

# Fitzrovia News



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

Issue 142 Autumn 2016

## Oxford Street pedestrianisation threatens to move congestion and pollution into side streets

**Residents and business groups want traffic reduced not displaced**

Residents from Fitzrovia, Marylebone, Mayfair and Soho have voiced concerns over Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's plan to pedestrianise Oxford Street.

Residents groups told London Assembly Transport Committee members in the summer that pedestrianisation is not desirable and it is not practical to provide alternative bus, taxi and delivery vehicle routes without moving pollution and congestion into the smaller streets either side of Oxford Street.

Representatives of residents told *Fitzrovia News* that they welcome the Mayor's desire to reduce congestion and pollution and want to work together to realise his aim to improve Oxford Street, but without adding to the already high levels of pollution and congestion in nearby streets. They say the Mayor should reduce motor traffic in the neighbouring areas not just Oxford Street.

Businesses in the West End, Transport for London, and Westminster City Council also hold the view that traffic reduction and not pedestrianisation should be the aim, otherwise the problem would just be shifted from one street to neighbouring streets.

However, residents and business groups were surprised when London deputy mayor for transport Val Shawcross announced in July that City Hall hopes to complete pedestrianisation by 2020. Pedestrianisation would be completed in stages with the eastern end of Oxford Street done first.

Residents and business groups fear that buses and taxis could be diverted along Wigmore Street, Mortimer Street and Goodge Street.

Wendy Shillam of the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum wrote to Val Shawcross saying that if pedestrianisation of Oxford Street results in a permanent diversion of taxis and bus



*Around 270 buses travel along Oxford Street every hour and 15,000 taxi passengers are picked up, set down, or carried every day. Community and business groups fear the traffic could be displaced into side streets.*

routes along neighbouring streets "it would be devastating".

Jace Tyrell of the New West End Company which represents traders in Oxford Street was cautious about the plans: "We look forward to seeing and discussing detailed proposals for Oxford Street following Ms Shawcross's statements but feel very strongly that any form of vehicle-free zones must lead to a genuine reduction of traffic, rather than large scale re-routing down smaller residential or commercial streets.

"In addition, it must be

accompanied by a full economic assessment to measure the impact on businesses and the shoppers and workers that travel to the West End every day via public transport," he said.

Campaigners for a traffic-free Oxford Street have welcomed the plans but Westminster City Council told the West End Extra that "the plans described by the deputy mayor for full pedestrianisation are currently unachievable without significant impact on those who live, visit or run a business in the area."

Oxford Street is a major route

for buses and taxis but private vehicles are already banned from 7am to 7pm except Sundays. Around 270 buses travel along the street every hour and 15,000 taxi passengers are picked up, set down, or carried every day.

Thousands of people live north and south of Oxford Street and despite having the lowest car use in the UK they experience the highest levels of pollution.

A public consultation on the Mayor's plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street will be carried out later this year.

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# Letters, emails and comment

Write to [letters@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto:letters@fitzrovia.org.uk) or post to Fitzrovia News, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, 39 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RX

## Take action now to have your say on Oxford Street plans

By Caroline Mawer

Pedestrianising Oxford Street may sound like a great idea. The Mayor of London made it his manifesto commitment and the plans are being drawn up. But it needs to be a great idea for local residents and businesses as well as the global tourists the Mayor is apparently hoping to attract.

But we don't want to have the surrounding streets even more congested, polluted and less safe than they already are.

So we need to speak out — not to complain — but to say what we actually want.

The first consultation ended on 29 July, and especially if you missed that, you need to make sure you don't miss your chance to have a say. Keep reading for some ideas about how you might do that.

Pedestrianisation is planned to start at the eastern end sometime in the middle of 2019 from Tottenham Court Road to

Oxford Circus. Then it's the western section up towards Marble Arch. Around Marble Arch itself is going to come last.

The bus traffic-jam along Oxford Street is apparently going to be sorted out by a "paradigm shift": with "interchanges, turn-backs and changes to the routes"; and by having a Hopper ticket, so you can get on and off buses for one price.

Although it's not at all clear where else they might go, the Deputy Mayor Valerie Shawcross has said that it's not about "all the buses simply running down Wigmore Street".

There has been some discussion about disabled access. There are going to be two accessible Crossrail stations at Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street. But many less mobile pedestrians won't want to (or can't) walk, and carry their shopping, between these.

Thinking around this needs to be as radical as with the

buses.

Just adding taxi-ranks in the side streets, and having taxis circling for a place in the ranks is going to further increase congestion as well as reducing road safety. Since the Mayor has much less power over taxis, this is a very significant issue.

Then there's pollution. We have very high levels of pollution locally. Well above the recommended levels for health. Sadiq Khan has been clear that reducing pollution levels is a priority for him. Surely we want more than just a local fight-back against pollution increasing when buses and taxis are displaced from Oxford Street?

The paradigm shift needs to extend from transport to actually reduce pollution across the West End.

The London Assembly and the Mayor must consider health, disability, road safety, and business needs.

Most importantly, they need

to actually listen to local residents and business people — not just tell people that a consultation period has closed.

Take action now:  
email Valerie Shawcross  
([val.shawcross@london.gov.uk](mailto:val.shawcross@london.gov.uk))  
and tweet @valshawcross

Email Sadiq Khan  
([Mayor@london.gov.uk](mailto:Mayor@london.gov.uk))  
tweet @SadiqKhan  
For tweets use the hashtag:  
#oxfordstreet

Say if you want to be personally informed about any future consultations.

Describe your good ideas — you will have some! Say what you are specifically concerned about: is it pollution, road safety, disability access, or business working?

Say what your special needs are: have you got children, breathing problems, reduced mobility, or a business to run? Ask for a reply. And if you don't get one, let *Fitzrovia News* know!

## Letter to Val Shawcross, deputy Mayor of London

Dear Val,

I represent Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum. Our forum is a 200 strong group that represents both residents and businesses in Fitzrovia. We are united in order to create a neighbourhood plan for the area.

One crucial aspect of our plan, triggered by strong public support, is to improve the streets where we live and work. There is no public green space in our area, little sitting out space and hardly any pedestrian streets. We suffer from some of the worst pollution of any residential area in Europe.

We are in the middle of writing policies that will go public this autumn. So far public consultation has strongly prioritised the greening of streets, the reduction and calming of traffic and the improvement of arrangements for pedestrians.

In particular we wish to enhance the Great Titchfield Street/Mortimer Street hub of our area. This has become a dynamic focus for local and specialist shops, small businesses and provides the area's vitality. But it is already stymied by the fact that Mortimer Street is a by-pass street for Oxford Street.

There are over 4000 people living in very dense flats in this area. Our population is not dominated by West End Wealthy, but by ordinary people,

many of whom have lived in the area for years, whose children attend the local schools and who work in local businesses. Many people live in social housing, or housing for the elderly. They cannot choose to move out of the area if it becomes even more devastated by traffic.

The announcement that pedestrianisation in Oxford Street shall go ahead leads us to fear the implications for our area, especially Mortimer Street and Newman Street. While the Crossrail project has gone ahead we have had several long term bus diversions through our area, along Mortimer and Newman Street. This has resulted in lines of jammed buses belching out exhaust.

If the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street results in a permanent diversion of taxis and bus routes along these streets it would be devastating for the area.

We support a reduction of traffic in Oxford Street, and have no objection to pedestrianisation per se. In fact, we too wish to look at traffic calming schemes to support improvements to Great Titchfield Street and Mortimer Street, which is the social and economic hub of our area.

Unfortunately it is not just Oxford Street that subjects the population of Fitzrovia to life threatening pollution. Mortimer

Street and New Cavendish Street are highly polluted as well. This pollution is exacerbated in the centre of London because of the urban heat island effect, which can trap a bubble of polluted air, stopping it dissipating, as it might do in greener parts of the capital. I am sure that enlightened traffic engineers in the GLA have already considered these limitations and are proposing alternatives. For example a bus hub at Tottenham Court Road and a further hub at Hyde Park Corner would be well supported by our community.

We are especially concerned that All Souls' Primary School, our excellent local primary school, lies only yards from the Mortimer Street/Newman Street junction. The prospect of diverting transport onto a minor road and increasing pollution levels so close to an area where children are taught, is not worthy of the new GLA administration.

The FitzWest Neighbourhood Forum is doing all it can to improve the environment for our inner city residents, existing businesses and the hundreds of thousands of new visitors that will be attracted by Crossrail 1, Crossrail 2 and HS2 which also arrives at our doorstep. We seek help from the GLA to achieve that result, not hindrance.

Please, can I have your

assurance that no scheme will be approved which diverts public transport and taxis through the streets within our area?

**Wendy Shillam, Chairman  
Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood  
Area Forum Executive**

## Corrections and clarifications

If you think *Fitzrovia News* has made a mistake please tell us by email [news@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto: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.

### 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 6 December  
Deadline is Friday 18 November  
[news@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto:news@fitzrovia.org.uk)

# Brain boffins search for missing link with the local community



The Sainsbury Wellcome Centre as seen from the corner of Howland and Charlotte Streets (above), and the Colonnade from different directions (right top and bottom). Pictures by Grant Smith



Those researching into how the brain works and affects behaviour, at Howland Street's new centre, wish to give talks to the local community.

Six leading scientists from all around the world are working at the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour at 25 Howland Street. The full complement of scientists is expected to reach 150 along with 50 dedicated support staff.

"We are interested in giving talks in lay

terms on any topics people are interested in and the community wants to know about," communications manager Alice Taylor-Gee told *Fitzrovia News*.

"Our research is into which part of the brain affects which behaviour. Taxi drivers, for example, are stronger in that part of the brain which works out how to get around from A to B.

"When people can no longer recognise close friends and relatives we need to find out

what happened to that part of the brain.

"If we understand how the brain ticks it may help other researchers to understand about people with dementia, and then maybe able to fix it."

The centre is also engaging the public with the world of neuroscience research through art installations at street level. These highlight visual illusions and how the brain processes signals.

There is also an area open to the public where stunning neuroscience images are projected.

And the colonnade running the length of the front of the building features 950 white translucent polycarbonate pixels which look different when viewed from one side or the other. From the east (Charlotte Street end) it shows the score of Bach's *Musical Offering* (1747): *Ricercar a 3* which is considered an extraordinary expression of the human mind and so reflects the creative capacity of the mind.

From the other end they show 11 separate winners of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine affiliated with University College London. The portraits play with illusion.

There is also an artist in residence for a year. This is Wayne McGregor who explores through dance how the brain works during different movements.

Inside is a white board the length of the building for researchers to draw on to share their ideas with equations and such-like.

The whole building was designed by Ian Ritchie Architects who visited laboratories around the world, and designed it to encourage cross collaboration between scientists by allowing them to see what others are doing.

## Triangle site plans put on hold

The controversial redevelopment of the triangular site at Clipstone Street and Cleveland Street has been put on hold while the owners and their property developer partners have a rethink on its future.

Last year Westminster council passed plans to completely demolish and redevelop the commercial site which was originally built as part of the Holcroft Court housing block in the mid-1960s.

Hoarding and scaffolding had surrounded the vacant site since the beginning of the year and covered up the wall with a Banksy mural.

But work to demolish the building never got very far and the developers were also mulling over a modified planning application.

However, in August workers started to take down the hoarding.

*Fitzrovia News* understands that the approved plans to develop the site will not be going ahead and its future has been put on hold.

As we went to press developers Dukelease Properties had not made a public statement on their intentions.

## Plans to redevelop Tottenham Street building published

Camden Council has published its own plans to redevelop the building containing the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre on the corner of Tottenham Street and Goodge Place.

The council which owns the Grade II listed building wants to convert the basement into a small flat, change the advice centre on the ground floor into commercial premises, and add a mansard roof extension for more housing.

