

Fitzrovia News



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

Issue 148 Spring 2018

Camden plans two years of chaos with 'ground breaking project'

All change at Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street with a new public park and two-way traffic

Residents and businesses will have to endure two years of disruption from March as work begins to transform the Gower Street and Tottenham Court Road one-way system in what Camden Council describes as a "ground breaking project".

All bus services will move to Tottenham Court Road making the street two-way by the end of the year, and Gower Street will become two-way 12 months later, says Camden.

Known as the West End Project it will create a much needed new public park at Alfred Place and promises improvements to Whitfield Gardens including the restoration of the Fitzrovia Mural.

New paving and road surface will be laid using high quality material and the historic lamp posts on Tottenham Court Road will be restored and relocated.

On Gower Street there will be protected cycle lanes running north and south giving cyclists safe and direct access into and out of the West End.

But Camden is hugely behind schedule with the project and it is desperate to get the Tottenham Court Road part completed and within budget before Crossrail trains start running along the Elizabeth Line at the end of this year.

Community groups are concerned that Camden is prioritising commercial interests along Tottenham Court Road over neighbouring streets with residents and small businesses.

The Charlotte Street Association and Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association say that the banning of most motor vehicles from much of Tottenham Court Road during the daytime will merely divert traffic — particularly taxis, private vehicles and delivery vans — into the narrow side streets. They are also concerned that public open spaces will be redesigned as low-maintenance with a reduction in greenery and featuring hard areas and seating to reduce ongoing costs, and designing out crime. But this will also mean less biodiversity and comfort.

A predicted increase in motor traffic along Torrington Place due

to the West End Project has been addressed already by Camden by stopping west bound vehicles travelling along Tavistock Place. However CSA and FNA remain concerned about an increase in congestion and pollution along Grafton Way, Charlotte Street and other streets.

Despite the billions of public money spent on Crossrail there will be no toilets on the Elizabeth line trains or at Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street stations.

Out of the £35m that Camden Council is using for the scheme there are no plans for public conveniences to relieve cross-legged passengers or anyone else.

Camden did initially work with local people on a design for the proposed park at Alfred Place but this initiative was cut short.

Community groups will be pressing the council to consult and work with them in the hope of a high quality and interesting design for the new open space.

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

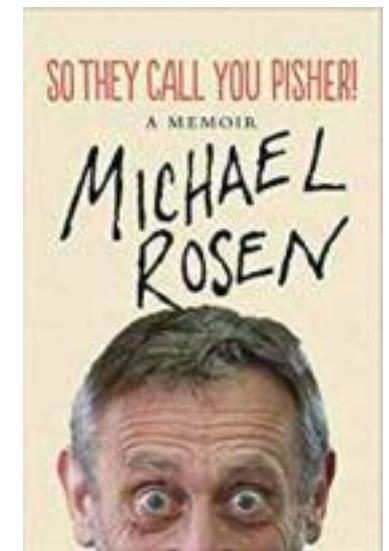
But Adam Harrison, Bloomsbury ward councillor and cabinet member for improving Camden's environment, is upbeat and hoping to still have his job after May's election.

"Transformation of Tottenham Court Road will address the issues of poor air quality, traffic congestion, and a lack of public open space," he says.

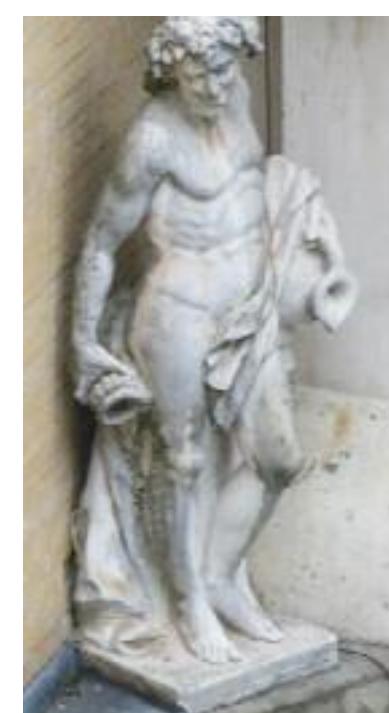
See: camden.gov.uk/westendproject



Andy Soto Bastidas, Barcelona-based couturier (left), and Dan Bates, local musician and FitzFest organiser (right), were married in January at the former Middlesex Hospital Chapel in Pearson Square. Photo: Robert Workman



Poet ribbed as plumber at Middx Hospital medical school
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God of wine
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Issue 148 Spring 2018
Published 6 March 2018

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editor and features editor
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website and assistant editor
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news and production editor
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Printed by: Sharman & Co Ltd,
Newark Road, Peterborough
PE1 5TD. sharmanandco.co.uk
Fitzrovia News is produced
by the Fitzrovia Community
Newspaper Group.
ISSN: 0967-1404
Published by Fitzrovia
Neighbourhood Association
(registered charity 1111649)
39 Tottenham Street,
London, W1T 4RX
fitzrovia.org.uk

Fitzrovia News is published
four times a year.
Our deadline for news,
features, letters and adverts
is normally two weeks before
publication. The next
issue will be out on
Tuesday 5 June 2018.
Deadline: 18 May.
Public editorial meetings
are held at 7 pm, first
Tuesday of every month at
Fitzrovia Neighbourhood
Association,
39 Tottenham Street
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The 43 Group

Thanks for the excellent article in the last issue on the "43 group" of Jewish anti-fascist ex-servicemen formed just after WW2, of which Vidal Sassoon was one of the more well-known members.

Some readers will also remember the veteran Communist Joe Rabstein who, in the 1970s, campaigned tirelessly in "South Marylebone" against housing deprivation, landlord exploitation, and inadequate Council policy. I was then a student living in Nassau Street and heard it said that Joe was a member of a secretive anti-fascist support group. So the story went: Joe was equipped with awesome self-defence skills and had, with a single kick, broken a man's leg for an anti-semitic taunt. I never had the temerity to ask Joe if it was true...

Anyway, it all serves as a timely reminder that, regrettably, fascist organisations and ideology survive still, if only at the margin and often in disguise, eager to blame inequality and deprivation on blacks, Jews, gays, immigrants, or some other convenient minority group. It is bigotry, and a diversion. Joe and my parents' generation fought a World War to defeat this evil. Fascism in 21st century garb should not be allowed to thrive.

Martin Smith, London SW.

It's time for Fitzrovia to Literary stand up and be counted!

I love Fitzrovia. But full disclosure. I was born and brought up in Birmingham. So if you are a long-term resident of Fitzrovia you should know I am looking at your area as an outsider. I have a tourist's eyes! I've only been here full-time for about ten years. No time at all for some Fitzrovia.

But what an area. Arguably still living in the shadow of Soho - NoHo thankfully never took off - this is the area that gave us Charles Dickens. Twice. Where George Bernard Shaw chose to live. And where Virginal Woolf lived. In fact, Virginia lived in the same HOUSE as Shaw. Jerome K Jerome used to walk these streets at night thinking about writing. The teenage Dylan Thomas dreamt of the area when still writing in Wales. Then later he met the love of his life in one of our pubs. More recently, Ian McEwan wrote a whole novel set in our streets. The late, multi-millionaire publisher, Felix Dennis, had offices around the world. But he insisted his head office remained in Fitzrovia. The poet who introduced Oscar Wilde to Bosie lived here. As did the war poet, Rupert Brooke. The Proles Pub from Orwell's 1984 is here. Griff Rhys Jones is a fan and has a house here. Yet on occasions this monumental area in the centre of the greatest city in the world (sorry New York and Paris!) feels like a rural village. Some pubs a hundred metres from one of the busiest shopping streets in Europe, close on a Sunday. And the area is loosely named after a pub and not the other way round.

What an area!

So I want to celebrate Fitzrovia and the obvious

way to do that is with a Literary Festival. The other thing I love about Fitzrovia is how contemporary it is. There are still struggling writers around, even though cheap rents are largely a thing of the past. So I want to create a Literary Festival that is loud and proud about this unique area and the idea is to have a two-pronged celebration. Celebrate the history of the area with readings and productions of some of the world-class artists who lived here in the past. And celebrate contemporary Fitzrovia with literary events, workshops, interviews with famous writers, poetry and street corner soliloquies. In the pubs, clubs, restaurants and cafes. Ever fancied writing? We want to create a book of a 1,000 words called 'One Day' - any story about anything over a single day - as long as Fitzrovia is in the picture somewhere. We'll then have live events and publish the book in hard copy and online.

Maverick Theatre has always been about access. The first pub theatre in Birmingham. The London Literary Pub Crawl. The memoir 'Confessions of a Butcher Boy', much loved by Peaky Blinders fans. FitzLit... provisional name... will be 10 days in either October or April next year. I'd love you to be involved. Whaddyathink? If you like the idea or have a venue that might like to be involved, please email fitzrovia@mavericktheatre.co.uk.

And thanks to the Fitzrovia News for their early support.

I love them almost as much as I love Fitzrovia. That's a lot of love...

Nick Hennegan

Helen Gregory

Helen Gregory, a long time resident of Tottenham Street, died at University College Hospital on 7 February. Her funeral was held at Bushey Jewish Cemetery on 23 February. She was at least 90 years old. She was a very private woman but knew a great many people in the shops and cafes of Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury. Helen had lived in Tottenham Street since at least the early 1960s after coming to London as a refugee from Germany. In retirement she was a volunteer researcher at The Wiener Library when it was based in Marylebone. Until her death she continued to read many newspapers every day and took a keen interest in current affairs.

Helen was well known around the area at less than 5 feet tall thinly built, she walked with a stoop. Often she carried bags around with her. Any request to ask if she wanted any help was met with a polite: "No thank you very much, I'm alright"

She spent a lot of money in the newsagents on newspapers and magazines and could be seen in coffee shops and Whitfield Gardens with a pair of scissors cutting out articles. It is believed she worked as a researcher and this work carried on throughout her life.

At the Icco pizza shop on the corner of Goodge and Charlotte Streets she could often be seen at the end of the evening putting away the shop's tables and chairs. Several customers were alarmed at the sight of this elderly lady doing this manual work and the manager asked her to stop because of customer complaints. Helen replied feistily "I've been doing this longer than you've been working here!" It was never mentioned again.

I first met Helen in 1964 when she came up to me in Regents Park as I was walking my baby and she made a few comments and I went on my way. About a decade later, I replied to a letter she sent to the Camden New Journal, she made herself known to me as the author of the letter. So started years of a distant friendship, because Helen was such a special, private, and fiercely independent woman but my little children gave her great delight.

When I was forced to leave my home in 2012, I told her I was concerned about her welfare. She berated me, saying that she would be alright as she had plenty of friends. I know she was much loved in Fitzrovia.

Fiona Green



Sandra, a neighbour, offered Helen the use of her bathroom when the council condemned Helen's boiler.

"Helen was very softly and well spoken and extremely grateful that I let her use my bathroom saying that the hotels in Gower Street wanted to charge her over £100, recalled Sandra. "She gave me this very sweet card (above) and thanked me every time I saw her. I will really miss her."

A neighbour who lived in the same block as Helen for many years said:

"We hardly saw her and she didn't encourage 'neighbourly' chats. She was never unpleasant, but obviously very private and we respected her shyness and need for privacy. We did worry a bit about her and wondered about the stacks of papers etc we could see in her window from the street. But she seemed healthy and fine, smiled if we met, maybe exchanged a view of the weather etc, but nothing more."

We realised she'd had a difficult past. Letters sometimes arrived in a different name (we'd assumed Polish) for her. She had a cat, that she sometimes took downstairs in the evening for a short time. But our paths didn't cross often.

It seems incredible that we didn't get to know each other more. It wasn't in my nature to stay aloof - but Helen really didn't want more contact.



There may be some changes but our food will stay the same

Jaoa Piedade Francisco Xavier Fernandes, originally from Goa, is the General Secretary of the Indian YMCA in Fitzroy Square.

He's been in the post, which is effectively the chief executive officer, for a year. Because of his long name he is known around the building as JP. He has worked for the YMCA for over 40 years mostly on the Indian Sub Continent and Fitzroy Square is his first posting abroad. he said

"The YMCA was formed in 1844 as an essentially anglican organisation born from Ecumenism which means interfaith ideas.

