

# FitzroviaNews



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

Issue 149 Summer 2018

## Labour snatches West End seat from Tories

Oxford Street: Westminster Tories forced into U-turn and Labour defies Sadiq Khan

Plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street shook up May's local elections as Westminster council's Tory leadership and their Labour opponents were forced to defy Mayor of London Sadiq Khan after the Campaign Against Pedestrianisation party stood candidates in three wards.

In an historic victory Pancho Lewis was elected as the West End ward's first ever Labour councillor after he defied the London party line and pledged to oppose the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street due to local concerns about displaced motor traffic and increased pollution in neighbouring streets.

But Westminster's Tories got off relatively lightly returning sitting councillor Jonathan Glanz and newly-elected Conservative Timothy Barnes, despite negative comments aimed at the party by two out-going councillors.

Paul Church, a popular Tory councillor and Soho resident, refused to stand again so disgusted was he with the behaviour of senior members of his own party at Westminster council.

Before deciding not to stand again he issued a scathing attack on his own party, saying: "I tried to stand up for the communities I was elected to represent against the dominance of property developers and their agents, patronage and power in Westminster, but I was bullied, silenced and threatened by their powerful allies. Local government shouldn't be like this."

His fellow ward councillor Glenys Roberts fought back after she was deselected and declared her support for the Campaign Against Pedestrianisation of Oxford Street.

The furore over Oxford Street forced Westminster cabinet member, Daniel Astore, to announce that pedestrianisation plans would be halted — a complete U-turn from his predecessor Robert Davis who stood shoulder to

shoulder with Sadiq Khan in support of pedestrianising the street and diverting traffic around it.

"TfL and the Mayor are the main proponents of the changes to the street, but it belongs to the council and the decision rests with us," he told a council meeting in April.

"I have informed them — much to some surprise — that detailed work on a scheme is to be stopped. They had even wanted to appoint an artist to design street concept art, but I have stopped this too. At present there is no scheme nor a proposal which is acceptable to the council."

He said Westminster could only back a plan that addressed the concerns of residents. Astore warned that any legal move by TfL to take control of the street could take four years.

In the West End ward only The Green Party and the Lib Dem candidates supported Oxford Street pedestrianisation.

The Oxford Street plans also divided active transport campaigners. Living Streets and the London Cycling Campaign backed the plans but former cycling commissioner for London Andrew Gilligan said the plans were a disaster for cycling.

Marylebone High Street ward was held by the Tories, and Bloomsbury in Camden was held by Labour.



Nikoleta Michalodimitraki manager of the Imakr 3D printing store in Wells Street beside one of their creations see page 7 photo Etienne Gilfillan

3 free offers exclusive to Fitzrovia News readers see page 7



Publicly hanged for local murder - page 15



Missing dog - page 5



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## If we don't care for our own backyard then nobody else is likely to

By Griff Rhys Jones

There are big plans for Oxford Street in the offing (although they have been halted for the time being). You may already know of them and they are certainly going to affect the residents who live around that retail artery. There was a consultation with Transport for London, but it appears that they put up the “wrong address” on their internet site. Undismayed, they report back that most people are in favour of their proposed changes. (I think they mean the ones that they directly approached, not the ones who couldn't get through to their consultation process.) I hesitate to go into print. I hesitate to be a NIMBY (though I have always believed that if we don't care for our own backyard then nobody else is likely to) but the desire to pedestrianise Oxford Street will have more repercussions than allowing the shopper to romp and yomp along the ancient thoroughfare un-menaced by extremely slow-moving traffic.

When I moved into what is considered the centre of town, some twenty years ago, I rather imagined that I had good planning to thank. In the nineteenth century dirty, polluted air drove people out to the suburbs in search of breathing space. The clean air acts of the nineteen fifties appeared to liberate the centre of London. It took time, but humans moved back. It was a shock to be told, a few years ago, that I actually lived in the most polluted area in Europe. Not coal smoke: an invisible and more deadly poison was drifting through the air. Its origin is not hard to discover. Walk along Oxford Street and count the number of heavy diesel engines pumping their particulate matter into the immediate atmosphere. Buses and taxis stopping and starting, idling and accelerating. Empty or not, they chug, fume and sputter ceaselessly. Delivery lorries throb out their fumes endlessly.

Mr Mayor and his TfL team rightly want to dispose of this evil and save the temporary inconvenience to shoppers. They intend to move the noxious poison away from Oxford Street and out into the back streets: along Mortimer Street and up Great Portland Street through the inhabited area. They seem to want to put this stuff where people live and babies sleep, where children go to school and people work all day, where we cycle and walk — where we eat. I don't follow this. If you have shit in your garden, would you move it into your living room?

London is a successful city because it is inhabited. In the seventies planning divisions across Britain became obsessed with “zoning”. It is still taught as the solution to urban life. Move poisonous factories away from the living quarters. This was a good idea, but it was extended to include offices and shops (which produce little pollution). These areas were separated from the human dormitories. This official compartmentalisation devastated the big cities of Britain and created alienating, post five o'clock, no-go city centres. Nobody wanted to live in our downtown wastelands any more. The do-nut effect took over Liverpool, Bradford, Leeds, Ipswich, Peterborough,

Belfast, Newport... Stop. Many, many other major towns or cities. Of course, it also relied on a Corbusian fantasy. Human beings were shown zooming effortlessly around on electro-glide mono-rails in architectural drawings of supreme impracticality. But in actuality people preferred cars. And where the car was banned, they took to buses.

There is of course every intention to get rid of diesel transport and render delivery lorries and taxis inert, but er... not yet. It's not practical, you see, certainly within the next ten years. So, the well-intentioned desire to separate humans from the dirty means of production has led to rivers of belching, fuming, choking, noisy, polluting traffic — far more deleterious to health and peace than any modern factory. In few places in Britain are people actually zoned from this real pollution — ring roads and feeder lanes, access routes and three-lane motorway-feeders. Except, funnily enough, in London. Not just because of the congestion charge. We actually have fewer motorways choking the great Wen. They were opposed by those damned NIMBYs. (Just visit Glasgow or Bradford to witness the effect of “good transport solutions.”) There was, originally, a six-lane highway planned for the Tottenham Court Road. It was heading for Centre Point. We should thank those pesky NIMBYs that it never happened.

We who now live in central London should pat ourselves on the back. We are the proper green future of the urban world — walking to work, living close to facilities, in a fully mixed environment of work space, entertainment, living-space and small local supply shops. It is the commuter and the daily Gadarene rush to occupy offices, to go shop down-town and to supply big shops and workplaces that really causes pollution.