If approved by Camden's own planning department it will mean the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association (FNA) will have to vacate the premises. Currently the FNA which provides welfare and housing advice, comments on planning and licensing applications and publishes *Fitzrovia News*, has no alternative accommodation to deliver its services.

The FNA has operated from the building since 1975.

# Bitter fight for sweet hut



A popular street trader is resisting being forced out of business. Many know and have been helped by Bobby Long (pictured), aged 77, who has sold sweets from his hut on the pavement outside Goodge Street station for 43 years.

Bobby said. "Both the manager of the station and the manager of the adjoining KFC shop are happy for me to continue trading. I am always up to date with the rent, I have given thousands of people help and directions over the years."

Yet in July he came back from holiday to find an enforcement order from Camden Council pinned on his hut ordering him to remove it within four weeks.

At first he was told it was because the hut was a few inches to big. So he planned to make the adjustment and brand it as the smallest sweetshop in London.

The *Camden New Journal*

reported Jonathan Simpson, Camden Council community safety chief, saying "The Council can no longer issue Mr Long with a trading licence without the permission of the freeholder. Since his licence lapsed in March we are working on and advising Mr Long on the options available to him."

Bobby told *Fitzrovia News* "I have been told there is no appeal procedure which to me is a grave injustice.

"I have had lots of letters of support. I don't make a fortune from the sweets, which are just £1 a bag, but my motivation is mixing with the community and helping them."

"Last week I started logging the number of times I gave directions to people who are lost. It was over 40 a day, many from people coming out of the station, others asking the way to the British Museum and other places.

"When the Middlesex Hospital was open in Mortimer Street I was always directing patients to it, many of whom came back to thank me after their treatment and became friends. It was almost like performing a social service.

"I used to have a charity box for the local children's hospital as well.

"I feel very much part of the community and am devastated at being treated in this way."

Local traders and the community have supported the campaign to prevent the eviction, and hope a solution can be found so Bobby can continue trading on the site even if with a different sized kiosk.

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# Safe home found for refugee

An asylum seeker twice arrested by the Syrian government has found a safe haven in Fitzrovia,

Martha Jean Baker, and her husband Malcolm Katz, have given their spare room to Ahmad (not his real name) who has fled from Damascus after hearing the government wanted to detain him again.

Martha helped set up a group called Refugees at Home ([www.refugeesathome.org](http://www.refugeesathome.org)) which connects refugees and asylum seekers with those with a spare room to accommodate them.

In July she was told of the plight of Ahmad through the group, so contacted him and after getting two references let him have the room the next day.

This ended a year of uncertainty for Ahmad, who faced the prospect of long term incarceration. He fled Syria by bus to Lebanon, then to Turkey by plane. After getting nowhere there he left after three months through people traffickers in a small unsafe rubber dinghy to Greece.

After buying a false Italian passport he was able to get to Geneva, but the fraud was uncovered so he went by train to the Calais "jungle" camp.

He stayed there for two



Ahmad relaxes with Martha Jean

months, then with another false passport got to Italy before being arrested again, then going to Paris for three months where he got an Austrian passport and a plane to Dublin.

From there he got a bus to Belfast, then another bus to London at the end of April.

He had only £40 and claimed asylum but was offered no accommodation. Luckily a friend he had met in Calais was able to put him up for three months and eventually told him about Refugees at Home.

"I found their website and emailed them," he said. "They

replied within 30 minutes at midnight. It was Martha. I was so happy when she offered me accommodation." She has since helped him register their address with the Home Office, while the asylum granting-process goes on which could take about seven months.

"I am so happy to have food and a bed and not have to sleep on the streets any more," said Ahmad.

He is a qualified dentist and is now studying English so that he can take English dentistry examinations to enable him to practise.

# Planning appeals

Camden Council will find out later this autumn if two decisions it made to refuse permission for developments in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury will be overturned by government inspectors.

On 13 September a hearings will be held to decide whether the council was right to refuse permission for UCLH Charity to redevelop Arthur Stanley House a former hospital building in Tottenham Street and create a mostly office development. Camden refused the application because it did not meet the objectives of the policy set out in the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, part of the borough's planning strategy. The Charlotte Street Association and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association had argued that the site should be used for housing and will be speaking in support of the council at the hearing.

Then on 4 October a planning inspector will hear arguments for and against plans for the redevelopment of an underground car park in Great Russell Street to create a windowless hotel. The bunker hotel was strongly opposed by local residents and the Bloomsbury Association will be speaking in support of Camden Council for refusing the application.

Developers Criterion Capital are also considering submitting a new modified planning application for an underground hotel, a move seen by local residents as waging a war of attrition on two fronts.

**New plans for former Strand Union workhouse**  
A public exhibition will be held in September to show off new plans for the redevelopment of the Middlesex Hospital Annex building at 44 Cleveland Street.

The site which includes a Grade II listed Georgian and Victorian workhouse is in the process of being sold by UCLH NHS Trust to its sister company UCLH Charity which is putting together a planning application to be submitted to Camden later this month.

The plans will include social rented and intermediate affordable housing as well as homes for sale at market prices. Commercial premises are also planned for the site as well as some public open space.

Public exhibition: 2pm to 8pm Wednesday 7 September, at Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, W1W 6DL.

# Students search for genetically modified prize

A team of international students at the University of Westminster hopes to take first prize in a synthetic biology competition to be held this autumn in Boston in the United States.

The team of thirteen students from Britain, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America will compete in the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) Competition in October.

Based at the New Cavendish Street campus they told *Fitzrovia News* about the project:

"We are currently working towards genetically modifying *E.coli* bacteria to synthesise amino-levulinic acid (ALA)," says Abubaker Mohamed a student from Somalia.

"ALA had been specifically chosen as it has a diverse range of applications such as bioherbicides, biofuels and cancer treatment," he said.

The team believe they can create a process to produce ALA — a non-protein amino acid — that is cheaper and produces a higher yield than current methods.

Dr Anatoliy Markiv, senior lecturer in biomedical sciences at UoW, told *Fitzrovia News* that the Boston event is a great opportunity for the students to tackle real world problems in a global environment.

"The iGEM competition is about sharing ideas, working as a team and having fun in unique

competition settings. Students who participate usually get engaged in real science projects and go on to become scientists in the future. Westminster have been involved in the iGEM since 2011. Our team last year has won a gold medal for the renewable energy project and we are aiming to go for gold this year as well."

The students are excited about the competition and the team leaders explained how the experience can improve their careers.

Amritpal Singh from India and a graduate in BSc Biochemistry, said:

"iGEM is one of the best experiences you could possibly have. You're given the chance to independently lead, research and carry out a project that fascinates you. The giant jamboree which is held in Boston allows us to present our research to thousands of academics, students and biotechnology companies. Science is a highly collaborative field and making connections with people you may work with in the future, from academics to our fellow peers is an amazing opportunity and something that would not be possible without the iGEM experience."

Paulina Brajer from Poland and a graduate in BSc Biological Sciences said:

"The iGEM competition is a student led project where the



*University of Westminster iGEM team. Front Row: Tracey Tran, 19, Vietnamese/ British; Kamile Minkelyte, 20, Lithuanian; Hanna Sowar, 20, British; Sally Al-jurdi, 21, Lebanon/ British; Camila Gaspar, 22, Brazilian/ Spanish; Maria Puiu, 23, Romanian; Evelyne Abrazado, 23, Romanian. Back Row: Reza Sarwary, 21, Iranian; Abdikarim Ahmed, 21, Somailan; Amritpal Singh, 21, Indian/ British; Paulina Brajer, 22, Poland; Reema Ali, 21, Bangladeshi; Abubaker Mohamed, 20, Somalian. Photo: Ludovica Siniscalchi.*

team is responsible for sponsorship to fund the project and outreach to teach the wider community about synthetic biology. These aspects give students an experience that gives an insight into the real world of science and lets students acquire a variety of skills. This is my second year participating in the competition and the experience has been rewarding and helped me

in many aspects as a student as well as being offered an MSc."

Camila Gaspar, a Brazilian and Spanish national and a graduate in BSc Biochemistry, says: "It has been an amazing experience with endless learning curves, and it's preparing me for the academic life as I know I will be using those skills during MRes and further to PhD."

The students are supported

with funding from University of Westminster and the Quintin Hogg Trust to meet many of the costs of the project, but they are also crowdfunding to cover the remaining expenses.

*You can sponsor the students by visiting [gofundme.com/westminsterigem](http://gofundme.com/westminsterigem). Follow them on [facebook.com/westminsterigem2016](http://facebook.com/westminsterigem2016) and [twitter.com/westminsterigem](http://twitter.com/westminsterigem).*

# Oh Calcutta! Films and music on menu

By CLIFFORD SLAPPER

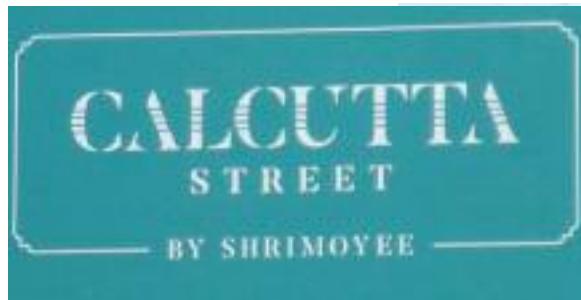
A cultural and culinary ambassador from the Indian subcontinent has set up shop on Tottenham Street. Her name is Shrimoyee Chakraborty (*pictured right*) and her restaurant, Calcutta Street, is hosting live music and film screenings.

Shrimoyee (Shrim to her friends) grew up in Calcutta, then went to study at Mumbai's Sophia College, followed by a move to the UK for a master's degree at Manchester's Business School, before settling in London a couple of years ago.

In India she was a television presenter, an economics analyser, and creator of a highly popular food blog called Shrimoyee's Scrapbook.

She has already created numerous successful restaurant pop-ups throughout London, but this is her first permanent restaurant. She aims to show people the delights and diversity of true Indian cuisine beyond the standard formula of London's Indian restaurants. Her menu features street food from Golpark, alongside hearty stews and substantial dishes from her family's home on Gariahat Road.

Shrim is on a cultural mission too, to educate Londoners on the art, literature, music and cinema of India. To this end, she



already has a music curator on board, and there are plans for a mural of David Bowie (1947-2016) alongside the Bengali poet, painter and composer, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941).

The books on which each bill is carried to the table are beautiful and colourful imprints brought from Bengal.

There will be film screenings and bottomless brunches on Sundays at Calcutta Street. The waiters and manager's job titles are the Indian terms for "little brother/sister" and "older brother", respectively. Staff training has included being sent to watch great Indian films such as those of Satyajit Ray.

Shrim has decorated the restaurant totally with Bengali artworks by Jamini Roy and with beautiful pieces brought personally by her from her home town of Calcutta, with a "chandelier" made by her from hand-fans.



She is keen to support the Bengali workers who make such things for little pay, whose jobs are under threat. There is a hand-carved mahogany stool

which is over 200 years old, carved mirror frames and even, in the window, a wooden owl, which in Bengal is a symbol for good luck.

Cafe celebrates 20 years on Charlotte Street

On 22 September Italia Uno will celebrate 20 years since it first served customers at 91 Charlotte Street.

The Italian cafe run by Felice Bracco and his family is famous for serving up freshly made sandwiches and for being a home from home for Napoli football fans.

Expect lots of Italian fun and of course football colours on display all week.

## News in brief

Workers at takeaway delivery firm **Deliveroo** in dispute over pay held several days of protests in August outside its offices in **Torrington Place**.

Property developer **Derwent London** thinks its rental income will be clipped as a result of the vote to leave the European Union.

Media company **Scrub**, which specialises in supplying pro-audio technology to post-production houses, has moved from Berwick Street in Soho to larger premises on the corner of **Wells Street** and **Margaret Street**.