This is the important tradition we continue to this day.

"We have a new emphasis on inclusivity and I'm a living example of that because I'm a Roman Catholic. I worship at Saint Charles Borromeo on Ogle Street while the organisation at its core is Anglican"

"We are on a mission to

change the way we are seen in the community we would like to open up the organisation to other locals, workers, students and residents' groups.

"The message we want to send is that everything around here is open to change and new ideas - but the food, for which we have a good reputation, will remain the same!

"Part of our work involves counselling and care of the students staying with us. The church is a cultural link with India. In many cases they are a long way from home in a new environment in an alien culture. We provide support to help them to keep the focus on their studies and enjoy their time in the UK.

"For the future we are expanding to Birmingham and preparing to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Indian YMCA in 2020."

Planning chief's gifts investigated

The chairman of Westminster council's planning committee from 2000 to 2017, which approved large building projects in Pearson Square and Rathbone Square, is being investigated over extensive gifts he has received from property developers.

Following reports of his gifts by *The Guardian* newspaper, Councillor Robert Davis has referred himself to the council's monitoring office and stated he has not broken any rules.

Records revealed he had received over 500 "gifts and hospitality" over three years, stated *The Guardian*. They included trips abroad, luxury dinners, and tickets to shows, film premieres, and Wimbledon Centre Court.

More than a dozen instances of hospitality came from Westminster Property Association which represents owners and developers.

This was criticised by the council's Labour leader, Adam Hug who said it gave the public a "clear perception that senior Conservative councillors have a very close relationship with developers."

For decades, he added, "they have let developers get away with building far fewer 'affordable' homes than required under Westminster's planning policy." They

Paul Church, West End ward Conservative Councillor, said this on his twitter account on 25 February:

"I tried to stand up for the communities I was elected to represent against the dominance of property developers & their agents, patronage & power in Westminster, but I was bullied, silenced & threatened by their powerful allies. Local government shouldn't be like this."

Fire at Fitzrovia building site

A spectacular blaze on the corner of Great Portland Street and Langham Street needed ten fire engines and 72 firefighters in February.

A number of gas cylinders on the site were involved and the cause of the fire is under investigation.



Councillor Robert Davis

had also pushed through controversial schemes, he added.

Councillor Davis responded: "As planning chairman it was an important part of my job to meet groups ranging from developers to residents, property agents, heritage associations, arts groups and trade organisations. Their sole purpose was to ensure and encourage the right kind of development in Westminster and ensure that anything put before the council was going to benefit the city as a whole." A council spokesperson added: "Where hospitality is offered, these meetings are all declared in the register of interests and have absolutely no sway on planning decisions."

Access to buses and taxis

Camden's West End Project (see front page) when it is completed will mean radical changes to access to the street and there are similarities to what Westminster Council is proposing for Oxford Street.

Camden, like Westminster, is seeking to reduce access to the street for taxis which means shoppers who need (or choose) to use taxis will not be able to hail one outside a shop. While this will reduce congestion and pollution on these shopping streets it disadvantages those with mobility problems and it means taxis will merely seek to ply their trade in neighbouring streets, often where they are not needed or wanted.

While Westminster wants to remove buses from Oxford Street altogether Camden is reducing the number of bus stops on Tottenham Court Road but running buses in both directions. There are pros and cons.

Unlike Westminster, Camden is not diverting buses left and right along narrow side streets where they are not wanted.

Volunteer runs for food aid

A long-time volunteer at a Fitzrovia charity is running this year's London Marathon to raise money for the Soup Kitchen, Whitfield Street which provides free hot meals for the homeless and those in need.

Nav Basi, aged 46, says: "I've been a volunteer at The Soup Kitchen for the last 12 years and met so many wonderful people, volunteers and guests. I wanted to give something back to a cause that continues to give selflessly to so many people."

The London Marathon will take place on Sunday 22 April. Nav's fundraising page is here: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/navdeep-basi

In a count of the number of people sleeping on the streets in autumn 2017, Camden Council recorded 127 and Westminster Council recorded 217.

News in brief

University College London has picked Kier to refurbish and extend its student digs Ramsay Hall, Maple Street to a design by Hawkins Brown.

A portfolio of buildings which includes an office of former Prime Minister Tony Blair has been put up for sale with an asking price of £50m by owners Great Portland Estates. The individual properties are 88-92, 84-86 and 78-82 Great Portland Street, and 21-23 and 15-19 Riding House Street.

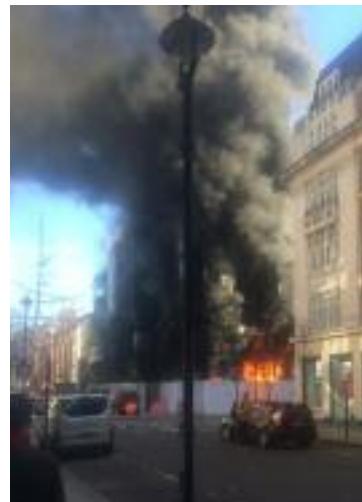


photo Tom Edgington

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Obituaries



Carmella Loureda (née Vieites González) was born in the La Coruña district of Spain. Her early life was difficult, her parents dying when she was very young so she was brought up by her grandmother in poverty.

A clever child she was able to read at three years old.

Carmella came to London in 1962 and worked in various catering, service, and hospitality roles for the Astor family, at the Lancaster Gate Hotel, and at the London Clinic Harley Street.

In 1971 she came to work in the catering department at the Middlesex Hospital. Her work involved the full requirements of a busy major hospital, catering for staff and patients, working at the doctors' residences and supervising functions including

Gillian Roy



Gillian Roy, a resident of Riding House Street, died unexpectedly in January. Over 100 people packed into All Souls Church, Langham Place, for a service of thanksgiving for her life.

Gillian was born and brought up around Deal in Kent. Her early calling was ballet dancing, then this became acting and theatre. She sought to establish herself in the theatre and for several years toured the UK for a repertory theatre company. She acted, was a stage assistant and undertook secretarial work. Gillian was a lifelong member of "Equity"

She had some difficult times and trials in her life but she was determined to put the adversity behind her and put energy joy and celebration into the rest of her life. Gillian loved the Arts and was a regular theatre and concert attender.

She was an accomplished

piano player and accompanied several singers for rehearsal and recital.

Gillian was involved in several drama and playreading groups throughout London, such as the Shakespeare Reading Society, Ham playreading group, Sunday Shakespeare Society, and the Shaw Society.

She was active at All Souls Church, Langham Place, for over 20 years, and used to belong to the choir. She was a regular contributor to the Thursday lunchtime service, giving readings and playing the piano.

The vicar said "She had a strong faith and was positively involved in life and the community of the church. She performed vital good works such as visiting the sick. I will miss her sense of humour, she was so unpredictable!"

Gillian Frances Roy born 4 April 1933 died 23 January 2018.

Carmella Loureda

children's parties, and staff Christmas parties. She worked at John Astor House when the kitchens were moved there.

Carmella never forgot her background and if customers were unable to pay for their meal she would reach into her pocket and pay herself. She would always give extra food if she knew she was serving a doctor or nurse. She worked her way up to become a supervisor.

She lived for many years at York Mansions in Berners Street until it was sold off by the Hospital, and later moved to Cleveland Residences on Cleveland Street. In 1990 she married Pepe Laureda, a chef who worked at Spaghetti House, Pescatori and the Hospital. She retired in 2001.

Fellow Middlesex alumni, the Moore family of Martin and Linda, were very close for 42 years. They provided mutual support. She was Godmother to their son Christopher whom she taught Spanish.

Well known in Fitzrovia, she had many friends and ex-colleagues in the area. The workers in Boots, Tesco, and Marks and Spencer were all devastated to hear of her death. Carmella kept close ties with her family in Grand Canaria and Spain. Her ashes were flown to Spain in early March.

Carmella Loureda

born 1 May 1936 died 20 January 2018

Santina Levey

Santina Levey, known as Tina, who died aged 79, lived in London for over 50 years, most of these years in Newman Street.

Tina was an outstanding textile historian and curator and one of the most respected Keepers of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Published in 1983 her book 'Lace: A History' remains the most authoritative work on the subject.

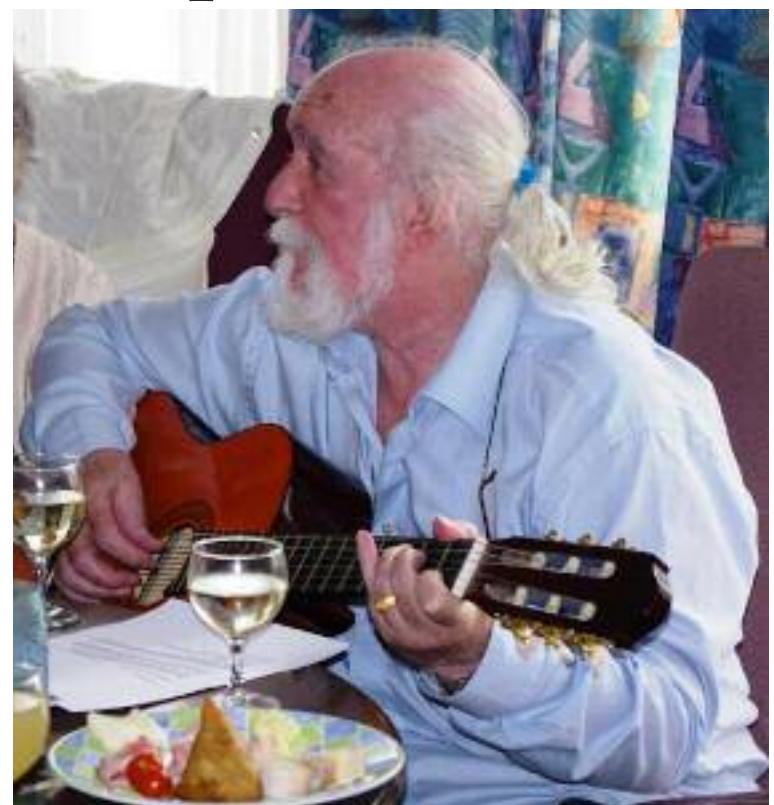
She adored her job and was venerated by her colleagues, for whom she felt great loyalty and responsibility. As the changing political culture of the 1980s began to disrupt the gentler ideals of public service and scholarship to which Tina adhered, she found



herself at odds with the Thatcherite mainstream. She and five other senior colleagues were made brutally redundant. This was a devastating loss for Tina and she took time to recover.

Tina was a lively, selfless and productive person with strong moral values who will be remembered in our hearts.

Joseph Cook



Joseph Cook, born 1924 in Liverpool and died in 2018, was a resident of Fitzrovia Court sheltered housing for the last 12 years. He was a musician who played the guitar and sang, and also worked with other musicians and groups

He first came to London in 1956 and worked residencies and one-off bookings in the West End with quartets and trios.

At the time there were 50 other bands working the West End and 30,000 musicians were registered with the Musicians' Union. Archer street in Soho was known as the labour exchange where entertainers and musicians could find work.

Joseph left London in 1963 and didn't come back until 2000, travelling the world working as a musician in South Africa and Swaziland. "Hotels work was hard as we played two two-hour shows a day six days a week," he recalled. "Cruises were easier two one-hour slots a day and time off when ships docked at a port. I worked for P&O liners and visited Acapulco, San Francisco, Sydney Australia, and Vancouver."

This biography was taken from the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association's oral history project booklet "Ebb and flow in Fitzrovia" available from FNA 39 Tottenham Street



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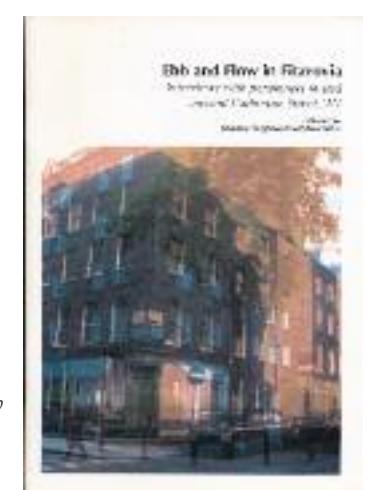
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Multiplex cancels overnight working but grabs space for loading on Charlotte Street



Derwent London's contractor Multiplex has dug a big hole on Charlotte Street but is having trouble filling it back in.