You might think that “pedestrianisation” is therefore a good thing. Lots do. But look more closely. There is another reason why this is being pushed through. This is part of a plan to “big up” Oxford Street. Oxford Street is still the largest shopping area in London. (Surprised? Well, it is very long). But it has steadily lost ground over the last twenty years to the Westfield Centres in Stratford and Shepherd's Bush and that Brent Cross place. Now Westminster want to fight back. They are allowing bigger edifices. The corner of Rathbone Place, big enough and a handsome Edwardian building in itself, is now scheduled for destruction — to be replaced with a bigger monolith. Surely, they argue, the new Elizabeth Line can be used to ferry more people into the centre of town? More shops, more offices. More traffic, more deliveries, more buses. More taxis. More “commerciality”. London having avoided the zoning that has ruined city after city across Britain in now getting it by default. As these areas are “improved” in the name of profit, so the living areas become less tenable. Even untenable, if you deliberately push all the pollution off your concourse and into the neighbouring streets which you then happily fill with more, bigger offices and supply lorries.

We all love to shop, but retail, as exemplified by the old fashioned commercial multi-



Griff Rhys Jones: local resident and president of Civic Voice.

Photo By Phil Guest, CC BY-SA 2.0,  
commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40424923

chain-store parade in the centre of town, is actually dying. Everybody recognises this. Mary Portas became a Czar on the back of it. (As if we needed an out of date Russian aristocrat to sort this out.) Many have loudly, and publicly, lamented this “decline of the High Street”. But what is a Canute-like policy to “maintain growth” at all costs? We still grow alright, just not in the way that backward-looking planners and councils want. People still consume. People still buy. The future, however, is clearly with more on-line shopping. As I write this it has been announced that the rate of shop closure has doubled. People prefer to use their local centres like the hermetically sealed Westfield. What windy wide wet street can possibly compete. It certainly won't compete by getting bigger. Can't we recognise that the migration of people who want to come and live in city centres is a good thing, a green thing, a sustainable thing and assist them? It has happened in the last twenty years, against official opposition, not only in Leeds and Manchester but also in Islington and Paddington. Preserve character, value and quality in good Victorian buildings: recycle them and restore them. Make the streets good to walk in, and live in, free of that excessive commuter traffic hurrying around the city. London is a series of villages. Big them up. Let Walthamstow and Ilford become new exciting centres, so that people can live, shop and work there. Let the main West End high street shrink and discourage the gutting of the centre to create a no-go commercial area. Oxford Street is only “in danger” from bad commerciality, opportunism and high rents.

We know already, those of us who live here, that we must avoid Oxford Street after six. We hurry across this deadly, empty canyon to get to the mixed vibrant world of living, eating, entertaining, music and habitation on either side. We tolerate its big shops, but if it were to shrink would we care? If some of the shops were to go would we rush to build new ones? Let us celebrate the mixed economies of Fitzrovia and Marylebone. Let us recognise that a true central capital city has museums, places of worship, parks, palaces, concert halls, libraries, universities, cinemas, theatres, and habitation as well as “business”. Let us step back from creating massive out of date, monocultural, shop-hour and working-time deserts right in our midst. It serves no one but the perpetrators. The people who run or own these businesses don't live there. They have no stake in the area beyond square footage and product-shifting. We do.



# Summer gardening club aims to make Fitzrovia greener

A new gardening club was launched this spring at one of Fitzrovia's most used and abused public open spaces ahead of London becoming the world's first National Park City.

Volunteers from the Friends of Fitzrovia Parks will be spending an hour every Saturday morning this summer making small improvements to Whitfield Gardens leading up to National Park City Week in July.

In December the Friends planted daffodils and other flowers as part of scheme by the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association to deliver free bulbs donated by Lincolnshire family business Taylors Bulbs of Holbeach.

This spring nine native species of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs have been planted in Whitfield Gardens, along with dozens of varieties of wildflowers as part of a project promoted by Kew Gardens.

For the first time ever oak and hornbeam trees have been planted — trees that haven't been grown in this part of London since the city expanded in the early 18th century.

Around 70 shrubs have been added to the garden donated entirely by people who live and work in the neighbourhood.



Oaks return to Fitzrovia's fields as part of a greening project.

However, Whitfield Gardens faces a threat from Camden Council which is considering concreting over large areas of the park in an effort to cut maintenance costs and create more space for corporate stakeholders in Fitzrovia as part of its flagship West End Project.

But the Friends of Fitzrovia Parks, supported by the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, are hoping to scupper Camden's hideous plans and deliver a greener Fitzrovia, and create a

wildlife-friendly park instead of a trading space.

*Saturday Gardening Club. Meet in Whitfield Gardens on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Tottenham Street 8.00am every Saturday until the end of September for an hour of gardening.*

*fitzroviaparks.org.uk*

*National Park City Week event: The challenge of creating and maintaining wildlife-friendly inner city parks, meet 11am Saturday 21 July 2018 at Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street.*

## Oxford Street consultation report withdrawn

A report analysing the responses to a consultation on the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street has had to be withdrawn after it was discovered Transport for London gave out an incorrect email address for respondents to use.

TfL removed the report from its website and issued a statement saying many people's views went missing.

"This was because we pub-

lished this [email] address, by error, on our consultation web page as one method of submitting a response. We apologise unreservedly for this," said the statement.

This major error was only discovered when community groups contacted TfL to ask why their responses were not included in the appendices to the report. They also asked questions about why

some of the statistics presented did not add up correctly.

The views of the Marylebone Association and the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum, were missing from the report along with an unknown number of other responses.

Local residents want congestion and pollution reduced over a much wider area instead of shifting the problems into side streets.

## Mortgage providers will not lend for affordable homes

Westminster council has approved a legal agreement to enable affordable homes at a landmark West End development to be re-sold at market prices because mortgage lenders will no longer finance the type of property offered.

The "intermediate affordable" homes are at Rathbone Square, part of a major development by Great Portland Estates, on the site of a 1950s-built Royal Mail distribution centre, which was demolished to create 142 luxury flats, shops, restaurants, and an office complex now occupied by social media giant Facebook.

A council report states that 22 affordable apartments which face onto Newman Street have been transferred to Westminster-based registered provider A2Dominion who submitted a planning application to amend the terms of the s106 agreement because "mortgage providers are no longer lending on products of this type".

The existing s106 agreement struck in 2014 states that the one bedroom flats are available to eligible households on a discounted market sale (DMS) basis, which means they can buy the property at a percentage of its current value and sell it again at the same percentage of market price to another eligible buyer.

To qualify potential buyers must have lived or worked in the City of Westminster for a mini-

mum of 12 months, do not own another property, and must have a household income between £58,000 and £90,000.

According to documents submitted in support of the application, lenders want to be able to sell the property on the open market if they have to repossess and recoup their debt if the owner defaults on payments, and they don't want an owner to be lumbered with a property they cannot sell or loses its value because its sale is restricted. Advisors for A2Dominion state that lenders "will not accept" the terms under which the flats can be resold.

Since the homes would be lost as affordable housing accommodation, a mechanism for capturing some of the value of the unit will be returned and put into Westminster Council's affordable housing fund. The council report states that if the home was originally purchased for 30 percent of market value then the council would receive 70 percent of its new sale value.

The council report, which recommended approval of the application, states the amendment "is considered to be partly an academic exercise to unlock lending from mortgage providers, as it is considered that there will still be many eligible households wishing to participate."