**Central London Action on Sexual Health (CLASH)** has moved from Warwick Street in Soho to new premises in **Mortimer Street**, Fitzrovia.

A **ticket tout** who claimed to be operating out of offices in **Eastcastle Street** has been jailed after he took out numerous memberships at football clubs using various aliases and bulk buying tickets for each fixture. One of his victims paid £600 for four tickets to see Watford v Aston Villa in April 2016; tickets originally costing £40 each.

Westminster Council has given a premises licence to **The Middlesex Hospital Chapel** (aka Fitzrovia Chapel) to allow alcohol to be sold, and for the performance of plays, films, live music, and dance. The council has also granted a licence for the chapel to be used for **civil marriages** and **civil partnerships**.

Punters who are missing a drink in Fitzrovia's most famous watering hole will likely be in for a pleasant surprise when the **Fitzroy Tavern** is expected to re-open after an extensive makeover by Samuel Smiths is completed this autumn. Expect a return to snugs, etched glass, big lanterns, mahogany finishings, and an extra floor for supping ale.

**Camden Cyclists** meet at Primrose Hill Community Association, 29 Hopkinsons Place, NW1 8TN from 7.30 to 9.30pm on Monday 26 September to discuss improvements for cycling.

## Opening and closing

### Closed

**Fat Lorenzo's** Italian restaurant

5 Clipstone Street

**Moba** Asian café 53 Goodge Street

**Tsunami** 93 Charlotte Street

**Stef's** Italian restaurant 3 Berners Street

**Nyunya** Oriental cuisine 11 Warren Street

**Flyer Alarm** printers 11 Howland Street

**Café Rouge** 264-266 Tottenham Court Road

**Café Rive Gauche** 20-21 Warren Street

### Opened



**Honey & Spice** delicatessen 52 Warren Street



**Ahi Poke** Hawaiian fish eatery cafe

3 Percy Street

**Boa** Taiwanese cuisine 31 Windmill Street

**Foley's** modern British cuisine 23 Foley Street

**Coppa Club** European cuisine

9-10 Market Place



**Honest Burgers** 117 Tottenham Court Road

**Samarkand** Uzbeki restaurant

33 Charlotte Street

**Yoobi** sushi Market Place Great Castle Street



**Peyton and Byrne** bakery cafe

226 Great Portland Street

**Calcutta Street** Bengali cuisine

29 Tottenham Street



**Clipstone** modern British cuisine

5 Clipstone Street



**MiHomes** property agents 20A Gosfield Street

**Simit Sarayi** Turkish bakery 68 Oxford Street

**Bensons Beds**

209-210 Tottenham Court Road

**Fabled** beauty products

21 Tottenham Court Road

**Strazzanti** Sicilian deli 51A Cleveland Street

**The Eye Place** opticians 5 Charlotte Place

**The Great Thai** restaurant

14 Riding House Street

## Opening soon

**Honey & Smoke** Middle Eastern grill

216 Great Portland Street

**Five guys** burgers

264-266 Tottenham Court Road

**Patty and bun** burgers 55 Goodge Street

**Adam Simmonds** opticians

33 Great Portland Street

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## Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her family



Cartoon by Jayne Davis

### Have a bash

How would you like to "whack a banker" and so wreak your revenge on the fat cats? If so go to Southwold pier on the Suffolk coast. It is one of the eccentric machines designed by local artist Tim Hunkin.

Older readers will spot the similarity with "bash the rat" which Tim ran in the Fitzrovia festivals of the 1970s when he lived at 28 Charlotte Street. He also used to saw people in half.

He has since become a television presenter popularising scientific themes. His other attractions on Southwold pier include "my nuke" which allows you to load plutonium rods into your very own nuclear reactor, "pet or meat" where you decide the fate of an innocent lamb (which appealed to our cartoonist, Jayne Davis, see above), and a water clock which chimes the half hour in "an amusingly rude manner." This is all in the updated *Bus Ride Britain* book.



### Minder on manor

Dodgy second hand car dealer Arthur Daley finally came into contact with those of his profession in Warren Street in an episode of Minder on ITV4 recently. His "dogsbodyguard" Terry McCann, played by Dennis Waterman, was shown outside Warren Street tube station (above) and then having a punch up with a car dealer, whose premises were on the corner of Fitzroy Street, played by Brian Cox before he was famous. The episode, entitled "In", was first broadcast in 1982 (available on DVD, Series 3, Episode 13).



My sister Margaret was delighted to see and photograph this cat roaming in Tottenham Street, the first she had seen for years. In the 1970s there were so many that they had their own column in Tower (predecessor of Fitzrovia News). So it was with shock she later saw a notice in Ogle Street announcing that a male sergeti cat with bengal skin, called Bobo, looking very similar, had been missing since July 30. Anyone who sees him should telephone 07814 871410.

### Donovan

Donovan celebrated his 70th birthday recently with a show at the London Palladium where he sang "Sunny Goodge Street." He wrote and recorded this in 1965 when he used to hang out in pubs such as the One Tun in Goodge Street itself, and the Duke of York round the corner in Rathbone Street.

You can get an idea of the state of his mind in those days from the lyrics:  
*On the firefly platform on sunny Goodge Street*  
*Violent hash-smoker shook a chocolate machine*  
*Involved in an eating scene*  
*Smashing into neon streets in their stonedness*  
*Smearing their eyes on the crazy cult goddess*  
*Listenin' to sounds of Mingus mellow fantastic.*

### Barred by George

I do hope my derogatory remarks about the new sign of the George at 55 Great Portland Street in the last issue was not behind its subsequent closure. This is most regrettable as it has a rich history dating back to at least 1809.

My friend Joe Mattey recalled that one of the pub's customers was the Irish playwright Brendan Behan. When told he had died the landlord reacted by saying: "He's still barred!"

### Pub humour

Notice in upstairs bar of The Champion in Wells Street: "Unattended children will be given Espresso and a free kitten."



### The Incredible Broken String Band

Two broken guitar strings by Matt Carroll failed to stop his band, LitFM, going down a storm at the Phoenix pub in Cavendish Square. Watch out for them in future. Matt and other members of the band work for the Bricklayers Arms in Gresse Street where they also rehearse.

### Skiffle star

Sad to hear of the death of Karl Dallas, the marxist christian musical journalist and skiffle group player, who lived for many years at 28 Gordon Mansions in Huntley Street. Born in 1931 he collected milk at the age of seven for the elected Spanish republicans in their fight against the military fascists. Later he joined the Young Communist League, and then became a christian at All Souls, Langham Place, attracted by the liberation theology, without renouncing his communism.



### Dada Dastard

The original Dada artists of 1916 will be turning in their graves. They were anti-war, anti-bourgeois, and indeed anti-art. So what would they make of furniture branded in their name at Uniform at Whitington House on the corner of Chenies Street and Alfred Place. But the real killer would be the dastardly use of a professional commercial artist to design a pictorial sign (above) on the ledge outside its premises to proclaim: "This is not a seating/rest area." I am glad to see this is largely ignored by tired folk queuing for the Rada Studios next door.

Just round the corner is an equally pompous anti-social sign. "Bikes chained to these railings can cause obstruction and are a danger to pedestrians. Any bikes chained to these railings will be removed. We accept no liability for damage to the bicycle." This is in Bloomsbury Terrace, Huntley Street. Can any pedestrians give us an example of how they have been endangered by a stationary bicycle securely chained to a railing?

### Lottery winner

A lottery millionaire is walking our streets. A winning ticket was sold at Castle News, at 35 Eastcastle Street, as proudly proclaimed by a certificate displayed behind the counter.

### Divorce party

Want to celebrate your divorce with a party? If so the Vasis restaurant at 56 Maple Street advertise their ability to cater for this. Presumably the bride's family on one side and the groom's on the other.

### Hair raising

A free haircut and a pint of beer has finally overcome my brother Percy's aversion to attending barber shops. The special offer was from The King's Canary at 81 Great Titchfield Street to mark the opening of the all night tube service on August 19.

The offer was from midnight until 5 o'clock in the morning, normally well past Percy's bed-time. There was a lot to shear away as he had let his hair grow long ever since his favourite barber, also in Great Titchfield Street, died 15 years ago. The same barber, incidentally, that newscaster Trevor McDonald used when ITN was in Wells Street



A photograph in our last issue enquired if any children recognised themselves as Mick Jagger was interviewed by police outside 96 Great Titchfield Street in August, 1966. The picture was rather too small for them to do that, so here is part of it enlarged. Does it jog any memories? If so get in touch. Our contact details are on page 2.

*Charlotte Street*

# Radio character who produced Hendrix and Thatcher

By JOHN AXON

Many older readers will see the name Bill Bobb and allow themselves a nostalgic smile, particularly former devotees of Turkish restaurant Efe's in Great Titchfield Street and the sadly dwindling number of erstwhile regulars of Goodge Street's Northumberland Arms, now trading as The Draft House. Bill Bobb, BBC music and later current affairs producer passed away in April. Bill was a musician (guitarist who morphed into a banjo player during the great Trad scare of the late fifties) turned live music producer whose unbeatable CV boasts such names as Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Cream, Status Quo, The Bee Gees...and Margaret Thatcher. More of her later.

The always debonair Bill was rightly considered a legend in his own lunchtime and quite often far beyond, a raconteur par excellence who to the delight of loyal friends and saloon bar acquaintances alike

was blessed with total recall of his 25 years at the BBC. Bill knew everyone and was happy to share his experiences and his sheer joy in making a living from what started as a hobby and became a lifetime's work.

Typical of his stories was his, er, experience with Jimi Hendrix. As a favour for old mate Chas Chandler, formerly of The Animals but then starting in Rock and Roll management, Bill agreed to book a recording session in Broadcasting House that would announce the arrival of the guitar superstar. As producer of the phenomenally successful Saturday Club which pulled in a weekly audience of nine million, Bill was required to record a number of live sessions, as what was known as Needle Time (the playing of commercial record releases, which was subject to restriction in an agreement between the BBC and the British Phonographic Institute).

Bill took a chance on the raw Seattle based musician, unsigned to any label and, incredibly, unrecorded at that time. The session duly took place but was recorded at such a fierce volume that it interrupted a live recital from a string quartet, so the first time Jimi Hendrix was ever heard in this country was in disharmony with Brahms on the old Third Programme. Bill was delighted with the session and he, Chandler and Hendrix celebrated in a Margaret Street hostelry where they too invoked Brahms, and indeed Liszt.

After the 1967 formation of Radios 1 to 4 Bill pitched his tent in Radio 2 land, continuing with live sessions but later became senior producer on the Jimmy Young show, whose mixing of light music, recipes and requests came to include politics. Hence the interviews with Prime Minister Thatcher which became media sensations as the seeming-



ly informal chats often had greater substance than one might have expected. Bill managed to be on the end of a handbagging when he offered the PM Perrier water, live on air. "Have you no BRITISH sparkling water, Bill?" The banjo player was banjaxed.

## Local firm goes global

Cardboard, the local firm that makes promotional material for films, is going global.

Based in Percy Street it is now expanding into the Australian and American markets. This is in addition to working for those in Germany and other places.

"This is our fifth year in Fitzrovia, and we are doing very well with local studios," said Jason Casey. "Now we are expanding into other countries.

"In Australia they have been looking for people who are less formulaic and more creative, which is what we are. We have had four jobs there in three months and have just got a fifth one.

"And we are on the verge of a new deal in Los Angeles.

"So it is potentially a real growth area for us and is already making a name for us in all parts of the world."

## 'Au revoir' to Warren Street

Staff (pictured right) at a cafe in Warren Street said farewell to their customers for the last time in June. Slava, who took over the Cafe Rive Gauche 31 years ago, spoke with fondness about her time in the neighbourhood. "It's been a fantastic time in a lovely area with lovely customers," said Slava.

