and shopping streets and change their collective minds."

(*Tower*, December 1975)

25 years ago

ITN move out

Independent Television News was preparing to move on December 14 from their nine-storey tower block at the corner of Wells Street and Riding House Street where it had been since the 1960s. As it grew it had expanded into an extension at 47 Wells Street, displacing residential accommodation, and into portacabins on the roof.

Local pubs, wine bars and restaurants feared "the loss of media folk's expense accounts." Speyhawk Mount Row had acquired the block and planned to demolish it and build offices and luxury flats. (*Fitzrovia News*, December 1990)

THE DUKE OF YORK

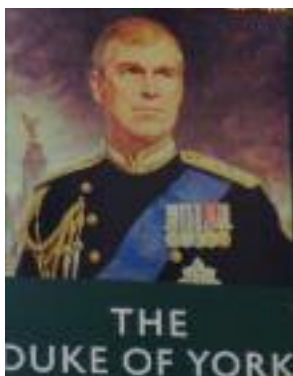
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WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email news@fitzrovia.org.uk by February 19 for the March 2016 issue, and put "Listings" in the subject box.

LIVE MUSIC

The Albany, 240 Great Portland St (thealbanyw1w.co.uk): Ukeleses on Wednesdays 8pm.

King & Queen, 1 Foley St: Folk once a month on Fridays (visit web.mustradclub.co.uk). Scaledown alternative live entertainments last Friday of the month (theorchestrapit.com)

UCL, Haldane Room, Gower St: Chamber Music Club concerts, Dec 7, 5.30-6.30pm, and (Christmas one) Dec 15, 6-7pm.

UCL Main Quad, Gower St: Christmas Concert, Dec 7, 1-8pm.

The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): Demob Happy, Dec 10; The Frank and Walters, Dec 11; Christmas Mod Ball featuring Eddie Phillips, Dec 12, 7.30pm to 1am; Frank Sanazi Xmas Cracker Show, Dec 16; The Boot Boys' Christmas Knees Up, Dec 18; The Fabulous Lounge Swingers, Dec 19; Blues Brothers Banned, Dec 20; For Pete's Sake, Dec 21; Little Bob Blues Bastards, Dec 29; The UB40 Experience, Jan 16.

CAROL SINGING

All Saints, 7 Margaret St: Assemble at parish office door to right of courtyard, Dec 17, 6.30pm. Lunchtime in church with mince pies and mulled wine, Dec 18, 12.30pm. Festival of carols, Dec 21, 6pm.

LIVE COMEDY

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

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

PUB QUIZZES

The Court, 108a Tottenham Court Rd: Every Sunday, 8pm.

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

POETRY

Bloomsbury Theatre Studio, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Bang Said the Gun, poetry for people who don't like poetry, Jan 28, Feb 25, March 31.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Native Tongue: Rap, Spoken Word, Poetry and Beats, Jan 14.

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre Studio, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Bright Club, Dec 10; Thurnerbards: Chapter III, Dec 12; London Science Communication Socials: Celebrity Christmas Quiz, Dec 16; Josie and Robin's Christmas Shambles - Studio Show, Dec 18-19; Vitriola Christmas Annoyance, Dec 20-21.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Barrell Organ weekend, Dec 5-6; Outcasts & Vagabonds - A Tom Bennett tribute, Dec 14; Holy Presents, Christmas puppet comedy, Dec 15-19; Sing-a-long-a-Muppets Christmas Carol, Dec 20; Adventure One, Jan 9-23 (part of Whose London Is It Anyway performances throughout January).

Dominion Theatre, 269 Tottenham Court Rd (dominiontheatre.co.uk): Elf The Musical, until January 2; The War of the Worlds, from Feb 8.

London Palladium, Argyll St (palladium.londontheatres.co.uk): Cats, starring Beverley Knight, until Jan 2.

CINEMA/FILM

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org): London Socialist Film Co-op screen films at 11am on the second Sunday of each month. Wadja, Dec 13; Where Should the Birds Fly? Nabi Samwil, and Alrowwad Pioneers for Life, Jan 10; The Act of Killing, Feb 14; The Will of the People, March 13.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Whose London film night of documentary films addressing London's changing landscape, Jan 17.

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: Murder in Mesopotamia, Dec 3, 6-9pm (£5, pre-book: events.petrie@ucl.ac.uk).

Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent St (regentstreetcinema.com): Films most days, See website.



Blues Brothers Banned: At the 100 Club on December 20.

EXHIBITIONS

British Museum, Great Russell St (britishmuseum.org): Free: Life and sole footwear from the Islamic world, until May 15; Shifting patterns: Pacific bark-cloth clothing, until Dec 6. Paid for entry: Celts: art and identity, until Jan 31; Egypt: faith after the pharaohs, until Feb 7; Drawing in silver and gold: Leonardo to Jasper Johns, until Dec 6.

UCL Art Museum, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Roderick Tye: The Human Presence. Celebrated sculptor and dedicated fisherman (1959-2009), until Dec 18.

UCL Grant Museum of Zoology, 21 University St (ucl.ac.uk/museums/zoology): Glass Delusions. How do minerals become living things? until Dec 19.

UCL Main Library, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Queen of the Sciences: a celebration of numbers and the London Mathematical Society, until Dec 18.

UCL Octagon Gallery, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Dangerous diaries: exploring risks and rewards in fabrication, until Jan 31.

UCL Petrie Museum, Malet Place (ucl.ac.uk/museums/petrie): Characters and Collections 1915-2015, until January 25.

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Rd (wellcomecollection.org): The Fallen Woman, until January 3; Blood: Uniting and Dividing, until Feb 28; The Art of Bedlam: Richard Dadd, until Feb 6.

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ART GALLERIES



Berloni, 63 Margaret St: Hani Zurob (pictured above), Low Quality Love, until Dec 19.



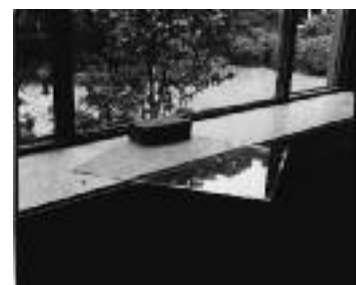
Curwen Gallery, 34 Windmill St: The Miniature Show (pictured above), and Martin Leman, Cats, Dec 3-23.

Christine Park Gallery, 35 Riding House St: Art Prize CBM, Dec 2-23.

Fold Gallery, 158 New Cavendish St: Ellen Hyullemose, Landscape Reconfigured, until Jan 16.



Tiwani Contemporary, 16 Little Portland St: Francisco Vidal (pictured above), Workshop Maiana Mutamba, until Dec 19.



White Rainbow, 47 Mortimer St: Shigeo Anzai (pictured above), Index, until Jan 23.

Full list on the website:
news.fitzrovia.org.uk/2015/12/01/fitzrovia-galleries-update-december-2015

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