## Traffic inspector says go west

The recommendations of a government inspector after a public enquiry into local traffic will alarm residents in Torrington Place and Huntley Street because it could mean a four-fold increase in motor vehicles outside their homes.

The new traffic system along the east-west route linking Fitzrovia, Bloomsbury and Kings Cross was implemented in 2015 to address concerns about motor traffic volume and road safety. The changes removed westbound motor traffic from the whole length of Tavistock Place between Gower Street and Judd Street, and doubled the size of the cycling lanes along the route.

Although the Torrington-Tavistock scheme is largely supported by pedestrians, cyclists, businesses, employees, Gordon Mansions Residents Association,

and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, there is strong opposition from the London Taxi Drivers Association, Imperial Hotels and the Bloomsbury Residents Action Group.

Now the inspector has recommended that "the Council consider the modification of the Order so as to provide for westbound only vehicular traffic whilst retaining the provision for separate west bound and east bound cycle lanes."

The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association says: "Levels of the pollutant NO2 at the Torrington Place and Huntley Street junction is already at or above the legal limit and allowing westbound traffic to cross Gower Street could cause a four-fold increase in motor vehicles passing residents windows."

## The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association annual general meeting

Monday 18th June 2018 from 6:30pm

Venue: **Sainsbury Wellcome Centre** lecture theatre  
**25 Howland Street W1T 4JG**

Anyone who lives or works in Fitzrovia is invited to attend. Please arrive from 6:30 for drinks and snacks before the formal meeting takes place from 6:45 - 7:30.

The meeting will review the work of the charity over the past 15 months, its accounts, and discuss the future of the organisation as well as the changes to the neighbourhood.

After the formal business of the meeting has been dealt with attendees are invited to stay around and socialize with snacks and drinks.



# Obituary: Reg Gadney

By Clive Jennings

I am very sad to have to report the death of local resident Reg Gadney who passed away on May 1. Something of a Renaissance Man, Reg segued from one career to another, achieving the highest level in each: soldier, diplomat, teacher, novelist, screenwriter, artist, the list goes on. I tried to capture this thirst for knowledge and pursuit of excellence in my profile of Reg in this publication in 2012, at the time of his last exhibition at local gallery Rebecca Hossack.

"A visit to Reg Gadney's generously proportioned studio, which occupies most of the ground floor of the large Georgian house in Fitzrovia that he has shared with his wife, Evening Standard restaurant critic Fay Maschler, for 20 years, reveals a man who has spent over fifty years immersed in the worlds of education, literature and art. The walls are lined from floor to high ceiling with books, paintings and memorabilia.

"He has received the highest accolades in all three disciplines: teaching at the Royal College of Art for 15 years in the 1970s and 1980s, he became its youngest ever Pro-Rector, and lectured at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale; his parallel career as a writer then took over, including some 16 published crime thrillers and many screenplays, several of which have received BAFTAs and Golden Globe nominations; and latterly he has built a following for his painting, a lifetime pursuit, with several well received solo shows of his paintings, and works in collections around the world."

The son of B C Gadney, a schoolmate of David Niven, who, as captain of the undefeated England Rugby Football XV of 1934-6 was something of a national hero, and a difficult act to follow. It was decided that Reg should join



the army, "to make a man of me – but it didn't work!", and he served three years in the Coldstream Guards, serving in Libya and France and ending up as a military attaché at our embassy in Oslo, gaining insights into the machinations of governments and the military that were to serve him well as a thriller writer.

Since his college days, Reg had wanted to write "seedy thrillers". He admired and kept in touch with Patricia Highsmith and Daphne du Maurier, who were both very supportive. His sixteen "literary thrillers, include six novels featuring his anti-hero, Alan Rosslyn who Reg describes as, "dull but a very good listener, which makes him a successful seducer of women". Of particular interest to Fitzrovia residents is his 2000 Rosslyn adventure "Strange Police" which finds our man involved in foiling an audacious conspiracy by Greek Nationalists to steal the Elgin Marbles from the British Museum and return them to Greece.

With many scenes set in and

around the familiar streets of Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury, he draws on his local knowledge to give it a sense of reality, making it probably the only novel, ever, to feature a scene set in the 24-hour store on Grafton Way. Reg ingeniously and topically wove the construction of Norman Foster's spectacular Great Court at the Museum, completed in 2000, into the story. Research included walking atop the magnificent glass roof constructed of triangular sections that encloses the Court, which covers two acres and is the largest covered public square in Europe.

Reg's latest book, *Albert Einstein Speaking*, is published by Canongate this month and being translated widely around the world. The novel comes with advance praise from Ian McEwan, his former Fitzrovia neighbour, who hailed it as 'a strange and luminous fiction, a literary gem beautifully and cunningly poised between historical truth and the warmly imagined'.

Reg loved Fitzrovia, particularly the cultural mix of the small local businesses, and was a familiar figure in local shops and cafés. We used to bond over a shared love of cheap cigars and a mutual admiration for the Italian screen goddess Claudia Cardinale. When Reg discovered that I knew her, and was visiting her in Paris, we struck a deal whereby he would paint my portrait in return for her autograph - I still treasure that portrait.

He is survived by his second wife, Fay Maschler, whom he married in 1992, and her children, Hannah, Alice and Ben; and by Guy and Amy, the children of his first marriage, to Annette Kobak, which ended in divorce.

Reginald Bernard John Gadney, thriller writer and painter, born 20 January 1941; died 1 May 2018.



## Outstanding swimmer breaks world record

Prize for the most outstanding swim of the 12-16-year old boys in the Middlesex Swimming Association County Championships went to Alex Rowson (pictured centre above).

It was the 100 metre freestyle event in a time of 54.83 seconds which won it for Alex, aged 16, who lives in Gresse Street, and is a pupil at Regent High School.

He is part of a unique joint training group between Chelsea and Westminster, and Brompton swimming clubs which has a gruelling programme of early morning and evening sessions of 16 hours a week.

He is pictured receiving the trophy from Frances Prentice (Middlesex Swimming President) with his coach Bram Montgomery.

Alex went on to win the same award at the London Region Championships in a new time of 53.61 seconds... 6.7 secs off the current world record!

## Tributes left for homeless man who died sleeping on Tottenham Court Road



Bunches of flowers and messages were left on Tottenham Court Road in memory of a homeless man who died while sleeping on the street.

A man who was aged in his 40s and was known as "Irish Keith" died on the pavement outside Curry's PC World in the early hours of the morning of Tuesday 27 March.

His death came just days after around 100 homeless people were evicted from a disused commercial building on Great Portland Street which had been turned into a shelter by volunteers from Streets Kitchen.

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**The next issue of Fitzrovia  
News will be out**

**Tuesday 4 September 2018.  
Deadline for articles, features  
and advertisements 17 August.**



# Dog picture goes walkies but returns home safely



"The portrait of the Tibetan Terrier in Victorian dress."

It was just another regular Friday evening at the Grafton Arms in Grafton Way on May 4. The pub was moderately full and there were several parties enjoying themselves.