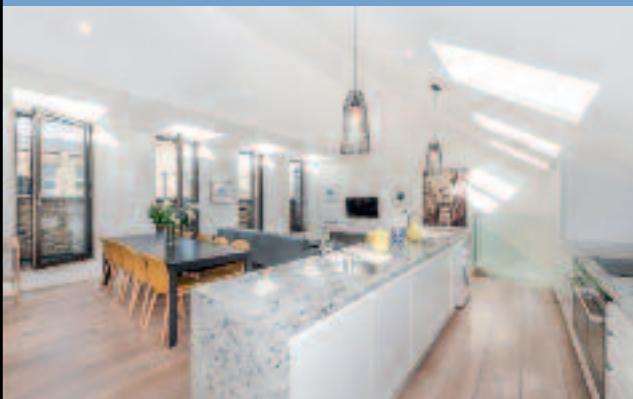
The owner of the building has plans to redevelop.



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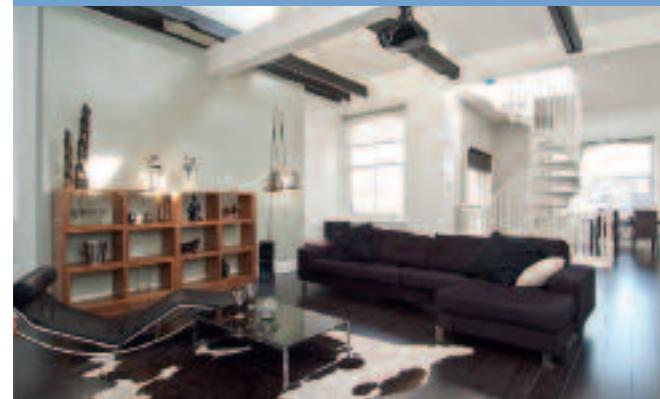
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All boarded up: The George on the corner of Great Portland Street and Mortimer Street.

## Changing times for historic pubs

Historic pubs are closing in the area at an alarming rate.

Perhaps the most famous is The George at 55 Great Portland Street, which dates back to at least 1809, and has been a regular haunt for BBC folk for generations.

It has been sold by Greene King and been boarded up for a few weeks now and the rumour is that it is going to be turned into a restaurant.

Another Greene King pub to be sold is the George & Dragon at 151 Cleveland

**Apologies – the Newman Arms is closed for the rest of August – this old pub needs some work done to its creaking bones!!!!**

*Sign outside the Newman Arms in Rathbone Street.*

Street. It dates back to at least 1826 and continued to be run as a pub for a couple of months after the sale. But it now looks very closed to drinkers and the rumour is flats are planned in its place.

The Newman Arms at 23 Rathbone Street has a sign stating that is closed for August for refurbishment. This pub claims to have been there since 1730, which was a little while before the street was built.

## Flattering fitz from the 40s

By Pete Whyatt

I called in to the Revival Retro Boutique on Windmill Street to meet the business owner. While I was waiting to chat with Rowena, I was able to see her in action dealing with a customer. I was pleasantly surprised to see how she engaged with her customer in a genuine and friendly way. She advised, suggested and helped the shopper choose just the right item of clothing. Using her eye for detail and knowledge of her range of stock she was able to give her buyer just the right hints and ideas so the customer left with an item she was really delighted with.

Rowena Howie started her working life as a travel agent advising customers on Trans Siberian Railway journeys but her hobby, swing dancing, turned her life and career around.

Rowena found it difficult to source good quality and stylish retro shoes and clothes. She was particularly frustrated when buying over the internet and was frequently disappointed with the quality and surprised at the poor fit of the garments in reality.



Rowena realised there was a gap in the market and started her business from home in 2009. Her business began with an initial credit card purchase of a small amount of stock that she sold to her dance friends. When she discovered her stylish retro clothes and shoes had a wider appeal than just that community the business began to grow. Two years later Rowena opened her first shop in Kingly Court off Carnaby Street then moved to her present shop in Fitzrovia in 2014.

"We sell new items sourced from around the world. The thing they have in common is they are inspired by the era of music that I love to dance to, the 1920s to the 1950s. The style harks back to the stylishness of a previous era, think of old Hollywood, glamorous parties and film premieres with screen legends such as Ava Gardner, Rita Hayworth, Katherine Hepburn. The clothes I sell are flattering and feminine, classic and elegant styles from a bygone era," she says.

Many people who pass the shop think Revival Retro is an "as new" shop selling pre owned designer wear, but the items are neither true vintage nor authentic reproductions. All the clothes are new, available in a range of sizes and made for modern women's bodies. The boutique offers designs that are not widely available in the UK. Many are imported from USA. Rowena and her staff provide a really personal service. She believes in reviving feminine tailoring, flattering cuts and well placed details, building a look from there.

"You don't need a penchant for vintage to love our shop. Our selection of flattering dresses has a wide appeal irrespective of having 'vintage inspiration' or being a '1940s design'. What matters in our store is being able to select from a range of styles and sophisticated looks. Our ability to cater for different shapes and the fact that we stock an inclusive range of sizes is impressive. Our dresses look amazing on curvy women."

"Revival Retro is first and foremost a bricks and mortar store. An independent shop with passionate and committed staff. We love what we do and the personal touch is very important to us."

"In 2015 we won a Time Out Magazine Love London award for best shop. The nominations for 2016 have just opened and we encourage everyone to come down to Windmill Street to try us out and if you enjoy yourself please nominate/vote for us to win this year."

Revival Retro has been selected as one of 100 small businesses from across the UK to be celebrated by Small Business Saturday, a nationwide grassroots campaign to encourage consumers to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities.

The Revival Retro Boutique, 30 Windmill Street, Fitzrovia, W1T 2JL. [revival-retro.com](http://revival-retro.com)

**"I nearly sold an elephant to Michael Jackson"**



Anna-Maria Thetford has managed the Darren Baker Gallery 81 Charlotte Street since July 2015.

"I love working in Fitzrovia," she said. "Out of all the districts I've worked in Fitzrovia is my favourite because it still has a community, there are still independent businesses around and you can travel the world by eating the many cuisines available here. I especially like some of the old pubs that retain their old world charm and atmosphere."

Anna-Maria has worked in the art world for 19 years. "The painting that first seduced me into art was the portrait of Matisse by Derain at the Tate Gallery," she explained.

"Backpacking around Europe for gap year before studies I visited all the major galleries in European cities when I came back I studied History of Art at university for three years."

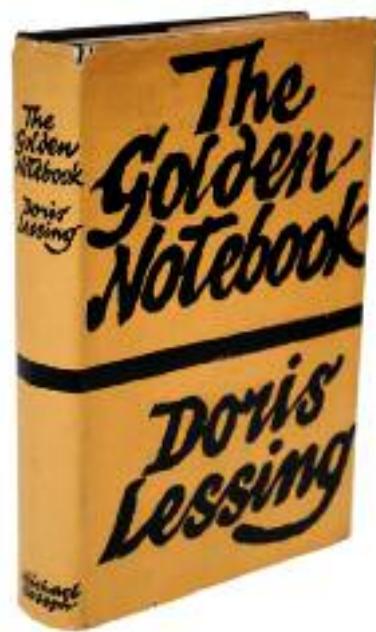
"Throughout my interesting career I've worked in many galleries including the Harrods gallery where Michael Jackson visited and nearly bought a large elephant. I also bumped into David and Victoria Beckham literally."

"Darren Baker Gallery is a contemporary art gallery, which welcomes both established and up-and-coming artists working in different fields. We welcome visitors and browsers please feel free to pop in and say hello."

"The gallery aims to break down the barrier between artist and viewer / collector by being accessible and unpretentious."

"This summer we held our summer bazaar which featured celebratory summer cocktails, live artist demonstrations, and special offers and discounts. We're having an end of summer event on Thursday 8 September from 6 to 8pm, which will feature a few surprises including a live artist demonstration from Millena DeMille."

# When Henry Kissinger got an earful



1956 led to her being banned from South Africa and Rhodesia (where she had been brought up). She belonged for many years to the British Communist party, until the Soviet invasion of Hungary led her to resign her membership.

In the second volume of her autobiography, *Walking in the Shade* (Harper Collins), she describes her Langham Street flat:

"The flat was tiny, six small rooms, and the building was hideous, with a grey bare cement staircase. On the fourth floor you opened the door to a narrow corridor, which bisected the flat. Opposite the door was a minute kitchen, then the bathroom, with its hissing and clattering gas geyser, and two other little rooms on that side. On the street side was my tiny bedroom, and a larger room, the living room. There was no way that flat could be made more than tolerable."

It was in this flat that she received Henry Kissinger, who was later to become National Security Advisor and Secretary of State for the Nixon and Ford governments. He wanted to meet members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) while he was in London, and in those years Lessing's flat was something of a headquarters for the internationalist New Left. Their conversation didn't get very far. When he began praising a new nuclear weapon precise enough to kill only a targeted 100,000 people and called it a "kitten bomb", Lessing was shocked and said that "anyone who could use the word 'kitten' to



describe such a weapon of war showed a lack of moral feeling and sensitivity and that just about summed up everything which was wrong with American foreign policy."

It was also while she lived in Langham Street that she wrote *The Golden Notebook*, widely regarded as her masterpiece. In both her life and her magnificently rich and diverse work the personal and political were entwined. A feminist and social activist, she was attracted by Sufism and also wrote most movingly about mental breakdown. For a whole generation she described and

interpreted a time of shifting certainties.

Doris Lessing was one of the most important writers of the post-war period. So why is there no blue plaque on Holbein Mansions to record her stay?

*Jennifer Kavanagh used to run a literary agency from an office in Langham Street, and now lives there. She is a Quaker, the creator of the board game, \*Journey Home\*, and the author of a number of books including one novel, *The Emancipation of B*. Follow her on Twitter @jenniferkwriter [www.jenniferkavanagh.co.uk](http://www.jenniferkavanagh.co.uk)*

By Jennifer Kavanagh

Did you know that Doris Lessing lived in Holbein Mansion, Langham Street from 1958 - 62? She rented a flat from her publisher, Howard Samuels, for £5 a week.

Doris Lessing (1919 – 2013) was one of the foremost post-war British novelists, the author of some fifty novels, plays and volumes of poetry and autobiography. She was the recipient of numerous literary awards, culminating with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007. She was also an active campaigner against nuclear arms, and an opponent of apartheid which in

## Recycling clothes, shoes and textiles in Fitzrovia



There are two recycling bins in Fitzrovia that accept clothes, shoes and textiles for recycling, both are situated on the northern end of Cleveland Street. One is at the junction of Carburton Street at the northern tip of the triangle site. The second is outside Howard House.

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# The spy who had a smashing time in more ways than one

By MIKE PENTELOW

The reckless and eccentric behaviour of the Soviet spy Guy Burgess (1911-63) in Fitzrovia and the surrounding area is described in two new biographies of him.

They are Stalin's Englishman, The Lives of Guy Burgess, by Andrew Lownie (Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99) and Guy Burgess, The Spy Who Knew Everyone, by Stewart Purvis and Jeff Hulbert (Biteback, £25).

Burgess, along with fellow spies Kim Philby and Donald Maclean, was recruited in 1934 by Soviet agent Arnold Deutsch, who was researching psychology at University College, London in Gower Street.