International construction contractor Multiplex caved in to pressure from residents and abandoned plans for overnight concrete pours at the redevelopment of the former Saatchi & Saatchi building on Charlotte Street, writes Linus Rees.

Multiplex intended to run four 33-tonne mixertrucks to the site every hour, and diesel pumps day and night in an attempt to get back up to speed on the contract for developer Derwent London.

Clearly irritated by the reaction from local residents who strongly objected to losing sleep, Nigel Bunce, project director at Multiplex, announced that they would instead do the concrete pour within normal working hours.

Bunce also said they wanted to close part of Charlotte Street between Tottenham Street and Howland Street to northbound traffic, making the carriageway one-way southbound only.

"Multiplex, in conjunction with Camden and other contractors in the area, want to ease traffic between two major sites by turning a small section of Charlotte Street into a one-way," they said.

At the meeting, Fitzrovia

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Residents had 'lucky escape' after blaze at blocks of flats

Fire fighters were called to a fire at a basement flat at Highfield House on New Cavendish Street during the early hours of 29 December.

A neighbour called the fire brigade after hearing a smoke alarm sounding.

Three fire engines and 14 fire fighters and officers from Soho and Paddington attended the scene after receiving this emergency call. The Brigade was called at 3.06 am and the incident was over by 4.10 am.

In a statement LFB confirmed part of a room in a basement flat of a five floored block of flats was damaged by the fire. No injuries were reported.

Crew Manager, Tom Tracey, was at the scene and said: "Thankfully, because these residents had smoke alarms, they had a lucky escape and were able to leave the property without injury."

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Highfield House was a residence for hospital workers before it was sold off to developers in 2012. Now the block is mostly used for short term lettings.



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The next issue will be out Tuesday 5 June 2018.
Deadline for articles, features and advertisements 18 May.

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Labour selects ward candidates

The Labour Party is the first to announce its candidates for the West End ward in the Westminster Council election on May 3, which opinion polls predict will be a close result.

They are (pictured from left to right) Caroline Saville, a former carer, Pancho Lewis, who works for a social enterprise set up to reduce food waste, and Patrick Lilley, a life coach and LGBT community organiser.

Issues they are standing on range from the environment, housing policy, standing up for high street businesses affected by crippling business rates to the effects of budget cuts. "In response to significant concerns raised by residents about plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street," said Patrick, "we have made representations to TfL arguing that changes to Oxford Street cannot and should not lead to major bus diversions onto residential streets nor in any way detrimentally impact the quality of life of residents."

Questions on behalf of residents with mobility issues have also been raised, said Pancho. "Residents need to be at the heart of decision making not property developers. Conservative controlled Westminster Council has put the profits of property developers first while building far

fewer 'affordable' homes than required under Westminster's own planning policy and have pushed through controversial schemes."

They have also worked against Westminster Council's "rush to build tall buildings," added Caroline. "Our quality of life should not be made worse by bulky overshadowing buildings, stealing light from our streets and causing more traffic congestion and pollution."

They have also been pressuring Westminster Council to get a grip on fly tipping and rubbish bins in the area and improve poor lighting on Gosfield Street.

Of great concern are proposed cuts of £91,000 to All Souls Primary School in Foley Street (£506 per pupil), under the government's new funding formula, according to the schoolcuts.org.uk website (<http://schoolcuts.org.uk>) So they have launched a petition calling on the Council to urge the government to scrap these proposals.

In order to "defend the rights of the hundreds of EU nationals living and working in Fitzrovia" they are keen "to oppose a hard Brexit."

They are also seeking input from Fitzrovia residents through an on-line survey (www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/welabsurvey), or through emailing them at team@westend-labour.org.



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Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her siblings



Master tailor to the stars

Master bespoke tailor Paul Kitsaros (above) celebrates 20 years at 66 Cleveland Street this year.

In that time he has attracted many celebrity customers such as television news presenter Huw Edwards, radio disc-jockey Steve Wright, film director Steve McQueen, and television chef Fergus Henderson (who specialises in offal and asked for a French peasant fashion in English fabrics).

But Paul also gets on very well with the locals. "It is like a beautiful village where we all know each other," he said. He was born in a village surrounded by sea and mountains in Cyprus before emigrating with his family to London in 1960 aged 15.

Originally he was a carpenter, then he learned how to use a thimble to hem trousers and "got a feel for it." So when he came to London he learned how to make trousers working in Camden, then making coats in Soho, and became ambitious to learn the entire trade and become a master tailor, which he did, after many years working for others.

When qualified he decided to go on his own. "I knew it would be difficult as I had learned a lot but was not experienced," he remarked. He rented a room for his own business, but after five or six years the increased rent drove him out.

He saw a property in Great Titchfield Street which he wished to rent with a colleague but the latter pulled out and it was too expensive for him on his own.

Then, while eating at the Maples restaurant, now called Vasis, on the corner of Cleveland and Maple Streets, he said, "I noticed next door, which had been a tobacconist, was empty. It had always been my dream to have ground floor premises, so I made enquiries and was able to acquire it."

Now he has eight people working in his shop including apprentices learning the trade such as Chuki Ibe and Johannes Arnold,

Beer off

The drayman delivering beer to The Hope on the corner of Tottenham Street and Whitfield Street was annoyed that Phil Hardwick was not there to receive it.

So he phoned him and asked where he was. "I am in Cornwall," replied Phil who had just moved from The Hope to a pub in that far west county.

"Luckily he was able to give them my number and I was there to accept the barrels," said Kim Beeching, the new landlady at the pub.

George Fest

Spotted in Gigs, the chippie opposite The Hope: **George Gal-loway**. He has been an MP for the Labour Party, and the Respect Party. Luckily he was able to have traditional fish and chips rather than lapping a saucer of milk cat-like as he once did on a certain television "reality" show.

Singer surgeon

Does anybody remember being treated by comic country and western performer **Hank Wangford**? Dr Sam Hutt (his real name) was also a gynaecologist in the NHS birth control clinic at James Pringle House, 73-75 Charlotte Street.

Bonus act

Punters at the comedy club upstairs at The Wheatsheaf in Rathbone Place were once treated to an unannounced appearance by American film star **Robin Williams**.

"He turned up and paid his entry fee on the door, and was then persuaded to perform," recalled actress **Charlie Dore** who ran the club. She was speaking recently on Ken Bruce's Radio 2 show. Apart from his successful screen acting career Williams was also well known for his mastery of improvised comedy.

Idiosyncratic

Another comic performer, **Charlie Brooker**, revealed on another radio programme that he was a student at the Polytechnic of Central London in Wells Street.

"They said I was idiosyncratic," he said on *Desert Island Discs* about his time there (before it became the University of Westminster). He thought they were probably right as his comedy was all about "extrapolating twisted logic."

His comic inspiration, he said, was Chris Morris hosting the BBC television spoof "The Day Today".

Surreal

Chris Morris, in turn, was heard interviewing the late great **Peter Cook** in another spoof sketch on radio. Cook was assuming the role of Sir Arthur Streeb-Grebling which was recorded in 1993 and broadcast on Radio 3 the following year. He reveals his love of **Tottenham Court Road** and swimming in the YMCA just off it in Great Russell Street.

It was included more recently (January 6) on the tautologically titled "Surreal Guide to Surreal Comedy" on Radio 4 Extra. But you can catch Sir Arthur's bizarre flights of fancy more permanently on YouTube.

Shaw show

The final bit of radio comedy involves Alistair McGowan playing Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion* on Radio 4 - teaching elocution to Eliza Doolittle. She was according to this **Bernard Shaw** play a flower girl on the corner of Tottenham Court Road.



Illustration by Jayne Davis

WELL SPOTTED

"Eye examinations while you wait." Congratulations for this service offered by Adam Simmonds, until recently at 130 Great Portland Street.

Basketball mania

There were queues six abreast by basketball fans the whole length of Percy Street on Valentine's Day. The attraction was the Presented by sneaker store at number 15 where a reality show was being recorded on facebook by the father and brother of superstar Lonzo Ball.

Lonzo, who plays for Los Angeles Lakers, was back in America, but even his father and brother (both professional basketball players themselves) were enough to draw the crowds.

The cost of sneakers at the store ranges from £100 to £100,000!



Dry wit

Congratulations to the Tower Tavern in Clipstone Street for this imaginative welcome (pictured above).

Boxing bricklayer's broken arm bout

The **Bricklayers Arms** in Gresse Street could have been taken over by a real bricklayer who broke his arm, it has emerged.

Tom Sayers, a Camden bricklayer, took up illegal bare knuckle fighting, and in 1860 was involved in such a brutal fight that the public raised £3,000 to enable him to retire.

Sayers had broken his arm early in the battle but continued fighting one handed for 42 rounds over two hours and 20 minutes until it was broken up by police. His opponent, American boxing champion John C Heenan, was blinded in the right eye for much of the bout.

Sayers considered setting himself up as a publican and was attracted to the Bricklayers Arms, perhaps because of the name, according to historians who approached current manager of the pub, **Paul Rowson**.

Instead Sayers invested in a circus which proved a failure.

Eavesdroppings

"Is this going up or down?" asked an American tourist by the lift at the bottom of Goodge Street station. Not as stupid as it first appeared. During the second world war there was a bunker 100 feet down (below the train tunnel) and protected by concrete blocks. It was used by the American General, Dwight D Eisenhower, who was planning the D-Day landings in France as the Supreme Allied Commander in 1945. He later became president of the USA and is commemorated now by the Eisenhower Centre in Chenies Street, which was the entrance to the bunker.

Clubbers

A new women-only club was due to open in Rathbone Place on March 8 (International Women's Day). Called The AllBright it is supposedly for working women but the annual membership fee is £750, more geared to "professional" women. So far it has attracted chief executives, politicians, actresses (Naomie Harris, Kathy Burke and Tara Fitzgerald), and musicians.

Charlotte Street

Surprise guest at hospital reunion

An amazing surprise guest turned up at the recent photographic exhibition commemorating the HIV ward in the old Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street of 25 years ago.

The photographer, Gideon Mendel, had collected staff, friends and family of patients on the ward for a group photograph on the last day of the exhibition in the hospital chapel.

There was just one missing, the family of a patient called John.

Just as Gideon was about to take the photograph John's mother Pat turned up unannounced all the way from Spain.

By sheer coincidence she was in London and saw an item on ITN News about the exhibition. Pat is pictured in front of one of the photographs from the exhibition, in which she is seated by the bed with her hand on her brow.

"It was wonderful for her to see the exhibition and meet the doctors and nurses who looked after her son, as well as Gideon," said organiser Hannah Watson (pictured far right in group).

"She told me John was confirmed in the chapel while he was



Pat with the exhibition picture of herself (above) and with staff members (below). Photos by Etienne Gilfillan

in the hospital. She also said John would have loved the exhibition with all the people visiting."

Gideon (pictured far left in group) was given special permission to take the photographs (with the consent of all) and met his future wife, Sarah, on the ward where she was a nurse. Through her he was able to keep touch with the consultants and

nurses. But patient confidentiality and records being lost made it more difficult to locate patients' families.

The exhibition was entitled "The Ward" and was organised by Trolley Books. There is also a book of the photographs with the same name, available from T J Boulting, 59 Riding House Street.