At closing time the pub gradually cleared of customers. Then the staff who had been run off their feet all night noticed something strange: at first they couldn't tell what it was but eventually they realised one of the wall paintings was missing.

The pub treasures its paintings of smartly-dressed dogs, which are scattered about the walls of the bar and guest rooms.

Pub worker Mitch Tillman said: "The paintings are part of the pub's branding. They are so popular, customers will sometimes ask if they are available for sale."

The staff made a quick search around the premises but it wasn't anywhere to be found.

Manager Leo Fernandez said: "We then realised that we run CCTV recording the inside and outside of the premises. So we decided to look at the Friday evening footage. On film we saw a party sitting at the table below the painting; one member of the party removed the picture and place it on the floor. Then at closing time the man in his 40s wearing a suit walked out of the pub with our painting under his arm. The bar staff were all too busy to notice this going on."

He told his boss about the theft but they decided not to report the incident to the police instead they launched an appeal on social media to request for information from regulars. The CCTV footage of the incident was uploaded for the art thief to be shamed.

"So we set about getting a replacement picture which we found. The following Wednesday morning we were in the pub hanging the new picture on the wall when there was a knock at the door.

"It was a taxi driver who brought our picture back together with a note of apology."

The cheeky note stated: "I'm home! Sorry I ran off with that strange man the other night.

"I think the heat got to me and I felt adventurous. I hope you take me back with open arms as it was just a fling and meant nothing to me!"

The note was signed off: "I missed you guys, (a sophisticated) woof!"

The taxi cost £30 and there was a stong "lead" - no attempt to disguise the sender's phone number or the South London postcode of where the painting was sent from, but the driver was sworn to secrecy.

Manager Leo said: "This was the first time that one of our paintings have been stolen brazenly in front of staff and customers. We're delighted to be reunited with our old friend. Of course now all the paintings have been screwed down to the wall."

Pete Whyatt



## Bag snatched from pub

Customers of Fitzrovia's drinking dens are reminded to keep a close eye on their personal possessions after CCTV images of two men were captured taking a bag from an unsuspecting woman enjoying a night out in one of area's many pubs.

Police are investigating the theft of the handbag and purse which was reported to be stolen at 9.45pm on a Wednesday in May at a venue in the Rathbone Street area.

A 2006 report from the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University College London stated that bags are the items most often targeted in pubs.

Police statistics reveal that "theft from a person" (where items are stolen from someone without force or the threat of force) is the most common crime reported in the neighbourhood.

Mobile phones, electrical gadgets, bank card, wallets, purses and bags are the items most frequently nicked.

Police advise the public not to make it easy for thieves: keep your valuables close to you and never leave bags, purses and wallets unattended.

## Empty homes at Fitzroy Place

An investigation by *Fitzrovia News* into occupancy of new homes in Fitzrovia has revealed — surprise, surprise! — that most of the 233 flats sold on the open market at Fitzroy Place are lying empty.

*Fitzrovia News* estimates that up to 70 percent of the luxury apartments are owned as investment properties, after checking the "full electoral register" for the number of households with someone registered to vote.

## Correction

Our front page story of FN 148 stated there will be no public toilets at Tottenham Court Road station when Crossrail trains start running in December 2018. This was incorrect. TfL have written to us to confirm that there will be toilets at Tottenham Court Road station for all passengers.

## News in brief

Organisers of the annual **Fitzrovia Festival** have been a little slow off the mark in getting things done this year. However, there will be events taking place in July. See [fitzroviafestival.org.uk](http://fitzroviafestival.org.uk) for the latest information.

On Friday 1 June London Fire Brigade were called out to a fire on the sixth floor at 5 Pearson Square.



## Live music at builders' bar

There will be live music at The Building Centre, Store Street every Friday in June as part of the London Festival of Architecture.

"Join us on Fridays from 5:30pm throughout June at our

new Barista Bar and enjoy end of the week drinks and conversation," says the invitation.

Known as The Store Street Social it kicks off on Friday 8 June for the opening evening of Open Studios Night in Fitzrovia.

A number of design practices across Fitzrovia will be open to the public and there will be events ranging from exhibitions to a drop-in design surgery, a talk or simply a party.

[londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](http://londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)

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Staff from Leaf Lover (left to right) Barbara Stankiewicz, Andrew Blank and Agata Kapciak outside the shop on Mortimer Street.

# New business blooming

After all the flowers shops have deserted Fitzrovia in recent years it great to see that trend reversed and a flower seller moved into the area.

Leaf Lover is owned and run by Andrew Blank together with his mother Patricia. The family have been in the business for over 20 years and used to own a chain of florists “Go-Flower” based in rail stations.

They occupy the shop at 42 Mortimer Street which smells amazing and is full of their beautiful flowers: orchids, roses, hydrangeas amongst others. This leads to the adjoining shop at 37 Great Titchfield Street which is full of houseplants and cactii.

Andrew says “We stock the widest range of flowers and plants in the West End and supply to homes, offices for events, PR companies and churches. We sell planters and vases as well.”

If you enjoy Fitzrovia News, please consider making a donation: [fitzrovia.org.uk/donate](https://fitzrovia.org.uk/donate)

# Opening and closing

## Closed

**Latium** Italian restaurant 21 Berners Street  
**Salento Green Life** cafe 51 Goodge Street  
**Dilegence** security solutions 55 Warren Street  
**Spectrum** camera shop 127 Tottenham Court Road  
**Tomatillo** cafe deli 132 New Cavendish Street  
**Rhymes with orange** cards, gifts 106 Great Portland Street  
**Life food cafe** 49 Newman Street  
**Halifax bank** 60 Oxford Street  
**Big Fernand** French burgers 19 Percy Street

## Opened

**Double J's** cafe (after re-furbishment) 333 Euston Road  
**Spymaster** surveillance and security equipment 11-13 Howland Street  
**Imakr** 3D printing 17 Wells Street  
**Barclays bank** 154 Tottenham Court Road  
**Define** fitness studio 82 Great Portland Street  
**LaksaMania** Malasian eatery 92 Newman Street  
**Hershesons** hair beauty 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  
**Island Poké** Hawiain food 1 Great Titchfield Street  
**Newman Arms** pub and pie room (reopened see page 9) 23 Rathbone Street  
**Leaf lover** flowers (see above) 42 Mortimer Street  
**The coffeworks project** coffee shop 2 Great Titchfield Street  
**Koox** Take-away restaurant using 3\* Michelin chefs 28 Store Street  
**Ousia** Mediterranean restaurant (formerly Andreas) 40 Charlotte Street  
**Alex coffee** 1 Hanson Street  
**Kyseri** Turkish pasa restaurant 64 Grafton Way

## Opening soon

**Rovi Ottolenghi** deli restaurant 59 Wells Street  
**Pastation** pasta 76 Tottenham Court Road  
**Said Dal 1923** Italian Chocolate 29 Rathbone Place  
**The Flavour Garden** eatery 1 Bedford Avenue  
**Flesh & Buns** Japanese eatery 25–33 Berners Street  
**Al Dente** pasta 51 Goodge Street  
**Evans soft furnishings** 55 Warren Street  
**Halifax bank** 118 - 132 New Oxford Street

## Avertisement

### Homes to Treasure: The Best in The West (End)

Fitzrovia has a long and fascinating history. Unlike other major West End districts, Fitzrovia was not developed by one major landowner but by multiple small landowners who developed their space independently. This has led to a vibrant mosaic of different property types and architecture styles with a predominance of small, irregular streets and stunning mews.