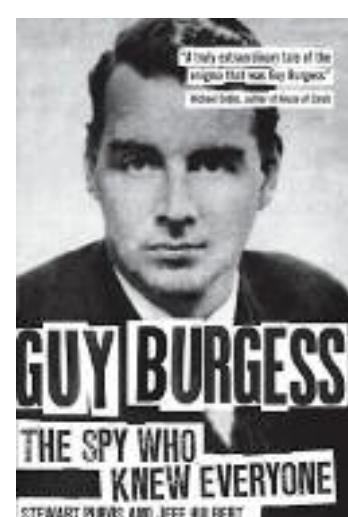
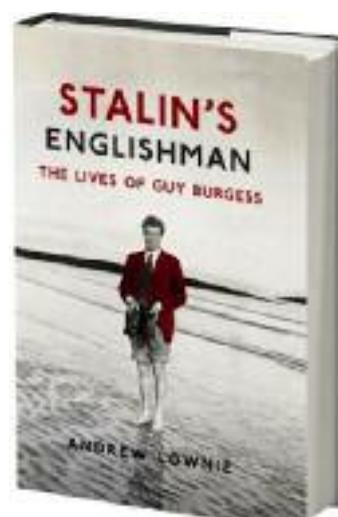
And the Russians instructed Burgess to join the university's School of Slavonic Studies to befriend fellow pupils who might be MI6 officers.

Burgess got a job with the BBC at Broadcasting House in the Talks Department in 1936, with a reference from his old Cambridge professor of history G M Trevelyn, who said Burgess had "passed through the communist measles that so many of our clever young men go through, and is well out of it."

At first Burgess lived behind Broadcasting House at 4 Duchess Street (on the north east corner with Portland Place), then nearby at 5 Bentinck Street in Marylebone.

His job was to suggest and book people to give radio talks. Among those he earmarked included some communists, such as fellow spy Anthony Blunt, and Francis Klingender, who ran the Artists International Association centre at 84 Charlotte Street. But also, at the suggestion of the Russians, he invited members of the British secret service such as author David Footman. They dined in the Langham Hotel at 1 Portland Place in 1937 after Deutsch suggested they strike up a relationship (to ease Burgess later getting into MI5). But Deutsch did not yet fully trust Burgess so got another of his agents, Kitty Harris, to eavesdrop on their conversation. Footman duly gave a talk on Albania, A Fish and a Motorcar, which was broadcast a couple of months later.

Burgess liked to hold court in Yarner's Coffee House at 1-2 Langham Place, on the north east corner of Mortimer Street. A BBC colleague, John Green, recalled: "We used to have the most exhilarating conversations about the pace of the world..."



and sometime we were so late coming back to our offices that we were ticked off." He also observed: "Guy drew brilliant cartoons, which he showed us before passing them under the table at the Talks meetings in the afternoon. Sir Richard Maconachie [head of department] would usually see and ask for the paper to be passed up, and after a good natured reproach, proceed with the meeting."

Green's overwhelming memory of Burgess was of "a dirty and dishevelled figure, an eccentric looking dirty don with filthy habits who left chocolate lying around, which attracted rats."

During the evenings Burgess would visit seedy nightclubs, such as the Moonglow Club in Percy Street, where he picked up black American soldiers. He also frequented the White Tower at 1 Percy Street where he could be drunk and truculent. The Gargoyle Club at 69 Dean Street was another haunt, and he was a member of The Thursday Club which met in Frascati's restaurant at 19-45 Hanway Street.

Drunken behaviour was to earn him a severe reprimand in May 1941. His office was at room 316 in the Langham Hotel, opposite Broadcasting House. When he tried to enter it in the evening he found it locked, as

his secretary had mistakenly taken home the key. A patrol officer was called and said he would endeavour to get a master key. Burgess told him to get on with it in an aggressive manner that raised the hackles of the officer. "You cannot talk to me like that, I am not a dog!" he said before marching off.

When he returned Burgess had smashed the door down with a fire extinguisher, swamping the carpet with liquid in the process.

He left the BBC to join the Foreign Office news department in Senate House, Malet Street, in 1944.

His BBC desk was taken over by William Hermondhalgh who found in it a bottle of gin and a book on flagellation. He remembered him as grubby, slovenly and constantly chewing garlic, while dressed in his Old Etonian tie, and wearing make-up if he'd had a particularly bad night.

Cartoonist Osbert Lancaster, who also worked with him, described him as "very intelligent until six in the evening. When he was in his cups, he made no bones about working for the Russians."

Lord Arran observed him stopping a cab outside

Buckingham Palace "to symbolically urinate against a statue." And he would "enliven boring news briefings by handing around half naked pictures of his latest male conquest."

After a drunken brawl in a night club in 1949 Burgess was pushed down two flights of stone stairs by his crony Fred Warner. Burgess broke his elbow, cracked his skull, and dislocated three ribs. Instead of calling an ambulance they took a taxi to Flat 3, 10 New Bond Street, where Burgess lived. He groaned all night and it was only in the morning they thought of phoning a doctor who got him taken to Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street, where he spent ten days. He also befriended a doctor at this hospital.

In 1950 he was moved to the British Embassy in Washington, USA. At his farewell party before leaving he was advised by one of the guests: "Don't be too aggressively left wing, don't get involved in race relations, and above all make sure there aren't any homosexual incidents which might cause trouble."

He famously replied with a mischievous grin: "What you mean is I mustn't make a pass at Paul Robeson."

# The Great Beast

A short story by  
**SUNITA SOLIAR**

**T**he Abbey of Thelema is cold. It stinks of cat piss. She wishes Raoul could see it for what it is: a decrepit house, blistered and cracked, with no windows and overgrown weeds at its entrance. But Raoul waits at the altar, keenness jutting from his bony face, his deep-set eyes fixed on the cat that Crowley holds out to him.

'Please, Raoul,' she says. 'Let's go.' There are the occult books and Raoul muttering about Black Mass, his breath pungent with absinthe, but she draws the line at drinking cat's blood. 'It's daft. That cat's not possessed by anything. It wants a good meal and a wash, that's all.'

Crowley's mouth tightens. His toadstool-shaped hat is on crooked, exposing his hairless head. She knows he is threatened by the look in her dark, marmoset eyes. She is the only fast thing in a slow world, and she is tied fast to her husband.

'Do not listen to the woman whose mind is impaired,' Crowley says, the cat's claws scrapping against the bulge of belly under his cloak. 'She is the symbol of your weakness.'

'I don't have brain damage,' she says. 'He made that up. Raoul, you know he made that up.' She tugs his arm. 'Come on.'

Crowley keeps his eyes on Raoul. 'You have great potential,' he says, keeping his voice low and hypnotic. 'Liberate this cat from evil.'

Betty pulls harder on his arm. It is wiry and firm. 'He thinks he's magic itself. Can't you see it's lies?' His eyebrows, which always seem to meet in the middle in photographs, like a bird drawn with two pen strokes, give him the appearance of single focus that does not include her.

She says, 'Let's go home. Let's go back to England. We'll have a pint at The Fitzroy. We'll go dancing.'

Crowley sneers. She has seen him look at her like that before. She was doing her Tiger Woman trick, crawling on all fours with glasses of whisky on her back, while Raoul and the others



Illustration by Clifford Harper

## 'She draws the line at drinking cat's blood'

watched. She heard Crowley pour filth into his ear. He called her bestial, smutty. Funny he didn't mind the smut when it was happening on the floor of The Abbey. He raises the cat, and Raoul's eyes follow his movements. The sleeves of Crowley's cloak fan out as he lifts the cat high above his head. Betty's own cloak is bright, with blocks of yellow and green. She helped Roger Fry design it and she wishes for the safety of the Omega Workshop, its floor covered in bright, stray threads, the warm smell of wood, the big, abstract patterns. A world of colour that takes her even further back to Limehouse and the gaudy shawls and ostrich feathers of working girls, all the swagger and show that is so much better than this darkness and blood. She snaps her fingers in front of his face. 'Look at it,' she says. 'It's a mangy alley cat. It's starved. You'll catch its diseases.'

Crowley swings the cat down, thrusting it into Raoul's arms. 'As I pass this cat to you, I pass part

of myself. Accept the power that is in you.'

Raoul grasps the writhing animal; it scratches his face. Crowley produces a knife from inside his cloak.

'It's all theatrics,' Betty says. 'That's all he is.'

Raoul raises the cat above his head as Crowley did; then he brings it down on the altar.

'Stop it,' she tells him. 'He isn't magical. He's a crackpot.'

Raoul takes the knife. The cat screeches. Blood pops and sputters. Raoul is covered in it.

'Drink it,' Crowley says.

Betty runs out, out into the night.

\*\*\*

She waits for him at their rent-

ed apartment. He will come home eventually. He will see that Crowley has no power, that he is a fraud. Maybe not today, but one day. Then he will come back to her, she will have him again. They will return to England. Raoul will write poems again. They will be happy. They will.

The sun is coming up, weak and putrid, when she hears the front door open. He drags his feet across the stone floor. Blood is crusty around his mouth. He is sweating. She helps him into bed. She gives him water. 'It will be alright,' she says, and she believes that stroking his head and pressing cold flannels to his forehead will heal him. She has the power to save him – it is in her gypsy blood. As his breathing becomes shallow, she whispers, 'Please don't take him away. Please don't let that devil take him away from me.'

When Raoul stops breathing, the sun is full and bright in the sky. The heat and his not breathing take the feeling out of her legs as she sits with them curled under her, the cloak bunched around her knees. When she gets up, her lips are dry. They split as they pull apart. She gets a pistol from her suitcase and returns to the Abbey.

Crowley lies on the floor, eyes open and smiling, his cloak lifted to expose the coarse hairs on his thighs. She points the pistol at him and fires. She misses. How does she miss? She is a good shot. She has had practice. He laughs. She fires again; the gun jams. No. He does not have the power to stop a bullet. He does not have the power to ruin her. No. He is not magical.

He gets to his feet and picks her up, carrying her like a rag-and-bone man's hoard and dumps her outside. It cannot be that he is removing her. She came here to kill him. The door of the Abbey closes on her. She must go home. She must tell people. No, he is not magic: he is evil.

**Poetry corner**  
by Wendy Shutler

FAMILY VALUES

*Arguments confuse, but I choose "Remain."*

*I don't want us just to be a little grey island out at sea, shrouded in the rain, the kid in the playground who won't join in. We should stand together with our fellow Europeans, side by side against those who would harm us.*

*I have this lovely station across the road, a fairytale castle connecting us to the wonderfully varied, historic and beautiful continent of Europe, via a magical tunnel underneath the sea. Venice, Florence, the Greek Islands, the Alps... who would not want to be a part of that?*

*Sovereignty, economy, but did you know that we all descend from Charlemagne? We're a family.*

*Broken now by a sadness of pencils, as loveless kisses in the wrong box say goodbye to a dream.*



## Banksy moves

A Banksy mural (above) has moved within the area. It used to be in the front window of the Freud Communications at 55 Newman Street. But they have now moved to 1 Stephen Street where he can still be viewed from the street.

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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

# Eric Coates: the popular composer who proved his critics wrong

SUE BLUNDELL, author of the play *The Man from the Sleepy Lagoon*, describes the life of the man who was told 'You'll never earn a living writing tunes'

**B**orn in Nottinghamshire in 1886, Eric Coates had been scribbling down melodies since he was six years old. By the time he was 19, his dearest wish was to go and study at The Royal Academy of Music in London. But his father, a country doctor, was determined that his fifth and youngest child should join a local bank. 'I was in despair,' Eric records in his autobiography, *Suite in Four Movements*. Eventually Coates senior relented, and Eric was enrolled at the RAM as a student of viola and composition.

This marked the beginning of Coates' long association with Fitzrovia. Now on Marylebone Road, the RAM in those days was on Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, just south of Oxford Street, and its students used to socialise in the cheap cafes in the area.

Later, when Eric found work as a viola player in the orchestra of the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, he joined the ranks of the scores of musicians who ate at Pagani's restaurant at 40-48 Great Portland Street, and, rather more frequently, drank at The George pub on the corner with Mortimer Street. This was known among exasperated musical directors as The Gluepot, because of the difficulty they had in extracting players from its depths at the end of rehearsal breaks.