Opening and closing

Closed

Portlands food and wine
104 Great Portland Street
Rawligion vegan eatery
12 Tottenham Street
Multiyork sofas
95 Tottenham Court Road
Joy fashion 103 Tottenham Ct Rd
Yumchaa tea 9-11Tottenham Street
Sicilyamo ices gelato
187 Tottenham Ct Rd
Caffè Paradiso 28 Store Street
Byron burgers 6 Store Street
Caffè Fratelli 2a Gt Titchfield St
Vital ingredient juices, wraps
48 Margaret Street

Opened

Thomas Exchange UK money exchange 160a Tottenham Ct Rd
W1 Hardware 18 Gt Portland St
La Pastaia eatery
142 Great Portland Street
Adam Grooming Atelier barbers 39 Rathbone Place
Joe and the juice juices wraps
42-44 Rathbone Place
Jardin du Jasmin cafe
159 Great Portland Street
Frame fitness studio 25 Barners St
Santa Maria pizzeria
160 New Cavendish Street
Denino furniture
156 New Cavendish Street
Loft furniture 52 Fitzroy Street
SudaThai eatery 5 Barners Street
Yaya sushi 42 Goodge Street
Coco & Rachel nails,coffee
34 Windmill Street
Cavendish Clinic face body
rejuvenation 65 Margaret Street

Margaret Howell designer clothes
63 Margaret Street

Central London Estates
estate agent 339 Euston Road

Samsonite luggage
1 Bedford Avenue
Greyhound cafe Thai food
37 Berners Street
Crosstown doughnuts
13 Newman Street
My Cigara vape shop
30 Great Portland Street
Coco de Mama Italian takeaway
9-11 Tottenham Street
Greyhound cafe Thai eatery
37 Berners Street

Opening soon

Ottolenghi deli restaurant
59 Wells Street
Barclays bank
154 Tottenham Court Road
Pastation pasta
76 Tottenham Court Road
Said Dal 1923 Italian Chocolate
29 Rathbone Place
The Flavour Garden eatery
1 Bedford Avenue
Define fitness studio
82 Great Portland Street
LaksaMania oriental eatery
92 Newman Street
Flesh & Buns Japanese eatery
25-33 Berners Street
Hershesons hair salon
29 Berners Street
Passyunk Avenue diner
80 Cleveland Street
Maître of Thyme holistic wellness
boutique 130 Great Portland Street
Mikel Coffee Company cafe
93 Tottenham Court Road

Club atmosphere but good food

By the DINING DETECTIVE

Meraki, 80-82 Great Titchfield St

I remember once writing in one of these columns in disbelief about a restaurant that sold prawns for £5 each. Now I've found a restaurant that serves three scallops for £6 each – and as a mezze dish not a main course – in the old premises of my dear old Effes, the Turkish restaurant that had been there for so long and where not long ago you could get a terrific freshly-cooked takeaway lamb kebab for £6.

Meraki is a shiny, very sleek Greek restaurant that charges £2.50 for a cut up piece of pitta bread to go with a £7.50 fava dip from Santorini.

The premises have been done up completely, there are lots of chefs who you can watch cooking, and lots of slightly over-attentive staff. The wine by the glass is almost exclusively Greek. Or a French glass for £11.50. Plus expensive bottles from other countries. Outside my price range.

So that's why this review has started in a bad-tempered manner.

However to be fair, even though I could not finish the one glass of red wine I finally ordered for £8.50 my companion drank a glass of the Greek sauvignon blanc happily (£7).

And I have to be even fairer, and say the food, even a piece of a



Page 14 is of 4 Percy Street.
PICTURE PUZZLE: The picture on

£6 scallop my dining companion had ordered but allowed me to try (putting up with my bad temper about the wine in a kind manner) was very good. The aforementioned Santorini dip was tasty and so was the expensive piece of pitta bread. Then I ordered the courgette and feta pasta (which I didn't know was a Greek dish) which cost £11: it was absolutely delicious – not just good, outstandingly good. My companion had ordered a greens dish called Horta Greens (£4.50) to go with the small dinner (not realising a mezze had been ordered as a main course), and enjoyed that also.

Still a bit hungry, we shared a Greek yogurt Pavlova for £7 which was not a Pavlova (my mother used to make them: Pavlovas I know) but was, in its own way, excellent, so it doesn't matter what it was called.

However you know my new

Photographer Gideon Mendel in the forward to the book on which the exhibition was based wrote that the four patients who agreed to be photographed (including John) died.

"They were the unlucky ones, who became sick just before treatment became available," he wrote.

"Coming back to these images now, 25 years later, I am struck by how they now seem to have become part of history, marking a very particular moment in time and the evolution of medical and social responses to HIV.

"I am reminded of the intensity of those moments, of the lives lived so brightly and the desperate sadness and loss for all those connected to John, Ian, Steven and Andre."

rule: I went back (because someone else had invited me to a business dinner). The £6 scallops had disappeared, the Pavlova had become "Athenian Mess," the French wine by the glass was 'not available' but there was a pleasant glass of Greek red wine, Nemea Reserve (but alas it cost £11.50). The food was again excellent and what we had was reasonably priced: a very tasty Grouper carpaccio marinated I think in lime and spices was delicious (£13); baked chicken in a lemony sauce was extremely enjoyable (£14); my companion said the lamb chops were better than some he'd had in Greece (£24) – a piece of pitta bread was still £2.50. This time I counted the chefs all on view: nine. And then I noticed something I had only half-noticed the first time: locals seemed to sit in the front of the restaurant while prosperous older businessmen, and their wives in sparkling jackets, ate further back; a sort of divided clientele. Perhaps it was a party; perhaps Meraki is a club of some kind also.

Whatever it is, it is certainly worth visiting for the food.

As we left, I was thinking again of Effes, and how different this was.

And then I saw that four shiny cars waited in a line outside; four drivers shivered and smoked in the winter air.

Ah Fitzrovia: how you have changed.

The cultural craft of Sue Blundell

FELLOW FITZROVIANS by Claire-Louise John

Local resident Sue Blundell is a playwright and lecturer in Classical Studies. In the midst of an established academic career a chance encounter with a group of actors created the opportunity to unite her knowledge of classical myth with her early love of the theatre, and she began to write plays of her own. A playwright for almost 20 years now, Sue's work has been staged in London, around the UK, and in the United States.

Sue, who grew up in post-war Manchester, has lived in Fitzrovia with her partner Nick Bailey, also an academic, for over 40 years. The first generation of her family to go to university, she read Classics at the University of London. "I was torn between Classics and English Literature, but opted for Classics because it is the original multi-disciplinary subject, encompassing art, philosophy, history, literature, drama, and myth." Sue was awarded her BA in 1968 and in 1973 completed her PhD on Epicurean thought (awarded 1975), in which she explored ideas which have resonated throughout her life.

The ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, a materialist whose conception of happiness was the absence of pain, advocated a simple life sustained by the pleasures of knowledge, community and friendship. Significantly, he developed the notion of justice as a social contract.

An instinctive social activist, Sue went to work for Camden Council in 1974 then, as she describes, in its heyday. For 10 years she committed her considerable energies to addressing housing issues but saw their work unravelling in front of her eyes from 1979 with the advent of the neoliberal project under Margaret Thatcher's government. In mid-1970s Fitzrovia, housing was also a central issue and Sue quickly got involved with the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, which had been established in 1974 to deal with local housing concerns. More recently, from 2011 to 2016, she was Chair of the Fitzrovia Trust, which was



The Man from the Sleepy Lagoon was performed at The Ship pub as part of FitzFest 2016.
Festival Musicians back row from left to right: Emilia Zakrzewska (flute), Waffy Spencer (clarinet), Dan Bates (oboe and MD), Beatrice Philippis (violin), Amy Harman (bassoon), Venetia Jollands (violin), Hannah Sloan (cello), Hannah Strijbos (viola)
Front row Rob McIndoe (Director), Sue Blundell and actor David Acton who played Eric Coates

founded in 1985 and supports local housing initiatives.

On the strength of her PhD, Sue next began to build up various part-time academic posts in adult education, teaching on the Classical Studies MA at Birkbeck, where her specialism was gender, art and philosophy. At the Open University, students flourished under her guidance at regular tutorials. She became a post-graduate thesis tutor specialising in the architecture of Classical Greece at the Architectural Association in Bedford Square, a post she was offered as a direct result of tours she led to ancient Greek sites. She also took students to Cuba, where a wealthy benefactor in the pre-revolutionary country had amassed a spectacular collection of ancient Greek pottery. Her first book *The Origins of Civilisation in Greek and Roman Thought* (1986, republished 2014) was in many ways an extension of her doctoral thesis. It was followed by *Women in Ancient Greece* (1995) and *Women in Classical Athens* (1998).

While still teaching, Sue's focus unexpectedly turned to playwriting. She taught a course for the Open University on Homer, legendary author of the ancient Greek epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, which was taken by a number of

actors who had great enthusiasm for the subject. One suggested bringing in some fellow actors to speak the many voices of the poetic translation of the entire last book of *The Iliad* and, working together, Sue went on to construct further plays out of Greek myth which were commissioned by and performed at the British Museum. If Sue's career as a playwright came about by serendipity, it also arose from a classicist's understanding of the oral tradition and the timeless significance of the spoken word.

Sue, a self-confessed actor-manqué, has always loved the theatre and attended the then famous Library Theatre in Manchester from around 1960, when she was aged 13. She saw the plays of William Shakespeare and the new kitchen sink dramas by Pinter, never imagining that one day she would write for the stage herself. She is currently working on a play about the French sculptor Auguste Rodin which has been commissioned by the British Museum. As a playwright, Sue initially drew on her extensive knowledge of classical sources, but she has also found support and inspiration as part of groups such as the London Playwrights, and the Bonnington Playwrights, with whom she wrote *Found Drowned* (2007) about the life of the

actress Ellen Terry. *Treasure* (2015), tells the story of Peter Mark Roget, the man behind the Thesaurus, who made lists of words to soothe his depression, and has written about the famous Chief Surgeon at Manchester Infirmary for the Manchester Science Festival.

Naturally curious, Sue is happy to take on new subject matter. On the content of her plays, she says "I'm a feather of each wind that blows". For the inaugural FitzFest in 2016, Sue wrote *The Man from the Sleepy Lagoon* about the light music composer Eric Coates which was performed with the accompaniment of FitzFest musicians. *Tell Me the Truth About Love*, an intensely moving description of what was at the time a forbidden love between Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, was then written and performed for the second year of the music festival in 2017.

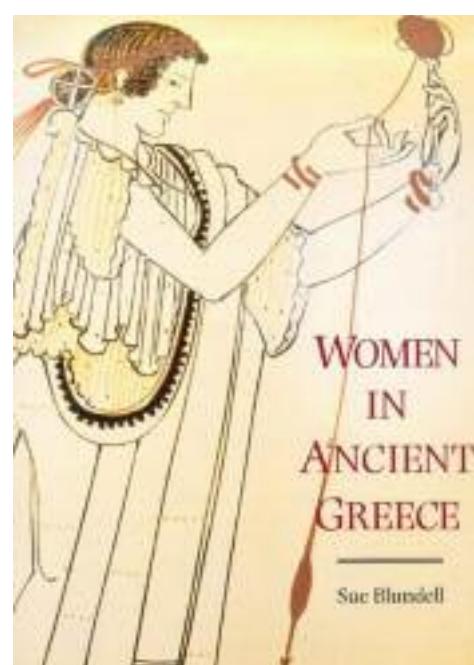
Sue has built enduring relationships which support her as a dramatist, and has worked with the same director for five years. She sees her plays as living organisms, is always present for rehearsals from the first read-through, and is happy to discuss possible modifications that the actors suggest. Her plays express her values and as such articulate her politics and beliefs.

There is a harmony and completeness to the career Sue's life-story describes, as themes established in youth find expression in her creative life. Sue's classical studies took her deep into the philosophical questions which humanity forever poses, and her profundity of spirit is the natural source of her writing skill.

Sue is a life-long diarist and, arising from her early interest in Epicurean thought, she now writes a blog on happiness. I will end with a tip from George Bernard Shaw that Sue brought to her readers' attention at the start of this year and which may in part express her own drive, vivacity, and joyful nature: 'The way to have a happy life is to be too busy doing what you like all the time, having no time left to you to consider whether you are happy or not.'

Website: sueblundell.com

Blog: sueblundellhappiness.wordpress.com



The cover of *Women in Ancient Greece* (1995).



Doing what she loves: Sue swimming in the sea off Devon, Summer 2017.



Reading the tribute to Swedish writer and dramatist August Strindberg (1849-1912), in the square now named after him. Place August Strindberg, Paris, December 2017.