Fitzrovia gained significant fame during the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a bohemian and artistic centre in London due to the presence of the famous Fitzroy Street Group which included such luminaries as George Orwell, Virginia Woolf, and George Bernard Shaw. The area has retained this artistic individuality to this day and there are many unique spaces to both let and purchase in the area. In addition, Fitzrovia was historically the home of both the rag trade and the automotive trade, after the decline of these industries, many of the empty showroom and factory units became stunning homes benefitting from superb natural light. This has made Fitzrovia homes highly sought after and coveted by a range of residents.

From period conversions, to modern developments, the Fitzrovia area has a fantastic variety of residential properties available to both rent and purchase. Probably named after the famous Fitzroy Tavern, which in turn was named after the Duke of Grafton whose surname was Fitzroy, Fitzrovia is one of the most desirable areas to live in the country. Indeed, The Sunday Times named the area the best place to live in London in 2016.

Robert Irving Burns have been based in Fitzrovia since 1962 and in that time we have become the foremost agent in the area, helping hundreds of people find their ideal Fitzrovia Home. We are proud of our heritage as local agents and bring expert insights on the Fitzrovia area. To get in touch with one of our residential experts about selling or letting your property, or to view the excellent range of homes we have available, please contact us on 0207 637 0821.





# The ultimate selfie

3D printing builds a three-dimensional object from computer-aided design usually by successively adding material layer by layer. Objects can be of almost any shape or geometry. There are many different technologies processes and materials involved.



photo Etienne Gilfillan

Imakr store at 17 Wells Street specialises in all aspects of 3D printing. They stock scanners, printers, consumables and accessories; everything needed to print and fabricate objects.

When you enter the shop there are several people working at computers but also you notice a quiet

background of low level noise.

It is the printers chugging whirring whizzing and ticking away either fabricating or printing objects one layer at a time.

Store Manager Nikoleta Michalodimitraki told me all about this new field and how versatile 3D printing can be. "It can be used for dentistry and medical uses prosthetics hearing aids," she said.

"Architectural models of buildings, jewellery and rapid prototyping

"You can even print food; chocolate is popular for promotions and special events.

"In the shop we advise and train; and we scan, design and print on demand and stock design and printing software.

"One of our more unusual products recreates your likeness in a 3D-colour sandstone composite model which is both accurate and detailed. It is available in four sizes, eight, ten, twelve and fifteen inches high. You come to the office and stand in the booth which is like a white tent the size of a large wardrobe. Inside the booth are a double row of cameras. You stand still on a plinth which revolves you around 360 degrees whilst the cameras capture your image all around from head to toe."

These scans are processed into an initial print file. From this file the designers make final preparations to "print" a full colour Mini-You It is the ultimate selfie. Couples, children and full families are also possible. The whole process takes between 10 to 14 days and prices start at £199.

Imakr provide free training and learning sessions at the shop every Tuesday evening at 6:30 *Fitzrovia News* readers are invited to come and learn about this cutting edge of technology. You may even get to try a 3D printed chocolate!

Pete Whyatt



## Good vibrations

Life in Fitzrovia is full of noises and discordant distractions and these stress-filled sounds affect us on many levels. "We perceive sound with our body as well as the ears," says Fitzrovia's own Gong Master, Chasmonty Strikes. He uses the ancient and venerated practice of gong playing as part of his Sound Therapy to retune his clients.

My Editor sent me to Tottenham Court Road for a Gong Shower, a shortened version of a Gong Bath. This is what happened..

I arrived and was shown into the room, leaving my mobile phone and other worldly distractions in the hallway. In the room there was a range of gongs of different sizes. We had a short discussion about medical matters, my stress levels and how I relax and sleep, along with what I hoped I would get out of the session.

I was invited to make myself comfortable by either sitting, lying on a massage couch or on the floor. I chose lying on the floor. I was in the centre of the room surrounded by gongs and he informed me that we would begin with the sound of a singing bowl and would end when hearing the sound of tingshas, the rest would be pure gong sounds.

I was asked to shut my eyes and the experience began with some controlled breathing exercises. I then heard a range of sounds which slowly increased in intensity as the session progressed. Although I could not see him, I could sense a quadrophonic experience as he moved around with noises coming from all points in the room. Some of the gongs are large and create a nice welcome breeze.

At first I found it difficult to relax and the thoughts of the day were still whizzing around in my head but gradually I began to hone in on the sounds that were being given to me. After a while, I began to just think about the different sounds and sensations that were going on in the room and finally got into a relaxed state. I had a Gong Shower, but a longer session in a Gong Bath would bring on deeper therapeutic benefits, I am told. "Stress reduction is one of the most important results of receiving Sound Therapy," according to Gong Master Strikes. "Stress is the underlying cause of many physical conditions and it melts away when you are bathed in the sound of healing vibrations." Sound Therapy, I am told, works using brainwave entrainment with pulses of sound encouraging the brain to re-align to a given beat and apparently it works for almost everyone.

Chas Strikes hails from London and has lived in the area for many years. He has studied Sound Healing on various courses and says: "You should go to the Gong Bath like you would go to get a breath of fresh air." He is offering free 30 minute introductions by way of Gong Showers. You can email him at [gongmasterstrikes@gmail.com](mailto:gongmasterstrikes@gmail.com) to reserve your session.

Pete Whyatt

## The essence of beauty and health

The Lakshmi spa and boutique on 21 Eastcastle Street is a new addition to the locality but the company has been operating for over 35 years. It is the UK arm of an Italian company that practises Ayurvedic wisdom and Holistic principles.

The company was started 35 years ago and the core of their business has always been essential oils. These essential essences are mostly organically sourced and come from over 100 countries. The company also stock a range of creams, soaps shampoos and beauty products. Their products are mostly concerned with dermatology and dealing with skin problems such as acne, psoriasis,

stretch marks and anti-ageing

They also have spa facilities which provide a range of treatments and therapies ranging from pedicure and manicure to sports massage

The spa and boutique is run by Nicole Furia and James Watson Trimming.

James got into the business because he suffered skin problems and after having tried many cures and remedies he found that the holistic approach treated the problem. "My diet and lifestyle affected me negatively and by cleansing and detoxifying my liver I found the condition eased."

James and Nicole have made an exclusive offer for *Fitzrovia*



Nicole Furia enjoys a manicure at the salon

*News* readers. If you call in at the salon and mention *Fitzrovia News* you will receive a sample from their evening cleansing ritual range.