Coates seems to have been blessed with a keen awareness of his own abilities, and how far they extended. When Frederick Corder, his composition tutor at the RAM, asked him to sketch out an idea for a symphony, Coates replied, 'Oh I can't do symphonies.' Light music was what he was good at, and so the two of them spent the rest of the tutorial discussing Arthur Sullivan's comic operas.

On the other hand, Coates could be doggedly protective of his own music. Years later when he overheard one of the assistants at Chappell's on Bond Street telling a customer that Coates' work wasn't up to much, he protested to the director. The assistant was sacked and sales of Coates' sheet music began to climb.

And though he loved hearing his tunes being banged out on a pub piano, listening to them being mauled by a bishop was quite another matter. One day in the gents at Oxford Circus tube station he saw an elderly cleric in purple disappear into one of the stalls. Then a sound emerged which Coates eventually recognised as his



ERIC COATES

own Knightsbridge march. 'Excuse me, but this is how it should go,' he announced when the bishop resurfaced. And he proceeded to hum the tune.

Though his compositions were beginning to be popular, Coates continued playing viola at the Queen's Hall. Built in 1893, this was Britain's premier concert venue, home to the promenade concerts since 1895. In 1912 Coates was promoted to principal violist, and in this role he eventually clashed with Sir Henry Wood, the QHO's conductor. Wood, incidentally, was another musician who knew Fitzrovia well. He was born at 413a Oxford Street (now 59), grew up in rooms over his father's jewellery and pawnbroking business at 355 (now 185) Oxford Street, and later lived in a flat at 1 Langham Place.

One of Henry Wood's pet hates was the deputy system. Players would find someone to take their place if they got an engagement which clashed with one of their orchestra's rehearsals. When Wood banned the system, 40 members of the QHO walked out in protest and set up their own orchestra, which they named the London Symphony Orchestra.

QHO players still used deputies if they thought they could get away with it. Coates once accepted an invitation to conduct one of his own compositions at the London Palladium, and found a substitute viola player to rehearse a tricky piece by Richard Strauss with the QHO. But Wood chose this occasion to look over at the violas, and later that evening he gave Eric a sound ticking off. Coates would dearly have loved to give



Sue Blundell (centre) with the cast of her play about Eric Coates, 'The Man from the Sleepy Lagoon', which was performed at The Ship on New Cavendish Street by David Acton who played Coates (front right) and the FitzFest musicians led by Daniel Bates on June 8 of this year.

up the viola at this point, but he was married by now and didn't think he could afford it.

'Old Timber' may also have been jealous of Coates. Eric's son tells a story about a prom concert where the orchestra was playing his father's 'Wood Nymphs', with Coates as usual on the viola. 'Encore! Encore!' the audience roared. Wood wasn't conducting that day, but as he disapproved of encores someone was sent off to ask his permission. Meanwhile the orchestra played 'Wood Nymphs' again. Wood couldn't be found anywhere. When there were more calls for an encore Coates himself went off with the conductor to pound on Wood's office door. There was definitely someone moving about inside, but no reply came. So they went back and played 'Wood Nymphs' for the third and last time.

The following summer, in 1919, Coates received a letter from the manager of the QHO. 'Sir Henry Wood regrets to inform you that your services will not be required for the forthcoming Promenade season.' This was a disaster for Coates. He and his wife Phyl were forced to leave their home at Flat 3, Berners Mansions, 34-36 Berners Street, close to the corner of Mortimer Street, and move to a cheap bedsitting room in Hampstead; and Phyl went back to her former work as an actress.

Things slowly improved. In the 1920s and 30s Coates' work became increasingly successful, especially after he brought some American-style syncopation into his pieces.

When the BBC transmitted his 'Knightsbridge' march, the

last movement of his London Suite, at the beginning of the radio programme *In Town Tonight*, they received 20,000 letters in one week asking for the composer's name. More signature tunes followed. 'Calling All Workers' was used to introduce *Music While You Work*, and 'By the Sleepy Lagoon', adopted in 1942 with added sea-gulls, still signals the start of *Desert Island Discs*.

This last piece was famously inspired by a distant view of Bognor one balmy summer's evening. One of Coates' last works, the 'Dam Busters March', formed the overture for the film *The Dam Busters*, released in 1955.

Much of Eric's music reflects the bustle and sounds of London, and 'Langham Place' and 'Oxford Street', from his London Again Suite, testify to his great love of the West End. The countryside is wonderful for dreaming, he tells us, but London is the place for work.

One day in the 1930s Eric and Phyl bumped into Sir Henry Wood and his wife at the Bournemouth Festival, and they shook hands. 'Are you still playing the viola, Mr. Coates?' Lady Wood asked. Coates replied that he hadn't touched the instrument since the day Sir Henry did him the very great favour of giving him the sack. 'I would never have had the courage to become a full-time composer without his "help ...", Lady Wood.'

Throughout his career Coates was supported by his much loved wife Phyllis. They had met in 1910 when Eric agreed to join a friend at a concert at the RAM. Hilarious, they thought, when they saw in the

programme that Miss Phyllis Black was going to recite a couple of poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson. But as soon as she walked onto the stage Eric knew that she was the one. For the next few days he haunted the Academy, and at long last got an introduction to Phyllis. He took her out to tea, and after a week he proposed. He was 25, while she was only 17.

Naturally her parents objected, and they banned the couple from meeting. Overcoming all opposition, Eric and Phyl finally married in 1913. After that they were hardly ever apart, until Eric's death in 1957.

In 1941 the Queen's Hall was destroyed by an incendiary bomb, and after the War the Proms moved to the Royal Albert Hall. The site of the old Hall, bounded by Langham Place, Great Portland Street and Riding House Street (see a 1916 map below). It is now occupied by the St. George's Hotel and Henry Wood House (where there is a plaque to it at its Langham Place entrance).

Unlike Henry Wood, Coates may not have mourned its passing. He was never able to forget the humiliation of his dismissal from its orchestra. 'Every time I walked past the place', he tells us, 'I used to feel slightly sick.'



# Author of socialist classic spent his childhood in Fitzroy Street

By MIKE PENTELOW

**T**he author of what became a socialist bible, "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists", lived in Fitzroy Street from the age of five to nine.

As a painter and decorator by trade he took the name of Robert Tressell -after the trestle which is used in the building industry.

His real name was Robert Noonan who was born in 1870 and died in poverty in 1911, being buried in an unmarked pauper's grave in Liverpool, three years before his novel was published.

In fact his surname at birth was registered as Croker, after his 80-year-old father Samuel in Dublin, but Robert always used the surname of his then unmarried mother, Mary.

After Croker died in 1875 Mary married a Swiss cabinet maker, Sebastian Zumbuhl, and they then lived with young Robert at 37 Fitzroy Street.

Sarah Eicker, who lives there now, was alerted to this when one of Noonan's descendants knocked on her door, and told her about it.

He had read it in the introduction by local historian Steve Peak to a new edition of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists published by Hastings council (where Noonan wrote it between 1906 and 1910). Peak stated Robert's mother married Zumbuhl sometime after Croker's death in 1875, and that they then lived in Fitzroy Street until some time before 1881.

30660 Zumbuhl, Sebastian

37 Fitzroy-street

By consulting marriage records and electoral rolls Sarah has established that Robert's mother married Zumbuhl in early 1875 in Poplar, east London, and the latter was a registered voter in Fitzroy Street in 1878 (see extract above). And Fitzrovia News consulted St Pancras ratebooks to establish that they lived in Fitzroy Street from 1875 to 1879.

They then moved to 27 Elmore Street off Essex Road, Islington, for some years. By 1890 Robert, aged 20, was living in Queen's Road, Everton in Liverpool, employed as a sign writer, and was jailed for six months for stealing £50 worth of silver and kitchen equipment.

Soon after he was released he emigrated to South Africa. There he joined a brigade of the United Irishmen to fight against the British in the Boer War. Then he and his daughter Kathleen sailed back to Britain in 1902 and settled in Hastings, where much of the novel is based.

Noonan had to work from 6am until late at night for under 3p an hour, and experienced at first hand how cut-throat competition in the industry caused poverty and misery for those working in it.

One of those whose lives have been changed by reading his book is Ricky Tomlinson, jailed for two years for picketing during the building work-

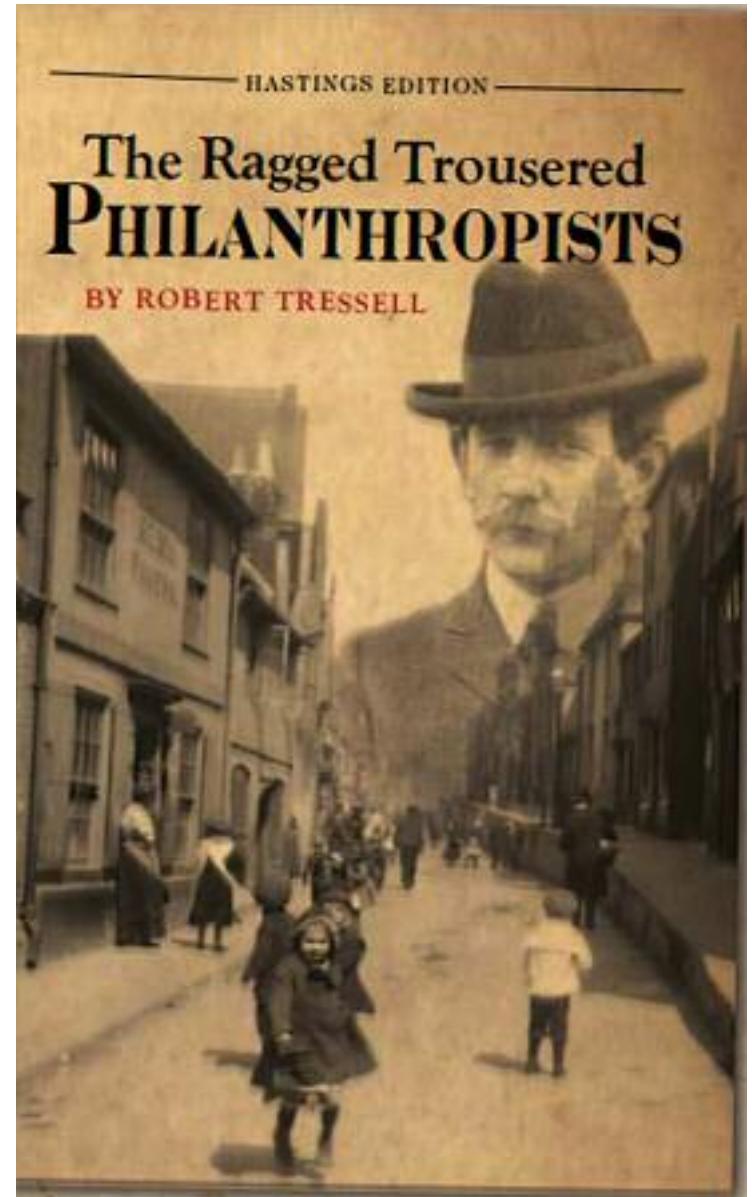
ers' strike of 1972, when he was a plasterer. There had been no complaints by the police who congratulated them on their behaviour on the day of the picketing. Months later, however, after pressure from the government he and others were accused of intimidation but charged under an obscure 1875 conspiracy law which had a lower burden of proof and no maximum sentence. He is still trying to get the convictions overturned.

While in Leicester prison he was given the book by the prison governor who was an ex-bricklayer. This changed Ricky's politics from flirting with the National Front to joining Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party.

After leaving prison Ricky got into acting with the help of film director Ken Loach, whose office was at 46 Charlotte Street. He cast him in films such as Riff-Raff, and Raining Stones. Ricky played Bobby Grant in the Channel 4 soap Brookside from its start in 1982 for six years. He is now best known as Jim in the television comedy, the Royle Family.