Patrick in his purple punk days

From bus conductor to music promoter 1980 SQUAT WAS MOST EXCITING TIME OF MY LIFE



Patrick revisits Middlesex House

Living in a squat in Great Titchfield Street in 1980 was the most exciting time in the life of Patrick Lilley.

In the same house were soon-to-be pop stars Boy George and Marilyn, for whom Patrick later became publicist, from an office in Middlesex House, at 32-42 Cleveland Street. Now he is an organiser of musical and other events, including club one-nighters.

"It was like I had arrived at the centre of the universe," said Patrick. "There were people like the artist John Maybury, the singer Andy Polaris, emerging film makers and fashion designers - all going somewhere, plus drag queens, gay boys and eccentric girls."

"I was slightly the odd one out, being a social science student. But I made lifelong friends I still know 40 years on."

"We were all really broke, but we had such fun. We had all been through punk rock but were now embracing the new look and all loved David Bowie."

In fact he tried to make his own Bowie-style pants from fabric in Berwick Street, but his stitching technique was inadequate and they fell apart one windy night.

"I had heard of the Cleveland Street Scandal of Victorian times and thought we were now part of the latest instalment of Bohemia in Fitzrovia, with lots of dissidents around," he added.

The first club night he organised was on a Bowie theme in 1980 and he progressed to promoting warehouse parties. "We had everyone from teddy boys to gay boys and arty people, Rastafarians, famous people like Bianca Jagger and regular clubbers," he recalled. "All different people mixed together in the same space which really worked. Now people go to spaces to meet people like themselves."

Eventually the one-nighters became weekly and he started one called Queer Nation on Sunday nights in Covent Garden. "It was the first of a new era of 90s club nights for a generation who had witnessed the pandemic of HIV and Aids and the decimation of human life and talent," he said. "If we can't have a party we may as well roll over and die was the attitude."

"It provided a safe and fun place for self expression and being yourself. It caught the spirit of the age." The Face magazine, based in Mortimer Street, featured it in their pages.

It was attracting 300 people a night including the artist formerly known as Prince, Vivien Westwood, and Robbie Williams.

"The one-nighter culture inspired young people all over the world to be informal, dance and be themselves," continued Patrick. "It was a semi-political statement."

He was reminded of these days when visiting the chapel on the site of the old Middlesex Hospital last November on Remembrance Day. There was an exhibition of rare photographs taken in the hospital's HIV ward.

"A lot of people I knew ended up there," said Patrick. "So it was very moving to see photos of 'The Ward' in the chapel." Special permission had been obtained for the photos to be taken by patients, friends and staff.

On a slightly lighter note he recalls his short lived career as a bus conductor on the 88 along Oxford Street and Great Portland Street.

"I fell asleep on the first day," he admitted. "The conductor training me just told me to carry on. But I got the sack soon after. Somebody had appreciated me though. She was the woman behind the counter at the job centre. 'You are the bus conductor who stopped my baby crying,' she said."

It conjures up a different image to that of Boy George's nickname for him in his autobiography. That was "Beelzebub" (so dubbed for his red draped jacket, red hair and wicked eye brows) and shortened by friends to Bubble.

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The poetic plumber

By MIKE PENTELOW

A future poet laureate was known as "the plumber" when he was a student at Middlesex Hospital Medical School in Riding House Street.

Michael Rosen is now a well known television/radio broadcaster and poet/novelist; and was the Children's Laureate from 2007 to 2009.

But in 1964 he was an 18-year-old scruffy and unenthusiastic student at Middlesex Hospital Medical School.

He reveals in his recently published memoirs how he got the nickname of "the plumber."

He arrived late for a lecture, wearing his grandfather's American jacket, like the one that appeared in the film "On The Waterfront". This was appropriate as water was streaming out of the ceiling into the lecture hall.

"Oh, I thought you were the plumber," said the lecturer.

"As my fellow students had spent the last few weeks revelling in the fact that I looked like a tramp, this was a gift," he writes in his memoirs "So They Call You Pisher!" (published by Verso, price £16.99).

He soon realised that medicine was not for him so he planned on how to switch to an English course. His preference was UCL (University College London) in Gower Street. "It



seemed exactly like the image of a university I had in mind: big, crowded, bustling, diverse and full of public argument," he writes.

But switching from a medical to another course in London was not possible, he was told, but it could happen at Oxford University. Luckily he was able to get a place there at Wadham College studying English language and literature, and writing, acting and directing plays.

Towards the end of the course, in 1969, he decided to apply for a traineeship at the BBC, being offered to six graduates a year.

He was attracted by some of the radical programmes being produced there at the time by the likes of Ken Loach. "History and arts documentaries were coming out that were exactly the sort of

thing that would interest me," he recalls. "The Open University, and many further education, schools and children's programmes, all looked inviting."

He was offered an interview. Beforehand, however, a man turned up at his room in college while he was away asking questions about him.

The fellow student who spoke to the mysterious man described him as "from the BBC but not actually at the BBC." The friend said the man had asked whether Michael was "alright." After being told he was the man asked others.

"Was he a spook?" asked Michael, to which the friend shrugged his shoulders.

Michael then asked his father Harold (who had been a long time member of the Communist Party of Great Britain) the same ques-

tion. "He was a spook," he answered.

The interview then took place at Broadcasting House, Portland Place.

He was asked how he described his politics, and replied "an unlearned Marxist" coining a phrase on the spot.

"Unlearned or unearned?" asked Karl Miller, editor of The Listener, who was on the interviewing panel.

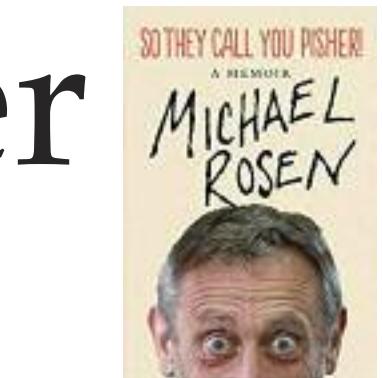
"Unlearned," he replied.

A few weeks later he was asked back to Broadcasting House where he was met by Lance Thirkell, who stood the whole time reading Michael's file (which presumably had details of his arrests for demonstrating against the war in Vietnam and an Oxford hairdresser who refused to cut black people's hair).

After a short time he looked at Michael and said: "I think we'll go nap", which meant he had got the job. He later asked his father what the phrase meant. "It means they're backing the outsider," he said.

Michael worked on radio plays and documentaries and on schools television very successfully until in 1972 he was asked to "go freelance."

It took him a while to realise he had in fact been sacked - presumably for having a Christmas tree on his file (a sign by MI5 veterans that he was too left wing). When this practice became public



in 1985 and he asked to see his file it had been destroyed. Fortunately "going freelance" led to a successful career - including with the BBC.

Earlier, Michael recalls, he visited Heal's furniture store at 196 Tottenham Court Road in the 1960s when his Marxist parents "spent hours debating whether to buy the armchairs with the rust coloured upholstery or the blue tweed sofa."

Also during the 1960s when a blues fan he saw the likes of Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters in the Dominion Theatre at 269 Tottenham Court Road. But when seeing a film at the Academy Cinerama at 165 Oxford Street, with his girlfriend Janey, he was appalled to learn later that it meant he had missed Sonny Boy Williamson on the same night in Watford, near where he lived.

EXCLUSIVE FOOTNOTE:
A stink was raised at the book's launch over the deletion of a description of a farting competition. This had taken place between Rosen and former Fitzrovia resident Chris Kaufman in a marquee on a campsite in France when they were 14 years old. They both chastised the editor at the launch over the removal of the passage. "He just turned his nose up at us," quipped Chris.

Murders, traitors, and corpse theft on his beat

The sometime bizarre duties of a policeman based in Tottenham Court Road during the 1930s have been revealed.

Police constable David John was based in the station, at 55-59 Tottenham Court Road, from 1929 to 1939 before being promoted to sergeant at Bow Street.

During his time in Tottenham Court Road he arrested two murderers, cut the hair of William Joyce (aka Lord Haw Haw) before his hanging for treason, and had a strange experience in the Middlesex Hospital morgue in Mortimer Street.

Pc John's son, Simon, who lived in the Huntley Street police flats during his youth with his father and family, has recalled many of the stories told to him.

Born in Swansea in 1908 the height minimum for joining the police in that town was 5 ft 10 ins, but David was shorter by half an inch. He was, however, able to join the Metropolitan police where the minimum was 5 ft 9 ins.

"People were stealing rings from the fingers of corpses in the Middlesex Hospital," said Simon. "A bell was rigged up so that when the morgue's door opened the bell would ring. My father was hiding close by when the bell rang. He rushed into the morgue only to discover a doctor and nurse together on the mortuary slab, investigating each other's nether regions."

His first arrest of a murderer was of a 29-year-old from Holloway called Leonard Davies who pushed a 14-year-old schoolgirl, Avril Waters of Edgware, in front of a tube train at Tottenham Court Road station in 1939. The girl died in Pc John's arms, which he remembered for the rest of his life. Davies, who had previously been certified insane, was found unfit to plead and sent to Broadmoor.

The second murderer was a sailor, living in Langham Place, who cut his wife's throat after finding her in bed with another man, then surrendered himself in the street to Pc John.

It was in the autumn of 1945 when an inspector appeared at the flats in Huntley Street where Pc John and his family lived.

"Seeing the inspector at our home and on a Sunday my father thought he had done something wrong," recalled Simon. But the inspector opened the conversation with: "I understand that you cut hair." When he said he did the inspector said: "Right, come back to the nick with me now with your tools. I need you to give someone who has just arrived a haircut."

It was William Joyce, nicknamed Lord Haw Haw for his radio broadcasts from Nazi Germany to Britain.

During the war police in the Huntley Street flats went on to the roof to watch the "Battle of Britain" bombing of the East End.

Pc John helped put out an incendiary device nearer to home, in Ridgmount Gardens, burning his trousers while doing so. "He was impressed that he got paid for those trousers, by the insur-



PC David John depicted playing rugby at Twickenham in 1935.

ance company."

He was a rugby player for London Counties - for whom he played at Twickenham against the All Blacks in 1935 while still a PC at Tottenham Court Road, and was depicted in a cartoon in the Evening News (above).

He was a forward who had two Welsh trials and played for Swansea, the Metropolitan Police, Middlesex, and the British Police as well as London Counties.

As secretary of the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association he

organised the European Police Boxing Championships in the Albert Hall. When asked why this event was so popular with the general public he answered: "People like to see coppers hitting hell out of each other."

He went on to become an inspector at Kensington police station, and was the charging officer of the infamous mass murderer John Reginald Halliday Christie in 1953.

Simon started cycling to school in Dulwich from Huntley Street in 1957 because there was a bus strike. "I liked the freedom and so even when the strike ended I continued," he said. It was seven and a half miles each way.

"The worst time was cycling when there was fog. Cycling home slowly one day the fog was so thick that I hugged the left hand kerb. Suddenly I almost hit a car parked on the opposite side of the road; that's how thick it was."

'It's a voluntary examination.'

'No.'

'You must submit to it for your own good and the benefit of good society.'

I thought my trouble was that good society had already been inside me. 'Can't you just tell from the sores?'

'I can tell that the sores are sores, yes. That they seem very much like the oozing mark of degeneracy, vice, yes, but without thorough examination we cannot say for sure.'

I bet you could, doctor. You look like you enjoy a bit of foie gras. Oysters. Loose jowls and a stomach bursting your buttons. I bet you get around the pleasure zones of London when you're outside of these disinfected walls, away from your metal-beaked monsters.

I've done many of these examinations. I regret that what appears to be your condition is becoming more frequent.'

You don't need to show me how it works. In and out, in and out.

'See? It's really very simple.' Simple, yes. It doesn't need to

Sick Asylum

A short story by SUNITAR SOLIAR

be complicated to bite and tear.

'And completely...proper.'

Ah, no enjoyment for you in this. You want me to be certain of that. You won't cast your lustful eyes over my bits — that would be sickness in you, wouldn't it? And it is only me who is covered in pus-filled sores, even though we are both inside the asylum.

'I don't want it.'

The tight lips, the sigh as though you find yourself yet again forced to whip a stubborn child.