  
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# Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her siblings

## Beatles and hash in Hanson Street

Entertaining anecdotes were told by **Barry Miles**, author of many books about the 1960s counter-culture, when addressing the Sohemians meeting in the Wheatsheaf, Rathbone Place.

He still lives in a Hanson Street flat, which, he recalled, was first wired for electricity when he was there back in 1964.

"Many people worked in the rag trade in those days which was very local. One of our neighbours told us she had been offered such a job but turned it down because it was all the way at the other end of Great Titchfield Street!"

And it was in Hanson Street that one of the **Beatles** was reputed to have had his first hash cookie. Not far away, in Wigmore Street, **Paul McCartney** had a room in the house of Jane Asher's father, where Paul first played the tune on a piano to Yesterday. The panels in his room, by the way, were made of Norwegian Wood.

Miles (he dislikes his forename Barry) was also co-owner (with Marianne Faithfull's first husband John Dunbar) of the Indica Gallery where **John Lennon** first met Yoko Ono.

"John first came in asking for a book by someone he pronounced as Nat Che," he recalled. "It was a while before we realised he meant Nietzsche" [an influential 19th century German philosopher].

Yoko Ono (as she was referred to in Radio Times) revealed on Desert Island Discs how one of her conceptual works was a block of wood which people were invited to hammer a nail into for five shillings. John asked if he could knock in an imaginary nail for an imaginary five shillings.

Another guest in Hanson Street of Miles was the American beat generation writer and artist **William Burroughs**. Apparently he took delight in driving out a fellow American in Fitzroy Street by photographing and recording him, then replaying it outside his home the next day.

Miles was also an editor of the hippy journal International Times, which was supported by Pink Floyd's manager Hoppy, who raised funds for the journal by putting on concerts in the UFO club at **31 Tottenham Court Road**.

Another way of raising funds was to go into Foyles bookshop in Charing Cross Road, buy a book from its second hand department, then sell it for a profit to the rare books section of the same shop.



## Death bed humour at UCH

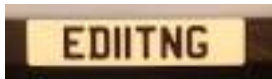
"I always knew Unison members would get their hands on me in the end," quipped the retired general secretary of that union, **Rodney Bickerstaffe** (pictured right), on his deathbed in *University College Hospital*.

This was what he confided to his son Philip, who related it to those attending a celebration of his life in Central Hall, Westminster.

When Rodney was giving the oration at the funeral of his close friend and fellow union leader Ron Todd, he said Ron had told him on the phone he had got leukaemia and wanted Rodney to say a few words at the funeral. "Certainly, Ron," replied Rodney. "I have my diary here. What date will it be?"

In his reply Ron reminded Rodney that he was born out of wedlock.

The current Unison general secretary, Dave Prentis, referred to Rodney's work with the homeless, including organising sleep-



Is there a dyslexic journalist in the area - owning this brown Ford van in Margaret Street (number plate above)?

## Codswallop

My brother **Percy** really must brush up his diction (if you'll pardon the expression).

He ordered "goat's cheese" in L'Etoile in **Charlotte Street**, but got "cod's cheeks" instead. I suppose they do sound a bit similar.

"I do hope they were facial cheeks," he crudely commented. Then he redeemed himself by adding: "Either way, they are absolutely delicious!"



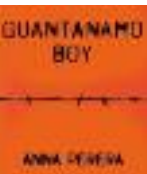
overs for them in churches. This may explain why All Saints Church in Margaret Street included him in their list requesting prayers for the recently departed.

## Local author exposes child abduction scandal

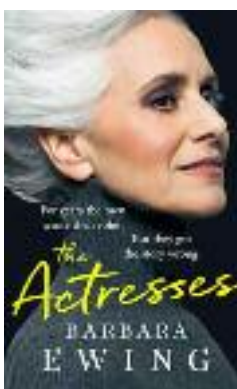
Novelist, **Anna Perera**, most famous for "*Guantanamo Boy*" (Puffin) now lives in the area. She was born in London to an Irish mother and a Sri Lankan father. For a while she was a teacher, responsible for excluded boys. Now she writes for the teenage market, but also adults.

Of *Guantanamo Boy* she states "although it is a work of fiction, it is inspired by real events. It remains a fact that children have been abducted and abused and held without charge in the name of justice in Guantanamo Bay and many secret prisons around the world."

The book's frontpiece includes a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "An eye for an eye and the whole world will soon be blind."



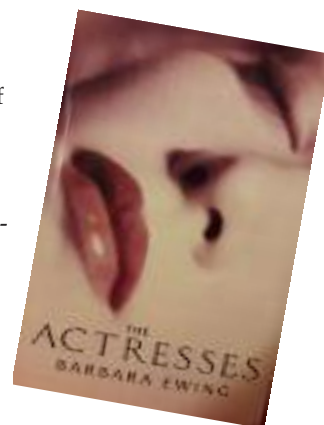
## In praise of older women: chance to win new novel



"The Actresses" by local novelist/actress **Barbara Ewing** has just been reprinted 21 years after its first publication. Despite this time difference it is highly topical in view of recent revelations about treatment of actresses.

Interestingly the cover of the new edition of "The Actresses" (left) depicts a slightly older woman on the cover compared to the original (right). Are the publishers taking a commendable risk with this?

Have you ever seen an "older" woman on the cover of a paperback? If so we will give a copy of the new novel to the first to respond (email news@fitzrovia.org.uk with "Actresses book" in the subject box).



## Queen Charlotte immortalised

A right royal welcome to the re-naming of the Draft House at 43 Goodge Street as Queen Charlotte. It is on the corner of Charlotte Street, which is named after her.

She married George III in 1761 and was a regular visitor to the theatre at 21-25 Tottenham Street, and a frequent visitor of both the artist Mary Moser in Huntley Street (21 Upper Thornhaugh Street at the time) and novelist Fanny Burney (who was also the keeper of her robes) at 23 Chenies Street.

Sadly, she did not get on with her daughter-in-law, Queen Caroline of Brunswick, the wife of her son George IV. There were rumours that both Caroline and her daughter (another Charlotte who died at the age of 21) had been poisoned.

My elder brother Mortimer, a member of the Inn Sign Society, thinks it would be nice to have a pictorial sign of Queen Charlotte outside the pub.



Illustration by Jayne Davis

He is also delighted that the Newman Arms in Rathbone Street now has a pictorial hanging sign (see page 9). The previous one just had the name and a claim to date back 300 years... before the street was built

## Boulting brothers' local link

The **Boulting Brothers**, who directed many popular films in the 1950s and 60s, were indeed related to the T J Boulting sanitary engineers in **Riding House Street** (now an art gallery).

**Laurence Boulting** (whose article about the firm is on page 13) is the son of **Roy Boulting**, whose twin brother was **John**.

"My uncle John told me he thought his twin was the better director of the two of them - more of an artist and poet he thought," writes Laurence in his book "Love at 24 FPS".

"Although I would never have dared express this opinion aloud while they were alive, I sometimes thought it was John who made the better films and the more enduring ones as well... Is that being disloyal to the memory of my father? Just a little perhaps... not that they would have given a toss for anyone's opinions except their own. Identical twins, you know... funny creatures."