Born in 1939 he was raised in the Everton area where Noonan had lived as a youth half a century earlier.

Others to have lived at 37 Fitzroy Street include playwright Bernard Shaw from 1880 to 1882, and Scientology founder L Ron Hubbard from 1956.



Robert Tressell is pictured on the cover of this latest edition of his classic novel. It can be ordered online for £2.99 plus £2.50 postage on: <http://www.famouslyhastings.com/search/?query=Ragged+Trousered>

## Taiwanese well worth queueing for

**BAO, 31 Windmill Street**

Now: here's a thing. If you have time to queue (no booking) and don't mind a stool, (no chairs with backs), you'd definitely want to know about BAO - if you haven't heard of it already: it has branches elsewhere.

A Taiwanese restaurant with not expensively priced food, some of which is truly delicious, has recently opened in our area. While you're in the queue someone brings you a menu and we were lucky enough to be standing next to someone who worked in Bao and was coming here on her day off! So we had good advice about what to order - and indeed you can also order a beer in the queue while waiting. Your turn comes before too long, and in you go. There, along with the chopsticks and the serviettes, you will find a pencil provided to mark your order on the menu which a friendly member of staff will explain to you if it is your first visit.



PICTURE PUZZLE  
ANSWER: The building  
with the J & Goddard sign  
on page 15 is at 68  
Tottenham Court Road.  
Once a service charge of 12.5% was added: still the bill was less than £60 for two and you could have a much cheaper meal if you don't drink (although they do also serve interesting-looking cocktails). When we added a little more, the wait-person came back and told us service had already been added. "For the pleasure of your extra service," we said (it was to the one who had to taste the bad wine).

Give it a go, you won't be sorry, and you're pretty sure to go back again!

A small wine list with pleasant, mostly European, wines (at about £5 a glass) and when I sent the first glass back as perhaps from a bottle having been open too long, I watched. In two minutes the barperson tasted it, opened a new, different red at once, and gave me another glass, which tasted fine and cost the same. I call that service.

When we'd finished we looked out and saw a queue of perhaps 30 on one of those not brilliant summer nights we have had, so we asked for the bill at



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# Shelter in tube stations from blitz had to be fought for

By ANN BASU

**D**uring the Blitz the people of Fitzrovia, like other Londoners, occupied the Tube stations to use as bomb shelters. Although the authorities tried to ban it at first the public quickly forced them to back down and accept what was in effect a people's occupation.

During the intermittent London bombings of 1917 people had sheltered in the Underground; so it was expected that Londoners would head to the Tube when war broke out again in 1939. As Mike Horne explains in *The Northern Line*: "This time round the government feared that a 'deep shelter mentality' would develop, with people refusing to come out. At the outset of the war the use of Underground stations as shelters was therefore banned."

However Londoners, rather than accepting the official line that the Tube should remain solely a transport network to ensure movement around the city, insisted that it should provide refuge in time of urgent need.

The government dithered over the question of deep level shelters before the war and for many months did nothing to provide them. Some MPs pressed very strongly for government action to protect the population, as did the Liberal Megan Lloyd George, David Lloyd George's daughter and the first female Welsh MP. But others, such as Conservative MP



ILLUSTRATION BY CLIFFORD HARPER

Sir Ralph Glyn, opposed the provision of deep shelters in tube stations as potential hindrances to the flow of traffic. Sir Ralph, speaking in a Civil Defence debate on April 5, 1939, was concerned that the debate too much favoured the general public: "There is a great danger that people will get an impression ... that we are paying too much attention to the protection of individuals here, and not giving sufficient attention to what really matters most—our offen-

sive and defensive power."

Sir Ralph also believed in looking ahead at future uses for such shelters: "You must devise shelters which will bring in some sort of commercial return in time of peace, such as car parks."

But when the bombings began in August 1940 the people simply decided that they and their families felt safest in the Underground and, helped by political activists, occupied the tube stations ignoring any attempts to stop them. Tottenham Court Road, Goodge Street and Warren Street were all occupied and became heavily used.

Ted Bramley of the Communist Party, in the pamphlet *Bombers Over London* dated October 12, 1940, declared: "Three times the authorities said that the Tubes must not be used as shelters. But the people went to the Tubes. At many stations police and officials barred their way, gates were closed; but at Warren Street, Goodge Street, Highgate, etc., gates, police and officials were swept aside and every inch of stairs, corridors and platforms taken by the people."

The people's will was acknowledged in Parliament. By October 1940 tube sheltering was starting to be organised to make the best use of available spaces.

Once stations were being used by thousands of people night after night, it became desperately urgent that facilities should be provided. Hundreds of recumbent people were being

squashed against each other without any bedding to provide a minimum of comfort; they even lay on the rails in the disused stations. These extreme conditions were greatly worsened by the absence of sanitary facilities; the smell must have been almost unbearable.

By January 1941 the work to equip the tube stations was well under way, with three-tier bunk beds provided. The Minister of Health, Malcolm MacDonald, described the improvements: sanitation was provided, ventilation and heating was looked at, overcrowding was reduced by encouraging people into less-used shelters, and first-aid posts operated in the larger shelters, with a sick-bay, a medical officer and a nurse in cases where patients had to be isolated.

Local resident Max Minkoff had vivid memories of sheltering on the platform in Warren Street tube station, recalled on a Jewish Museum audio (No 319) that his family were allocated bunks in the station by organisers: "We had to go to the underground in the evening to get our bunks, we had to go seven o'clock, six o'clock, whatever it was, straight after work." Max's father stayed at home with one of Max's brothers, sleeping in the basement under a table.

The tube trains carried on operating in Warren Street while the platforms were occupied. There was conflict over space despite the best efforts of the marshals.

My mother, Rebecca Coshever, then a girl of 14 who lived in Howland Street, remembered arguments breaking out

with her family's regular platform neighbour, a German woman, over infringements caused by the woman's many belongings overflowing into their own little patch.

The Tube sheltered many thousands of Londoners each night during the bombing, while continuing to circulate people around the city. Eight new deep shelters, sheltering up to 8,000 people each, were eventually constructed under tube stations including Goodge Street; but they weren't opened to the public until 1944.

Many people, of course still had to rely on Anderson shelters in back gardens, indoor Morrison shelters or other types of surface or basement shelter; the Tube played a vital role in the West End but it was far from able to protect everyone.

The Tube shelters became a part of wartime mythology, drawn by Henry Moore and locked into generations' memories. Domestic life, at least for some Londoners, took root below the street surface.

And for communities in Fitzrovia the underground shelters were a vital refuge: the locality, abutting major railway lines, was heavily bombed both in 1940-1941 and in the doodlebug era of V2 bombings in 1944 (the destruction included the bombing of Maples, the big furniture store in Tottenham Court Road, and much of Howland Street, where my mother's family had lived). For many in Fitzrovia the Tube became a world in itself; a world that ordinary people had claimed and helped to shape.

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## Picture puzzle



How well do you know Fitzrovia? J & J Goddard manufactured and sold pianos at this building in the area from 1851 to 1964. The sign is still there. Do you know where it is?

No prizes, but for the answer look under the Dining Detective picture on page 13.

# He who pays the piper calls the tune



## 'The Piano Man' No 6 by CLIFFORD SLAPPER

As a pianist in every kind of venue from the roughest of pubs to the most exclusive clubs in the land, I have enjoyed an acute insight into the class division which runs through society. Entertaining those enjoying their leisure time, I have seen an unguarded side of people cast adrift from their desks but still obsessed with the power of money, whether through its abundance or its absence.

I had a residency at the Soufflé restaurant in central London's Intercontinental Hotel in the 1990s. The agent, sadly no longer with us now, visited one night in full but conspicuous disguise, to check on my performance. He called the next day to say that although everything else was in order, he had noticed from a distance that my socks were dark blue rather than black.

Meanwhile, a very pleasant regular customer from the

Middle East asked if I would accompany him afterwards to show him something of the local nightlife. I took him to a club called Xenon which had live music. He handed me a £50 note (the 1990 equivalent of £112.50 in 2016) and asked if I would mind getting him a glass of wine from the bar. I agreed, despite feeling it was a bit cheeky of him to send me on this errand. That is, until I returned and proffered the £48 change, only to find him insisting that I keep it; which he did for each of the other rounds. And all this despite my blue socks.

A year later I was playing at the Pitcher & Piano off Trafalgar Square, a stomping ground for besuited wage-slaves masquerading as monied captains of industry. One drunken yob in a tie was not keen for me to leave the piano after my three-hour set, and stuck a £50 note in my face to tempt me to play "one more song". I declined, so he then dramatically held up the dirty old portrait of her majesty and tore it in half down the middle. He made a great fuss of handing me half whilst shoving



Cartoon by Chris Tyler

the other half into the top pocket of his Topman suit. "You play one more song for us, and the other half is yours, mate!"

Whilst I was pondering my next move, another identikit city whizz kid on the lash stepped in and asked me what his friend was up to. It turned out this kind of antic was a common part of the first young man's repertoire of pretences of opulence. His friend started begging me to return the other half of the £50 note to them so that it could be selotaped to its twin in his friend's top pocket. "He's always doing this sort of thing! We share a flat and we're behind with the rent! Please?"

People's attitudes to money are sometimes baffling. At that same venue customers would often ask what I was paid, as if

by being an entertainer I had signed up for complete transparency in all my affairs. I experimented by alternating my answer between "£70 a night" and "£700 a night", both of which were readily believed (the truth was somewhere between the two). The piano I played there was electronic and had a little red light which rapidly flashed on and off as I played. Once, to relieve the boredom, I replied that I was paid 10p for each note I played and that the light was counting the notes played. My questioner appeared delighted by this insight: "Oh! So that's why you play so many notes!"

On another occasion I was running late so got a mini-cab in to work. I asked the driver to get there as fast as possible, as I was late for playing. He was worried on my behalf, but I reassured him by saying that I was paid per song played, and that on arrival I would just play the songs twice as fast to fit them all in. Again, he happily believed me. All in good fun, dear reader, and I can assure you that I have become far more truthful since those days.

## Looking back through our archives

### 40 years ago

#### Two cinemas and a theatre close

*From Tower, June/July 1976:*

Two cinemas and a theatre closed down in Tottenham Court Road as a result of the Gort Estate redevelopment, all between Percy Street and Stephen Street.

The Berkeley, under various names, had been at number 30 since 1913, and La Continentale, also under different names, at number 36, since 1912.

The Open Space Theatre at number 32 had not been there long but was hoping to reopen in Euston Road with the backing of Lord Delfont.

A new cinema, the Other Cinema, was about to open at 25 Tottenham Street in the basement of the Scala Building, on the site of the old Scala theatre.

The opening night was to be October 15 with a film called Winstanley, which was about the Levellers in Cromwellian times. This was to be followed by a season of films about outlaws and social bandits, such as Ned Kelly and Robin Hood. Tickets were £1, or 80p for students.

Meanwhile the YMCA hostel in Fitzroy Square closed, while a new one opened in Great Russell Street off Tottenham Court Road. The rents at the new one, however, were so high that there were less than ten permanent residents and only 110 temporary guests out of the capacity of 880.

The rents were £18 a week for a single room, and £26 for a small double one. This compared to £9 a week for students in Middlesex Hospital and University College Hospital homes.

The new YMCA building cost £15 million and took seven



years to build and had originally been planned as a luxury hotel. After financial difficulties arose the plan was changed to a hostel in order to qualify for a £7 million grant from the Department of the Environment, and a £2 million loan from Camden Council.

See also [archive.fitzrovia.org.uk](http://archive.fitzrovia.org.uk)

A poignant photograph by Erica Davies (left) showed children barred from Fitzroy Square Gardens wistfully watching another child playing inside.