'And what about what society wants? What about what you owe society? In your line of work, you are a woman with half the woman gone, and what remains is a social pest. Is it right that society should carry your burden of

your fall?'

I didn't fall, doctor. I was pushed, and probably by some of your fine fellows from the club. No doubt it's impossible to push over a man of your girth and stature, but for those of us who have been picked lean, it's much easier to topple. Is my stupidity annoying you?

'It's like cholera. We need to monitor the sewers and alert society. If you are found to be suffering from inherent immorality of the female, we will need to register your name according to The Contagious Diseases Act. It is essential that you consult your conscience and choose to allow the examination.'

I think my conscience is oozing out of me as we speak. 'You

Poetry corner

SUBURBAN SPRING

By Wendy Shutler

Clouds of blossom hover on the trees;
magnolia, forsythia, illuminating green
suburban gardens.

Earth awakes: the daffodils are out
under the apple tree.
First time out for the deckchairs too
from winter hibernation in the shed.

A chorus of birdsong, a bee's drowsy hum.
Coffee in the garden in the morning sun.
Resurrection.

In the chill of the still-light evening air
the blackbird sings solo
a triumph song. Around a crackling fire,



Illustration by Clifford Harper

a few more cosy winter nights to go.
Farewell, cheerful comforting blaze!
Welcome, deckchairs, sunny summer days!
In Spring we can have it all, both ways.

OCCUPY

By Terry Egan

Nothing trickles down
from your beauty's one percent -
the all that is yours
in soft, pale cheek and wet mouth,
in blonde hair none can reckon...

We look on, the rest -
we poor ninety-nine percent -
our kisses' wages
reduced, our yearning lengthened;
but out to catch your notice...

Haven't I tasted
something like it - that sweetness
another's red lips
have conveyed to my red lips:
yours there when I closed my eyes?

know enough to add me to the act: social pest; degenerate. Go ahead. Write me up.'

'We must have proof.'

'I can get an eye-witness to vouch that she saw me down Newman's Passage with a man in tailcoats last week.' Didn't like that one? 'Well, then, the proof is that I had one pimple. It turned into a pea-sized ball of pus. Now I'm covered in the things and can't move for my cracked skin and fever.'

'Proof must come from the entrance to the womb. You must choose to consent.'

'I do not consent.'

'You must choose to consent or face the prospect of jail.'

'Ah, it's that kind of choice.'

'You could have said that at the start.'

'One likes to imagine that those who have spread corruption to the good men of this world are penitent.'

You'll need a much bigger imagination than that.

'Do you choose to have the examination?'

You're as keen as the rest, aren't you?

'And if it is the sickness of degeneracy I've got? What then?'

'We must isolate you here in this benevolent institution to prevent the spread of your sickness.'

'But to me. What happens to me?'

'If it is the disease of moral error, then your situation is too far gone. In a less severe case, we might try to cure you of your compulsion to commit sin. But you have let your soul go to rot. It will be time to meet your maker.'

You can stop pretending that you regret to have to tell me this, doctor. Or is that graveyard tone the only way you can keep the gloating out of your voice?

'And if I choose not to stay

here?'

'You must.'

'So it's a lock hospital.'

'It's a benevolent institution —'

'Yes, I heard.' The institutions on this site have been nothing but philanthropic. I was born here when it was a benevolent workhouse.

'I assure you we will do our best to treat you —'

'To study me —'

'Yes, and to treat you until your demise. Do you choose to have the examination?'

'Or die in jail? It's quite a choice you give me, isn't it, doctor? Locked choices in locked rooms, though perhaps its fitting that I should return to my maker on the very site where I arrived into this world. You'd find that satisfying, wouldn't you? 44 Cleveland Street: call it home.'

'The medical treatment you receive will not at all be prejudiced by your —'

'Do what you're going to.'

It's as though I've given you an extra pork chop, but you're careful to keep that from your face, showing me that it is incumbent upon you to do your social duty.

'Very good. Lie back in the chair.'

The pop of metal. You drape me in cloth — for what? My modesty? No, to assure yourself of your own decency, your separation from sickness. Are you going to maintain eye contact? No, you're not even going to look at me, just off into the dignified distance, as your hands fumble around, poking and prodding the government's instrument into

Lord does it hurt! Quarantined for the pollution. Divine punishment with your divining rod. Think of something else, something that hurts less, the sores on my back, macaroons, yes, macaroons. I've never had a macaroon. Always wanted to try one. Sweet things, delicate things in dainty drawing rooms, the soft heat of fires, of good and decent places it hurts —

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The pioneering history of Middlesex Hospital

By ANN BASU

University College Hospital has a large archive stored in a building on Euston Road, opposite the Hospital itself. The collection is rich in little gems of public health history.

Besides all the information on UCLH there's a fascinating collection about the Middlesex Hospital. The Middlesex was at the heart of Fitzrovia in Mortimer Street for more than 200 years and only merged with UCLH in 2005. Its beautiful chapel still stands, surrounded by new development, in Pearson Square.

Some archive items raise issues that sound very familiar to us. The treatment of cancer had become a specialisation of the Middlesex Hospital by the 19th century and this is probably why press items about cancer appear in its records. A Daily Express article dated March 11, 1921 is titled "Terrible Toll of Cancer: Forty Thousand victims in a Year: Alarming Increase". The newspaper warned that British cancer deaths had risen from only 15,000 in 1881-1885 to more than 42,000 in 1919. Numbers of cancer sufferers were very low compared to nowadays but were shooting upwards so that cancer was the fastest-growing threat to public health of the 20th century.

The Express article shows that some of the causes of cancer were already beginning to be understood although they were not yet firmly proved. It reported that cancer was linked to several factors, with numbers one and two on the list being excessive tobacco smoking and excessive drinking. So Dr Richard Doll's groundbreaking research in the 1950s, proving the link between smoking and cancer, was building on theo-

- at forefront of medical innovation



A ward in Middlesex Hospital, Mortimer Street in the 1950s. Reproduced with permission from UCLH arts and heritage, UCLH National Health Service Foundation Trust.

ries being developed many years before. A dietary link was also suggested in the article, even at this early date.

Early experimental cancer treatments tried at the Middlesex now sound bizarre. They were often gruelling for patients and even cruel. Remedies tried in the 19th century included compressing the tumour after putting powdered chalk into its surface cavities. Another gruesome 'treatment' was ulcerating the tumour with a caustic made of zinc paste and the herb sanguinaria. Patients were also sometimes made to take the South American herbal remedy of turpentine or Condurango bark, by mouth.

W.S. Handley of the Middlesex was the first doctor to treat cancerous lymph nodes by implanting radium tubes between the patient's ribs. Long before chemotherapy treatments began, radium was viewed as a miracle cure, transforming the outlook for cancer patients. However, radium was a scarce resource. Press coverage was given, in the 1910s and 1920s, to a lack of radium supplies worldwide and to its high cost. The need to pay for radium was highlighted in the Middlesex's fund-raising drives: the Middlesex was a charity hospital in those days before the NHS.

The public health issues that most concerned doctors at the

Middlesex are apparent in the health leaflets it gave out to the public in the 1920s, which have been preserved in the archive. Even at that time, doctors were well aware of the need to catch cancer cases early. A health leaflet of this time about womb cancer stresses in block capitals: "CANCER OF THE WOMB IS CURABLE IF REMOVED IN ITS EARLY STAGE." The leaflet goes on to ask in bold type, "Why then do so many women die of this disease every year?" and answers, again in capitals, "BECAUSE THE PRESENCE OF THE CANCER IS, IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES, NOT DETECTED UNTIL TOO LATE."

The hospital's forward thinking on health issues is also shown in its leaflet for women going through menopause, which it called the "Change Of Life." The leaflet is down-to-earth in describing the symptoms of menopause. But it tackles fears about this stage of women's life in a way that is revealing about the public attitudes and approach to medical treatment of the time. Going into block capitals again, it states:

THE 'CHANGE OF LIFE' DOES NOT CAUSE MADNESS, and until such symptoms disappear as THEY SURELY WILL, they can be greatly relieved if the woman will consult a fully qualified doctor.

Another Middlesex leaflet of the 1920s is about the still-common scourge of Infantile Diarrhoea which was fatal for many babies and children in this country. Nearly two thousand children under five died of it each year in London. The leaflet sensibly tells mothers to boil all milk and make sure all food is fresh; to cover food with muslin; and to kill all house flies and make larders fly-proof. The hospital also strongly recommends breast feeding as one of the best ways to keep babies healthy and free from diarrhoea. It sternly informs mothers that: "Nature NEVER allows the milk of a healthy mother to be 'wrong' for her own child. Therefore any failure in feeding is due to ignorance or lack of determination. CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR OR WELFARE CENTRE."

One final intriguing fragment from the UCLH archive reveals an astonishingly early application of film technology to medical practice at the Middlesex Hospital. It's a short article in the Star newspaper of May 18, 1912, called "New Use For Cinema". The first cinemas only opened in London's West End in 1910. However, only two years later cameras were being used at the hospital to film surgical operations, for the research benefit of medical staff.

According to the Star: "The kinematograph was introduced into the operating chamber of the Middlesex hospital some time ago, and has been a great success. Many operations, both grave and minor, have been photographed, the films being used exclusively in the hospital lecture rooms, and at strictly scientific gatherings."

The Star didn't get its prediction right when it suggested that: "Perhaps it is in surgery that the moving picture will be of greatest value in the future". But this brief news item, retrieved from the archive more than 100 years later, shows how Fitzrovia's Middlesex Hospital was at the forefront of its times in medical innovation.

A new book on Fitzrovia

A sociological history of Fitzrovia from 1900 to 1950 is to be published next year.

It is called "Fitzrovia, The Other Side of Oxford Street" and is by Ann Basu, who regularly writes historical features for Fitzrovia News.

Her maternal grandmother, Rebecca Simkewicz from Belarus, lived at 1 Little Titchfield Street in 1911, and her mother Rebecca Co-shever lived at 48 Howland Street until it was knocked down in 1938 to make way for a telephone exchange which opened the following year. A plaque marks where it was on the north east corner with Cleveland Street.

"I want to emphasise that in this period how high the proportion of immigration was," Ann told Fitzrovia News. "Literally 75 per cent were foreigners in the streets bordering Cleveland Street.

in the 1911 census.

"And they were welcome, as were all outsiders, in the area which was open to all kinds of influences and where there were job opportunities and cheap rents in those days.

"The clothing industry, especially women's outer clothing, developed after 1900 and really encouraged migration, particularly Jewish migration, with little workshops and clothing shops.

"The communications and entertainment industry also developed beyond recognition, such as the film industry. Tottenham Court Road had a huge cluster of cinemas, about a dozen at one time, and experimental films (especially by producer Charles Urban) were encouraged in the Scala Theatre [between Tottenham, Scala and Charlotte Streets].

"The whole idea behind the

title of 'the other side' is that it is on the other side of Oxford Street but quite separate from Soho, with the Fitzroy set in the 1940s and 1950s being more edgy and gritty.

"And it is on the other side of Euston Road, blocked off from north London, again with a very different identity."

This is Ann's second book to be published. The first was called "States of Trial" about the American novelist Philip Roth. It was published in 2014 after six years of work on it.

She became interested in him while doing an MA at Birkbeck College and wrote a thesis on him. "I was really blown away by the human story of his novels about American identity and race," she said. "I felt I really wanted to know more about him, so read more of his novels, partic-



Ann Basu with the Fitzrovia history manuscript

ularly the later ones, and really enjoyed them."

The new book is due to be published by the History Press in May 2019.

Marx on the run in Tottenham Court Road

The 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx is on May 5 so it is timely that his links with Fitzrovia should be recalled.

Perhaps most famously he was involved in a drunken and disorderly pub crawl in the early 1850s along all the 18 pubs* that existed then in Tottenham Court Road.

His two companions were fellow German revolutionaries, Edgar Bauer and Wilhelm Liebknecht, the latter of which described the events in his memoirs.

"There loud singing issued from a public house; we entered and learned that a club of Odd Fellow were celebrating a festival," he wrote.

"We met some of the men belonging to the party and they at once invited us 'foreigners' with truly English hospitality to go with them into one of the rooms. At first their conversations were in "the best of spirits" ... until the subject of patriotism cropped up.