His book, which is an anthology of 101 films, is published by Sixth Avenue Press.

## A leg up



I see a "Half Leg Wax" is being advertised for £22 (terms and conditions apply) on the corner of Wells Street and Mortimer Street.

"I might be tempted if they make it a BOGOF [Buy One Get One Free]," remarked my sister **Margaret**. "Which half is it anyway, top/bottom or inside/outside?"

*Charlotte Street*



# Treat yourself to tasty Japanese dishes - best during the special discount times

By the DINING DETECTIVE

**KAZU** 64 Charlotte Street, W1W 4QD.

It was only when I picked up the card of this restaurant that I realised it was a chain. But I couldn't find any other branches in London - although there is one in Abu Dhabi and one in Montreal...

A dining detective has a duty to keep an eye on restaurant openings and closures, but the corner of Tottenham Street and Charlotte Street is not really the buzzing-restaurant-end of Charlotte Street.

As I had passed by last year I felt a great deal of money was obviously being put into the establishment on the ground floor of the old Hogarth Studios: at first I thought it was yet another architectural company. Finally I understood it was a restaurant.

Kazu is a Japanese restaurant which we don't have a lot of in Fitzrovia, but it seemed a bit expensive for me and there is a much cheaper one in Goodge Street which is often full of young people - students perhaps, to which I have not been, but will. And why don't they ask us, the residents, where to put a new



PICTURE PUZZLE: The picture on page 14 is at the Rising Sun, 46 Tottenham Court Road.

restaurant!. This new one has not, it appears to me, and I pass it often, had a lot of customers.

However, at the moment Kazu has a board outside advertising a set meal offer, at 12-3pm and 6-7pm and I decided to try it: £16.50 for miso soup, salad, rice, a choice of main meals, and a dessert. As some main dishes - not part of this deal - go up to £36 (for something called Tokujo Sushi) £16.50 for a meal seemed a reasonable price.

Examples of things available for this offer are: Salmon or Chicken teriyaki (which are £16.50 anyway); Sushi (usually £23); Kazu Special (sashimi or

sushi with a side of tempura usually £24); Saikiyo Yaki (grilled black cod, usually £25), Unaju (grilled sea eel, usually £28). My companion and I both chose £16.50 dishes anyway!

The miso soup was tasty, and I really enjoy that feeling of drinking a thin soup out of a little bowl; the salad was ok, the mains were excellent.

As my main I had tempura prawns and vegetables - you know that crisp lightness when tempura is just-cooked and perfect? - that light, thin, coating was hot and crisp, the vegetables fresh-tasting and al dente, and the prawns so beautifully done: it was a great choice. I can't remember having such good tempura anywhere for ages.

My companion had very nice, oily, grilled mackerel which he enjoyed enormously (and considered very healthy!). The dessert was simply a very sweet and already sectioned orange, served in its skin which was exactly the right taste to complement what had gone before.

So now I want to say I think this Kazu is well worth a try especially if you can go at the aforementioned hours while the set

deal is on, to get an idea of what they serve.

They specialise in fish of all different kinds. You can also buy Kazu Rolls for £15 - the Fisherman's Special is filled with a mixture of different fish; the Unaju Roll is filled with crab, avocado with flying fish roe, and topped with braised eel.

Alas the wine is expensive by the glass and you know by now how I moan about this (£9 for a glass of long-opened French pinot noir) but a very nice Japanese beer, Kirin - which says on the bottle it is Japan's favourite beer - was (doubly) enjoyed by my companion and was £4.80 a bottle.

And although with our drinks and service charge the bill for two was of course quite a lot more than £16.50 x 2, at £58.05 a meal at the special deal prices was well within that eating-out budget of ours.

And - aha - I have just seen that from 2.30 to 6pm at the moment you can enjoy 25% off drinks and eat some small dishes like a salmon and avocado roll (£8) or a spicy tuna roll (£11). They are trying to attract you: after my enjoyable meal I'd say give it a go.



## Pub reopens

The Newman Arms in Rathbone Street has reopened under the ownership of Truman's brewery.

A new snug bar is being named after George Orwell, who was a regular during the war and referenced it in two of his novels: "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (as the "Proles" pub) and "Keep The Aspidistra Flying".

The bar also featured in the controversial 1960 film "Peeping Tom" about a murderer who photographed the killing of his victims.

A brewery spokesperson said: "The Newman was a legendary pub, and we want to return it to that status. Key will be the beer range with four cask and 12 keg lines, our own beers and a rotating selection of craft beers."

There is also one of London's first crawler machines to allow drinkers to take away draft beers.



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OPEN:

24/7





# Ustinov's birth pains

By MIKE PENTELOW

The birth certificate of celebrated actor, writer and raconteur, Peter Ustinov, reveals his home was 35 Ridgmount Gardens.

But his birth was a more than stressful one for his mother, Nadia Benois, on account of his journalist father, Jona, telling her to hold back her contractions while he filed his copy!

Just after midnight on the morning of April 16, 1921, Nadia recalled in her memoirs, she awoke with a pain in her tummy thinking it was the result of eating a box of chocolates.

Then at about 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning the pain returned and she realised it was the baby. So she asked her husband to take her to the nursing home.

He was typing a report to telephone to the Berlin news agency he worked for and told her, rather insensitively and with little medical knowledge: "Well, you'll have to wait. I'm not ready yet."

The pains grew stronger and more frequent. "I was walking up and down the corridor like a tiger in a cage," she wrote. Her nanny, Miss Rowe, asked Klop (Jona's nickname) to ring the nursing home and a doctor.

"Wait, wait," answered Klop. "I'll be ready in a minute."

"But in a minute the baby may be here," replied the nanny.

"I can't help it; be patient," replied Klop. "Surely Nadia can wait!"

The nanny went looking for a taxi, which she eventually found after walking miles. During this time Nadia was in agony, but Klop said he only had to telephone Berlin, and just as she thought she was going to split, he said: "Wait, wait. I am just finishing; just a few more phrases!"

Then the taxi arrived and she could hardly sit in it and felt the baby was going to be born there.

"No, no, you mustn't let it!" he told her.

At the nursing home the nurse pushed chloroform under her nose against her will so she was unconscious during the birth much to her resentment.

When at last she saw baby Peter she thought "he looked surprisingly wise, like a little Buddha, and yet so helpless and vulnerable."