There was a feature about an international cricketer who was then living in Cleveland Street and working for Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street. He was John Pulle (right) whose international career with Sri Lanka (when it was called Ceylon) lasted from 1928 to 1945. He was the opening bat, and could also bowl and keep wicket. Among his illustrious



opponents was the great Donald Bradman of Australia.

### Artist killed fighting fascism

#### 80 years ago

A local art student was killed fighting against Franco's fascists in the Spanish Civil War on August 25, 1936.

She was Felicia Mary Browne, born in 1904, a painter and sculptor who had been taught at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1920 to 1928, where she was awarded the Certificate in Drawing.

Then she went to Berlin to learn metal working and stone masonry where she witnessed the rise of the Nazis.

Back in London she joined the Artists International Association, the centre of which was at 84 Charlotte Street, and the Communist Party. She then travelled in Russia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia sketching peasants. In early 1936 she worked as a dishwasher in a tea shop, to raise funds for the party, and recruited fellow workers into the trade union.



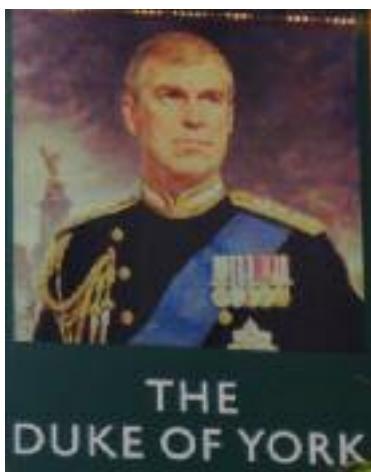
In July of that year she and her friend, the left-wing photographer Edith Bone, went on a driving holiday through France and Spain.

In Spain they were there when the civil war started and Felicia joined a Communist militia on August 3.

She was killed in action on August 25, riddled with bullets while rescuing a wounded colleague in a failed attempt to dynamite a Fascist munitions train in Aragon. This made her the first British volunteer to die in the conflict.

A small exhibition of her work, and letters from the front, was at Tate Britain until the end of August this year.

## THE DUKE OF YORK



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# WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email [news@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto:news@fitzrovia.org.uk) by November 19 for the December 2016 issue, and put "Listings" in the subject box.

## LIVE MUSIC

**All Saints Church**, 7 Margaret St: Charles Andrews organ recital, Sept 18, 7.15 pm (following Evensong).

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

**King & Queen**, 1 Foley St: Folk music: Jim Bainbridge, plus Martin Clarke, Sept 16. Jimmy Crowley, Oct 28. Mike Hebbert and Andrew Frank, Dec 9.

Scaledown alternative live entertainments last Friday of the month ([theorchestrarip.com](http://theorchestrarip.com)).

**Sevilla Mia Spanish Bar**, 22 Hanway St (basement): World Fusion, Tue, 9.30pm; Swing 'n' Blues, Wed, 9.30pm; Spanish Rumba, Thur-Sat, 10.30pm.

**Simmons**, 28 Maple St: Live music every Wednesday evening.

**UCL Haldane Room**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Chamber music opening concert, Oct 6, 5.30-6.30pm. Shakespeare, Oct 17, 5.30-6.30pm. Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club, Oct 26, 7-9.30pm. Schubert, Nov 4, 1.10-1.55pm. Ensembles, Nov 17, 5.30-6.30pm. UCLU Music Society, Nov 25, 1.10-1.55pm. Guest harpsichord recital, Dec 1, 5.30-6.30pm.

**UCL Main Quad**, Gower St: Concert, Dec 6, 1-8pm.

**The 100 Club**, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): Punk Special, 40th Anniversary, featuring Spizzenergi, Sept 20. A 40th Anniversary Tribute to the Punk Festival 1976, Sept 23-24. Dr Feelgood, Nov 11-12.

## THEATRE

**Bloomsbury Theatre Studio**, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Laugh Till It Hurts, Sept 14. Bright Club (UCL researchers present comedy), Sept 22, Oct 22, Nov 23. Edwina Hayes (plus special guest Joan Coffey), December 3.

**Camden People's Theatre**, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Blush (five stories about revenge pornography), Sept 20-24. The Absolute Truth About Absolutely Everything (a crisis of masculinity performed by females), Sept 22-Oct 8. The Brides of Bluebeard, Sept 24-25. Pussy, Sept 25. Cream Pie, Sept 28-29. Pube, Oct 7-8. Holy Presents (Christmas comedy), Dec 6-17.

**Dominion Theatre**, 269 Tottenham Court Rd (dominiontheatre.com): The Bodyguard, starring Beverley Knight, until January 7, 2017.

**London Palladium**, Argyll St palladium.londontheatres.co.uk: Cinderella, starring Paul O'Grady, Julian Clary, Amanda Holden, Nigel Havers, Count Arthur Strong, from Dec 10 for five weeks



## 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.

**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](http://www.odeon.co.uk) or 08712 244007.

**Petrie Film Club**, UCL Petrie Museum, Malet Place: The Assassination Bureau, Sept 22, 6-9pm. War Horse, Oct 25, 5-7.30pm. I Claudius, Nov 11, 6-8.30pm. Dishonoured, Nov 23, 6-9pm. (Prebook at [events.petrie@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:events.petrie@ucl.ac.uk) or 020 7679 4138).

**Regent Street Cinema**, 309 Regent St: For daily programme visit [regentstreetcinema.com/](http://regentstreetcinema.com/) programme. Matinee classics every Wednesday at 2pm, for over 55s, £1.75.

**UCL Art Museum**, Wilkins Building, South Cloisters, Gower St: Remainder, Nov 8, 6.30-8.30pm.

## 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.

## WALKS

**London Literary Pub Crawl**, every Saturday, 5pm. Start at the Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place. [LondonLiteraryPubCrawl.com](http://LondonLiteraryPubCrawl.com).

**London Walks** ([walks.com](http://walks.com)) £10, Over 65 £8: Beatles Magical Mystery Tour, Tottenham Court Rd station, every Sunday 11am, and every Thursday, 11am, Wednesdays 2pm. Rock'n'Roll London, Tottenham Court Rd station, Every Wednesday, 7pm, every Friday, 2pm.

## TALKS

**Curwen Gallery**, 34 Windmill St: Bowie Inspired, a talk by artist Richard Walker about David Bowie, Sept 15, 7pm. Artist's Talk, by Richard Walker on his work, Sept 21, 7pm.

**Sohemian Society**, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place:

**UCL Art Museum**, Wilkins Building, South Cloisters, Gower St: Live drawing with Lisa Gornic, Oct 11, 1-2pm. New acquisitions in conversation: Lily Johnson, Oct 20, 1-2pm. Dr Martin Lang on militancy in art and society, Nov 10, 1-2pm. Enemy of the Starts in performance, Nov 11, 1-2pm.

**UCL Darwin Lecture Theatre**, Malet Place ([events@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:events@ucl.ac.uk)): Tuesdays and Thursdays (1.15-1.55pm) during term time. Performing matter: greatest hits and new findings, Oct 11. Does social science tell the truth? Oct 13. Barking up the right tree: how do we understand what words mean? Oct 18. Shake, rattle and roll: communicating lethal risks, Oct 20. The lifelong benefits of reading for pleasure, Oct 25. Navigating the brain: software programming for surgical planning, Oct 27.

Hospitality and hostility: the role of established refugees in a crisis, Nov 1. Paying the penalty: the sporting prison, Nov 3. The US presidential election: a post mortem, Nov 15. How Putin reacts, Nov 17. Cancer evolution through space and time, Nov 22. Imagine a world with no slums, Nov 24. The Arctic on the fast track of change, Nov 29. Migrants and healthcare, Dec 1.

Evening lecture: Annual Grant Lecture on nature conservation, Nov 17, 6.30-9pm.

**UCL, Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Neale Lecture 2016, Prof David Carpenter on Magna Carta, Nov 3, 6-8pm.

**UCL Institute of Advanced Studies**, South Wing, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Figures of solitude and resilience, Lecture Room G11, Nov 29, 6-8.30pm.

**UCL Petrie Museum**, Malet Place ([ucl.ac.uk/museums/petrie](http://ucl.ac.uk/museums/petrie)): Archeology and espionage (deciphering codes), Sept 29, Oct 13, Nov 17, Nov 24, 1.15-1.45pm. Petrie's War: World War 1 at Home and in Egypt, Sept 29, 6-8pm. Psychology of spying, Oct 6, 6-8pm. Dead to Me, Oct 21, 27, 28, 1.15-1.45pm. Adventure into the unknown, Dec 1, 6-9pm.

## EXHIBITIONS

**All Saints Parish Room**, 7 Margaret St: John Lewis & Waitrose Arts and Crafts Club Exhibition, Sept 13-25.

**British Museum**, Great Russell St ([britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)): Free: Courting to contract: love and marriage in Iran, until Nov 20. Money matters, until Oct 9. Pay for: Sunken cities: Egypt's lost worlds, until Nov 27. South Africa: the art of a nation, from Oct 27.

**Getty Images Gallery**, Eastcastle St: Soho Past in photographs, Sept 22-Nov 19.

**UCL Art Museum**, Wilkins Building, South Cloisters, Gower St: Vault, work from most promising talent of Slade School of Art, Sept 26-Dec 16.

**UCL Grant Museum of Zoology**, 21 University St: Natural creativity: sex and trickery, Oct 19-Dec 23.

**UCL Main Library**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Fair play and foul: connecting with Shakespeare at UCL, until Dec 15.

**UCL Octagon Gallery**, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Cabinets of consequence (works of UCL geographers, neuroscientists, archeologists, zoologists), until Nov 11.

**Wellcome Library**, 183 Euston Rd ([wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org)): States of Mind: Tracing the edges of consciousness, until Oct 16. Bedlam: The asylum and beyond, Sept 15-Jan 15. RawMinds Wanderland (creative cues to how minds wander), Oct 20-30. Permanent exhibitions: Medicine Now, and Medicine Man.

## ART GALLERIES

**Featured exhibitions.** A full list of all galleries is on our website



*Pink Posing Patti* by Richard Walker at Curwen Gallery

**Curwen Gallery**, 34 Windmill St ([curwengallery.co.uk](http://curwengallery.co.uk)): Camberwell Beauty, Richard Walker, Sept 7-30.

**Lazarides Gallery**, 11 Rathbone Place ([lazinc.com](http://lazinc.com)): Nina Pandolfo: Beyond Meninas, until Oct 8.

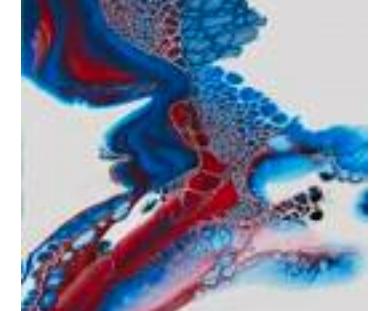
**Pilar Corrias**, 54 Eastcastle St ([pilarcorrias.com](http://pilarcorrias.com)): Tala Madani: Shitty Disco, Oct 5-Nov 12.



*Very Like A Whale* by Sylvain Lefebvre at Rebecca Hossack Gallery 2.

**Rebecca Hossack Gallery (2)**, 28 Charlotte St ([r-h-g.co.uk](http://r-h-g.co.uk)): Sylvain Lefebvre: Very like a Whale, until Oct 1. Ross Bonfanti, Oct 5-29.

**Rosenfeld Porcini**, 37 Rathbone St ([rosenfeldporcini.com](http://rosenfeldporcini.com)): Levi Van Velu, Oct 6-Nov 26.



*Dragon* by Nancy Wood at Store Street Gallery.

**Store Street Gallery**, 32 Store St ([storestreetgallery.com](http://storestreetgallery.com)): Nancy Wood, Oct 19-23.

**Woolff Gallery**, 89 Charlotte St ([woolffgallery.co.uk](http://woolffgallery.co.uk)): Keith Haynes, until Sept 30.