Bauer ridiculed English snobs, and Marx compared the excellence of German science and music unfavourably with English equivalents.

"The brows of our hosts began to cloud... and when Bauer began to allude to the English cant, then a low 'damned foreigners!' issued from the company, soon followed by louder repetitions.

"Threatening words were spoken, the brains began to be heated, fists were brandished in the air and - we were sensible enough to choose the better part of valour and managed to effect, not wholly without difficulty, a passably dignified retreat."

After "a double quick march" Bauer noticed a heap of paving



stones. "In memory of mad students' pranks he picked up a stone, and Clash! Clatter! a gas lantern went flying into splinters.

"Nonsense is contagious - Marx and I did not stay behind, and we broke four or five street lamps - it was perhaps 2 o'clock in the morning and the streets were deserted in consequence.

"But the noise nevertheless attracted the attention of a policeman who with quick resolution gave the signal to his colleagues on the same beat, and immediately counter signals were given. The position became critical.

"Happily we took in the situation at a glance; and happily we knew the locality. We raced ahead, three or four policemen some distance behind us.

"Marx showed an activity that I should not have attributed to him. And after the wild chase had lasted some minutes, we succeeded in turning into a side street and there running through an alley - a back yard between

two street - whence we came behind the policemen who lost the trail."

This could have been Newman Passage between Rathbone Street and Newman Street which would have been on the way to Marx's home in Dean Street. It was also near Rathbone Place which was familiar to Marx because he used to fence in a salon there at this time with Emanuel Barthelemy, a French revolutionary who ran it.

According to Liebknecht Marx "lustily gave battle to the Frenchman... what Marx lacked in science he tried to make up in aggressiveness... unless you were cool he could really startle you."

Barthelemy had fought in the Paris Commune of 1848 and was later hanged for murdering an employer in Warren Street who was unwise tardy in his payment of him.

Later, in 1864, Marx was back at Rathbone Place for the first meeting of the International

Workingmen's Association.

Tottenham Court Road had sad memories for Marx when three of his children who died in infancy were buried at the churchyard adjoining Whitefield's Tabernacle, at 79 Tottenham Court Road, now called Whitfield Gardens.

The eldest was nine-year-old Henry Edgar (known as Mouche or Moosh) buried there in 1855. Marx was so distressed that he had to be restrained from throwing himself into the open grave. The other two were Guido (1849-50) and Franziska (1851-52).

Marx was also a prominent member of the Communist Club which met at the Blue Posts pub, 81 Newman Street, from 1874 to 1877, opposite where his daughter Eleanor lived at 13 Newman Street in the year of his death in 1883.

He also frequented the club when it moved to the basement at 49 Tottenham Street in 1882. The club had its own choir, billiard table, and kitchen.

Those wishing to re-enact the crawl should gather in the Blue Posts, Newman Street, on May 5 ready to start the walk at 7.30pm.

*The 18 pubs in Tottenham Court Road were: the Blue Posts at No 6, Black Horse at No 19, Rising Sun at No 46, Rose & Crown at No 62, Talbot at No 64, King's Arms at No 82, Bull's Head at No 101, Roebuck at No 108, Northumberland Arms at No 119, Southampton Arms at No 141, Plasterers' Arms at No 157, Mortimer Arms at No 174, New Inn at No 183-6, Apollo at No 191, White Hart at No 199, Italian at No 236, Fox & Hounds at No 264, and Horsehoe at No 267.



www.TrueCrimeLibrary.com

Hanged 100 years ago

Seeking shelter from a zeppelin raid during the first world war in the basement at 101 Charlotte Street a woman instead found death at the hands of her lover.

She was a 32-year-old Belgian woman called Emilienne Gerard and the abode was that of her lover, a 42-year-old French butcher called Louis Voisin.

Unfortunately when Emilienne entered she found him with another of his lovers, Berthe Roche.

In the ensuing contretemps the couple battered and then strangled Emilienne. Then using his butchery skills Voisin dismembered the corpse and dumped the torso and arms in a square, and the legs in a garden. His mistake was to make it appear to be a xenophobic killing by attaching a note on which he had scrawled "blodie Belgium."

Another error was to leave her clothing, containing a laundry mark through which the police traced her address. When they visited it they found a note signed by Voisin which led them to his address.

There in the Charlotte Street coal cellar they found her head and hands.

Voisin claimed he had found these in her own home which he visited to feed her cat while she was away. Fearing he would be accused of the murder he took them away, he alleged. Asked why the rest of the body was not there he shrugged and said it was "unfortunate".

Credence in this tale was further broken by the bloodstains on the ceiling of his home. And more proof came when he was asked to write "bloody Belgium" and made the same "blodie" misspelling as on the note.

He was found guilty of murder and hanged at Pentonville prison on March 2, 1918. His neck was thick, with hardly any protruding neck (as can be seen in a photograph in the February issue of True Detective, above), so the executioner feared the rope might slip off, but it did not and the drop was completed.

Berthe Roche was sentenced to seven years for being an accessory to the murder. Within a few months she was pronounced insane and died the following year.

Lenin's legacy - Saatchi and Saatchi office!

What would Lenin have thought about the demolition of the Saatchi & Saatchi offices at 80 Charlotte Street last year, the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution?

Back in August 1903 he and Stalin met on the very same site

(the Angler's Club) for the congress in exile of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. The congress also met opposite in the Communist Club (code named the "English Club") at 107 Charlotte Street (now demolished to make way for a new UCL stu-

dent centre).

They moved from one venue to another to keep ahead of tsarist agents.

This was the congress in which the Bolshevik (Majority) and Menshevik (Minority) groups were formed within the party.

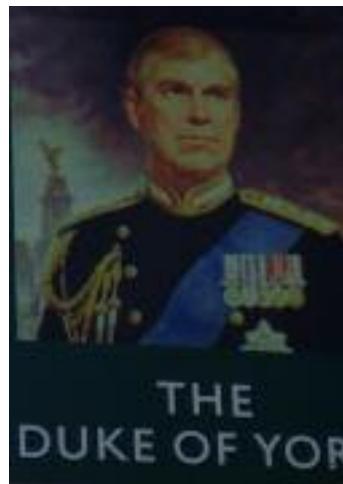
The previous year Lenin had

been at the opening of the Communist Club at 107 Charlotte Street after it had moved from 49 Tottenham Street. This was in August 1902 when about 300 people crammed in to hear speeches, music, the club choir, and telegrams read from Germany and many other countries.

Lenin had been living in London since April 1902 so it is likely he would have visited the club in Tottenham Street, which had been there since 1881 and had its own billiard table and kitchen catering for German and English members. Visitors included Marx, Engels, Bernard Shaw, William Morris and Keir Hardie. The building is still there.

Lenin also loved music, especially violin and piano, and attended Tchaikovsky's Symphonie Pathétique, at Queen's Hall, 4 Langham Place, in February 1903. It was conducted by Henry Wood. Now it is part of the BBC's Henry Wood House after the original building was destroyed by bombs in May 1941.

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Have a boozy night of music with Apollo and Dionysus

Second in an occasional series on Goddesses and Gods of Fitzrovia by SUE BLUNDELL

Poised above a roof in Bourlet Close, Apollo stands with his cloak tossed over his shoulder, one arm outstretched. The god of music, poetry and the arts in general, he feels quite at home in Fitzrovia, with all its creative industries.

Notable for his love of order and control, Apollo is often accompanied in Greek myth by his half-brother Dionysus, god of wine, drama and transcendence – the champion of 'letting-it-all-hang-out'. He feels at home in Fitzrovia too, especially on Friday nights. Together, Apollo and Dionysus facilitate what is best in the arts: let it rip, but keep it within bounds as well.

The most Greek of all the gods, Apollo was the only one of the twelve Olympian deities who kept his name when he migrated across the Adriatic to Roman Italy. Zeus was identified with the Roman Jupiter, Athena with Minerva, and so on. But Apollo was forever simply Apollo.

Bourlet Close, a mews between Nassau Street and Wells Street, is named after the frame-making firm of James Bourlet, which moved here in 1864. A local resident tells us that the Apollo, along with several other statues, was erected in the early 1990s by a



property-owner who wanted to reach a height that had been denied to his actual building by Westminster planners.

The Bourlet Close Apollo is a copy of a famous statue in the Vatican, the Belvedere Apollo.

This is a Roman work in marble based on a Greek bronze original which has long since disappeared. The marble version is over seven feet high and was discovered in Central Italy in the late fifteenth century. It was owned by one of the Popes, and so found its way into the Vatican, where it was displayed in the Belvedere Courtyard. In the eighteenth century it was seen as the acme of Greek and Roman art. Napoleon thought it was the best thing he took back to Paris with him following his conquest of Italy. After its sojourn in the Louvre it returned to Rome in 1815 and was reinstalled in the Belvedere Courtyard, where it remains to this day.

By the nineteenth century the Apollo was falling out of fashion. Critics such as John Ruskin saw it as rather flashy and vulgar. The Parthenon sculptures had gone on show in The British Museum in 1817, and people tended to prefer their simplicity and restraint. But in 1972 the Belvedere Apollo was



Apollo (left) and his half-brother Dionysus (above).

silver.' As a result the troops begin to drop dead from the plague. And all the heart-rending events of The Iliad – the anger of Achilles and his withdrawal from the fighting – stem from this deed.

The thing about Greek gods and goddesses is that they can be wonderful, but also terrible, rather like life itself. The worst story featuring Apollo is that of the mortal woman Niobe, who foolishly boasts that she has more children than the goddess Leto. This is perfectly true. Niobe has twelve, while Leto has produced only two. But the two are Apollo and Artemis, and they immediately spring into action with their bows and arrows. 'Not any more you haven't!' they cry as they shoot down Niobe's six sons and six daughters. Niobe weeps so much that she is turned into a cliff with water streaming down it. 'Like Niobe, all tears,' as Hamlet says of his mother Gertrude.

The Apollo of Bourlet Close may have just performed this horrible act of slaughter. Unfortunately, he's concealed behind scaffolding at the moment, but if you do catch a glimpse of him from the mews, please don't feel that you need to smile at him. He's pretty awesome, but he's also quite a nasty piece of work.

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How well do you know Fitzrovia? Can you identify where this picture was taken? Answer below the Dining Detective picture on page 7.



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Some partners more equal



My first ever job, aged 15, was not playing the piano. It was weekends on the sales floor of a Finchley Road department store, in the toys section. Watching a succession of children having to be physically pried away from various items, by stressed parents who tried in vain to explain to their innocent offspring the concept of "can't afford", my social awareness increased rapidly.

However, this was a branch of the "John Lewis Partnership", where all partners are created equal, so perhaps capitalism didn't have to be so bad? On the other hand, "senior partners" had their own floor and their own facilities, in somewhat Orwellian fashion. Doing some research later on this particular animal farm, I found that in this "mini-state", the illusion of equality only thinly covered a bureaucracy which made profits for investors and distributed benefits no less unequally than any other company or state. The current company mission statement boasts of being a democracy, but then promises only "as much sharing of power as is consistent with efficiency". The chairman is paid nearly £2 million per year, with shop floor workers on only about one hundredth of that – and all "profit share bonuses" are strictly proportional to pay.

I spent my whole first weekend's earnings before I got home (a theme which would recur later,



Cartoon by Chris Tyler

in my life as a musician, though that's another story!) at Our Price Records. I still have that vinyl double album of Dylan's "Blonde On Blonde". On the third week I was lost in thought, staring up at some huge and hypnotic chandeliers sparkling above. Had it been 38 years later, I'd have said I might have been dreaming of swinging from the chandelier like Sia.

Instead I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was my manager from the toy section, asking me how I ended up in the neighbouring lighting department. My inability to explain this teleportation resulted in an even swifter shift of matter, as I was shown the door with my P45 in hand.

A few years later, I had started doing gigs and found myself accompanying jazz singer Pauline Swaby for a set at a winebar on nearby Canfield Gardens. The first week went excellently. On the second week I had the worst tooth ache ever, being incapacitated by pain as I travelled there on the Met Line. I foolishly decided to try to play through the pain by drinking a quarter bottle of whisky from an off licence on the way there. A big mistake. It seemed that working

near Swiss Cottage was doomed once again to be only a fleeting experience.

The following year took me from Swiss Cottage to Dutch Bar, as I was in Amsterdam to access the archives of William Morris and the Socialist League, at the International Institute of Social History, for my Ph.D. research.

I played in some jam sessions, whilst enjoying rather too much of the local genever gin, this time without the excuse of a tooth ache. One day whilst there, I stumbled across a beautiful large bar, with a grand piano as the centre piece. I had a lovely chat with the owner, who had worked all his life as a pianist.

We shared tales of playing in bars for demanding managers, and of paltry pay. He explained that he had opened his own bar so that he could put such exploitation behind him. He could just play when he felt like it, without having to negotiate, as he was now the boss. I felt a bond with this fellow pianist, almost as if we were partners.

He said he often booked in guest pianists, and invited me to perform the following night, to which I gladly agreed. He said that he would of course pay me a fair rate, and then offered an amount in Dutch guilders (this was before the 2002 Netherlands adoption of the Euro) which in 2018 sterling would be worth... about a tenner for the night.

As Orwell himself grimly wrote in "Nineteen Eighty-Four", rewording an old nursery rhyme (and song lyric), "Underneath the spreading chestnut tree, I sold you and you sold me".

Thelma Holt and Charles Marowitz outside the theatre in 1976. (David Cooper/Photostage).



Trailblazing theatre

A disused old people's club was taken over by the Open Space avant garde fringe theatre in the basement at 32 Tottenham Court Road 50 years ago in 1968.

It made a considerable reputation for putting on experimental plays at lunchtimes and late evenings - three of which were televised, and many future stars got their first acting chance there. Writers were also given the opportunity to make their names at the theatre.

It was founded and run by actor, director and fundraiser Thelma Holt, and writer and director Charles Marowitz.

Among writers to have their early plays premiered at the theatre were Trevor Griffiths, Howard Barker, Peter Barnes, and Howard Brenton.

Performers who started their careers there included, Timothy

West, Prunella Scales, Liz Smith, David Schofield, Malcolm Storry, Richard Mayes, Janet Suzman, and Estelle Kohler.

Author William Burroughs also appeared on stage as the repressive judge, Julius Hoffman, in "The Chicago Conspiracy" in 1970.

When the building was knocked down in 1976 by the EMI redevelopment they moved to a disused post office at 303 Euston Road on the understanding that a new 250-seat theatre would be built for them in the Tottenham Court Road redevelopment.

This promise was made by Bernard Delfont, the theatrical impresario who was part of EMI. It was never honoured and following cuts in their grants from the Arts Council and Camden Council the theatre finally closed in 1979.

Looking back through the archives

40 years ago

Darts punch-up

Fron Tower, May 1978: The Valiant Trooper pub (now The Fitzrovia) at 18 Goodge Street was wrecked by a gas blast in the street outside. It was soon to reopen with one bar instead of two.

The pub's darts team had a woman playing for the first time. This followed a punch-up between the team's male members over selection, resulting in three being thrown out. Cathy, wife of team captain Terry Dawkins, was one of the late replacements and they went on to win the match against the Duke of York in the first leg of the knock-out cup quarter-final. The Trooper, homeless after the gas explosion which wrecked the pub, played the second leg at the Duke of York as well, to win handsomely, and meet Tower Tavern in the semi-final.



The Huntley Street squatters (above) have won the latest round in their battle to stay in the 54 former police flats. Judge Mecatta has ruled that the 130 adults and 30 children who live there had a valid licence to occupy the empty flats.

Lena Jager, the popular and long serving MP for Holborn and St Pancras South, was to retire at the next election. To mark the occasion the Bloomsbury Labour Party Branch held a farewell Greek style dinner in Anemos restaurant, 32 Charlotte Street, on April 23.

Over 100 guests heard Michael Foot MP praise her work

10 years ago

Guitar exile

From Fitzrovia News, Spring 2008:

The famous Spanish guitar composer Fernando Sor (1778-1839) lived at 26 Charlotte Street in the 1820s, wrote Brian Jeffery. Sor had been exiled from Spain for his politics and protesting against the invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte. While at Charlotte Street he wrote Italian songs with piano, waltzes dance music for piano and ballet music.

One theatre to another

A radio programme revealed that comedian and singer Danny Kaye was allowed to help conduct a medical operation at Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street when appearing at the London Palladium in 1947. He had a keen interest in and knowledge of medicine.



Film shot in art gallery

By CLIVE JENNINGS

For fans of the recently released and highly acclaimed Paul Thomas Anderson film "Phantom Thread", I would suggest a visit to Tristan Hoare Gallery at 6 Fitzroy Square (pictured above).

This beautiful building, which also houses The Georgian Group, was used as the location for the home and atelier of the main character, couturier Reynolds Woodcock, played to perfection by Daniel Day-Lewis.

Fitzrovians will remember the fascinating parade of vehicles that graced the Square during the filming, last year, from London buses and taxis to horse drawn carriages, not to mention the

Union Flag flying on the front of the building.

I highly recommend the film, which is beyond excellent and predicted to be highly honoured at the various awards ceremonies. Mr Anderson is a director and storyteller at the very top of his game, and this bizarre and dark narrative offers a window onto the mores of the upper echelons of society in 1950s London.

Also of interest in the film is a very realistic recreation of a Chelsea Arts Club Ball of the period – if you want to see the real thing, check the Pathé archives, available free online, for a hilarious newsreel film of a Ball that ends in mayhem!

WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email news@fitzrovia.org.uk by May 17, 2018 for the June issue and put "Listings" in the subject box

MUSIC

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

King & Queen, 1 Foley St: Folk once a month on Fridays 8-11pm (visit web.mustradclub.co.uk). Michael Sheehy (accordian) and Ed Barrett (fiddle) plus Marianne McAleer (singer), March 9. Dan Milner & Bonnie Milner (USA), May 11. Jeff Warner, June 9.

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.

The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): The Ramonas, March 8. Johnny Moped, March 9. Captain Ska, March 23. Doctors of Madness, March 24. Phobophobes, March 26.

UCL Haldane Room, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Chamber Music Concert, March 13, and May 1, 5.30-6.30pm.



Dan Bates, Founder and Artistic Director of FitzFest playing oboe, with festival musicians Juliette Bausor on flute, Beatrice Phillips and Laura Lutzke on violins, Adam Newman on viola and Hannah Sloan on 'cello.'

FitzFest 2018

Monday 28 May to Sunday 2 June

This year's festival will headline virtuoso clarinettist Michael Collins, leading flautist Juliette Bausor, The Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, and leading actor Robert Bathurst (ITV's 'Cold Feet' and 'Downton Abbey').

The opening night concert and reception 'Fitzrovia Fantasy' will take place at the Fitzrovia Chapel on Wednesday evening, 30 May, followed by a late night candlelight jazz concert 'Jazz at Bedtime'. Further concerts will take place on 1 and 2 June. Throughout the week there will be yoga and meditation at the former hospital Chapel, and Scanner will be back with his sound installation 'Middlesex Memories'. As in previous years, there will be music outside, and in local cafes and shops, walks and talks, and events at lunchtime, during the afternoon and in the evenings. Venues include the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre on Howland Street (with an exploration of Music and the Brain), the Royal Society of Musicians, Fitzroy Square, and the Rebecca Hossack Gallery on Conway Street.

www.fitzfest.co.uk

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre Studio, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Doctor and The Medics star in Poe Zest (Edgar Allan Poe reimagined by Mike Bennett), March 16-17. Mitch Benn, musical satire, March 23.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Fat Kid Running, by Hugo Aguirre and Lizzie Manwaring, and For a Black Girl, by the Davis Brothers, March 14.

Dominion Theatre, 269 Tottenham Court Rd (dominiontheatre.com): Bat out of Hell, the Musical, from April 2.

London Palladium, Argyll St (london-palladium.co.uk): Randy Newman, March 11. Nathan Carter, March 17. Suggs: A Life in the Realm of Madness, March 22. Yes, 50th Anniversary, March 24-25.

New Diorama Theatre (newdiorama.com), 15-16 Triton St (Euston Rd opposite Fitzroy St): Trap Street by Kandinsky theatre group about life on a housing estate, March 6-31.

Continued in next column

RADA, Malet St (rada.ac.uk/whats-on):

GBS Theatre: The House of Bernada Alba, by Federico Garcia Lorca, March 14-24.

Giegid Theatre: Broadway Bount, by Neil Simon, March 13-24.

Jerwood Vanbrugh Theatre: Women Beware Women, by Thomas Middleton, March 15-24

CINEMA



Money Puzzle on April 8.

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. She's Beautiful when She is Angry, March 11. Money Puzzle, April 8. Empty Desert and Reykjavik, May 13.

Charlotte Street Hotel, 15-17 Charlotte St: Film Club with meal and a movie for £40. To book tickets visit bit.ly/CharlotteStreet-FilmClub.

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

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

Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent St: For daily programme visit regentstreetcinema.com. Matinee classics every Wednesday at 2pm, for over 55s, £1.75. Kids' Kino Club, every Saturday, 11.30am.

Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St (raifilm.org.uk/events): Regular programme of interesting screenings.

WALKS

Karl Marx walk / pub crawl. Starts from Blue Posts, Newman Street, May 5, 7.30pm (see page 13).

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

London Walks (walks.com) £10, Over 65 £8: Beatles Magical Mystery Tour, Tottenham Court Rd station, every Sunday 11am, and every Thursday, 11am, Wednesdays 2pm.

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.

POETRY

King & Queen (upstairs), 1 Foley St: Springtime poems, songs and laughs from Wendy Shutler and Ivor Game with Bloomsbury bards Andrew Cuthbert and Bob Goody, Apr 23, 8pm.

EXHIBITIONS

British Museum, Great Russell St (britishmuseum.org):

Free: The currency of communism, until March 18. A revolutionary legacy: Haiti and Toussaint Louverture, until Apr 22. Charmed lives in Greece, March 8-July 15.

Pay for: Living with gods: peoples, places and worlds beyond, until April 8. Rodin and the art of ancient Greece, April 26-July 29.

Grant Museum of Zoology, 21 University St: Internal Beauty: An exhibition by Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva (sculptures from animal organs), until March 28 (1-5pm).

RADA Bar, Malet St: The Art of the Scenic Artit, until March 30.

UCL Main Library, Wilkins Building, Gower St: Dangers and Delusions? Perspectives on the women's suffrage movement, until December 14.

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Rd (wellcomecollection.org): Ayurvedic Man: encounters with Indian medicine, until Apr 8. Somewhere in Between, March 8-Aug 27.

TALKS

Fitzrovia Centre, 2 Foley St: Women of Fitzrovia (including Virginia Woolf and Florence Nightingale), on International Women's Day, March 8, 1pm.

Sohemian Society, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: Barry Miles on his career in the 1960s, March 14, 7.30pm.

UCL Darwin Lecture Theatre, Malet Place (ucl.ac.uk/events): Tuesdays and Thursdays (1.15-1.55pm) during term time. Sex and socialism: What the Bolshevik revolution meant for the history of prostitution in 20th century Russia, March 14.

ART

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



Gallery Different, 14 Percy St: Rajvi Dedhia Unadkat "APlay of Binaries (above)", March 7-8.

Tristan Hoare, 6 Fitzroy Square: "Geometrica – geometry in art from 2nd to 21st Century", until March 28. See feature on page 15.



White Rainbow, 47 Mortimer St: Chikako Yamashiro "Shapeshifter" (above), March 15-Apr 28. Chim Pom Artists Collective, May 17-July 7.



Edel Assanti, 17A Newman St: Dale Lewis - "Fat, Sugar, Salt", until March 10. Tamar Harpaz - "Crazy Delay", March 21-Apr 21.



Rebecca Hossack Galleries, 2a Conway St: Carla Kranendonk - "Odalisque (above)", until Apr 14. 28 Charlotte St: Sheila Clarkson - "Constellations" until March 24.



Pi Artworks, 55 Eastcastle St: Ipen Duben - "in via incognita" (above), until Apr 7.