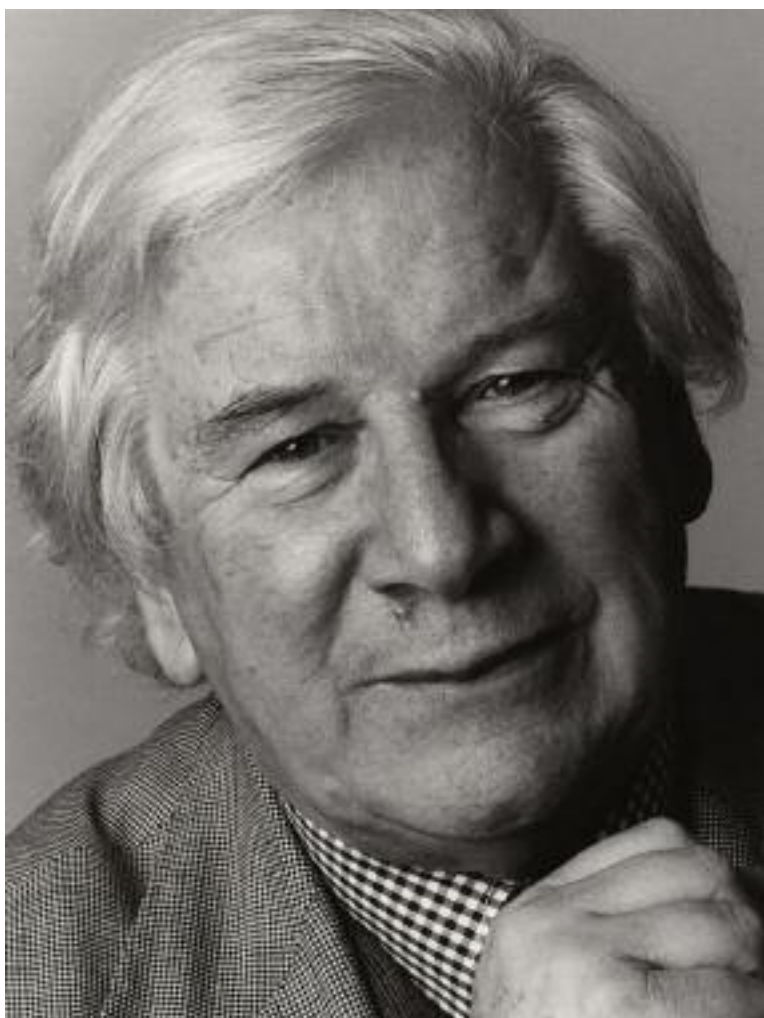
The nurse told Klop that his son was the exact image of him. "Well," he said. "I don't mind him looking like me, but I hope I don't look like him!"

Nadia had nicknamed her husband Klop (meaning bed bug) because of his bed hopping proclivities. So it was unconventional but not so surprising when he ap-

## ... for his mother that is



Young Ustinov with his parents in Ridgmount Gardens in 1924.



Peter Ustinov at the height of his fame (National Portrait Gallery)

pointed one of his ex-lovers to be Peter's godmother. He explained that she had hoped to marry him, but "it is too late now and as she can't be the mother of my child the least I can do is ask her to be its godmother."

Nadia laughed and said: "Well, I hope she will be satisfied with the alternative!" It also emerged he had first had an affair with the young woman's older sister.

The flat in Ridgmount Gardens belonged to a French woman, Madame Le Bhian, who did not mind fellow foreigners. Klop was partly Russian, German

and Ethiopian, and Nadia was half Russian and the rest French and Italian.

They had been treated as "enemy aliens" when they arrived in London in December 1920 so they spoke French together in public. They were told at their first lodgings they would have to leave as soon as the baby arrived, as no animals or children were allowed.

They were welcome at Ridgmount Gardens, however. Here they were visited, when Peter was nine months old, by a Russian inventor called Nicolai Nicolaevitch, who spoke very quickly

and threw his arms about extravagantly. Nadia suddenly felt Peter shaking on her lap. "He was convulsed by a fit of uncontrollable, silent laughter, like an old man," she recalled. "Tears were pouring down his cheeks. I started laughing too. Klop said it showed Peter had a very keen sense of humour. I had never seen a baby laughing in that way."

When Peter was two years old he spoke very clearly and was fascinated by new words, she stated. "Klop loved to play with him, making him do and say all sorts of absurd things. For instance, he would put his collar and tie around Peter's neck, a trilby hat on his curly head, and make him say: 'I am Lloyd George and you are rascals!' And Peter did it very emphatically, knitting his brow over his humorous eyes, obviously sensing the amusement he was about to cause."

They took on a cook, Frieda, from Hamburg, who also posed nude for paintings by Nadia, who was an accomplished artist. Frieda however declined a request to pose naked for seven-year-old Peter!

Klop also asked Nadia to paint his other girlfriends in the nude, which she did somewhat reluctantly.

Despite the tatty furniture at Ridgmount Gardens they attracted a circle of friends for evenings there during their three years' occupancy. The guest list included Mary Chamot (a Slade art school student from nearby Gower Street), Rudolph Stulik (owner of the Tour Eiffel restaurant at 1 Percy Street), Augustus John (the Fitzrovia artist who admired Nadia's work), the ballerina Tamara Karsinova, and Count Albrecht Bernstorff of the German Embassy who was later murdered by the Nazis.

In 1933 Hitler's government took over the news agency Klop worked for and it came under the control of propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Two years later Klop was ordered to prove his Aryan blood - impossible as his mother was part Ethiopian, his father was a Slavic Russian, and his grandfather a Polish Jew. Bravely he responded: "If Herr Dr Goebbels would like first to prove his ancestry, then I will do the same." Unsurprisingly Klop was sacked.

By then Peter was at the same school in London as Rudolf von Ribbentrop (son of Joachim, the

Nazi diplomat and later Foreign Minister) and did his best to antagonise him.

Klop then got British citizenship and acquired work in journalism, art dealing, and spying (for MI5, MI6, the KGB and the Germans).

As the second world war started Klop tried to get Peter involved in secret intelligence work, meeting a stranger and exchanging passwords. But it proved unsuccessful as Peter was considered unsuitable because he could not easily blend into a crowd.

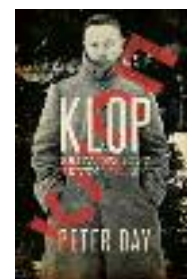
Nadia did her bit for the war effort by working in the canteen at Euston Station. But the "alien" taint reappeared after Dunkirk when security was tightened and only British born people were allowed to work there, much to her fury.

As Hitler planned to invade Britain in 1940, he put Klop on his death list of 2,820 people to be rounded up (along with Fitzrovia novelists Virginia Woolf and H G Wells).

After the war, Klop was assigned to entrap a British atomic scientist, Alan Nunn May, who was passing on information to the Russians. Klop (posing as a Russian agent whose message they had intercepted) was to approach him from Tottenham Court Road and exchange passwords outside the British Museum. But May had been tipped off and did not turn up.

Klop did however warn his MI5 case officer that Kim Philby's wife was a Communist and Soviet agent, and that Anthony Blunt was a member of the Communist Party. These warnings were ignored and the pair were allowed to continue spying for the Soviet Union for many more years before being unmasked.

When Klop retired from MI5 in 1957 he worked for a short while for the management company of his son, Peter, by now a famous actor.



### SOURCES:

**Klop and the Ustinov Family**, by Nadia Benois Ustinov (published by Sidgwick & Jackson, 1973).

**Klop, Britain's Most Ingenious Secret Agent**, by Peter Day (published by Biteback, 2014).



For the past week, I've been tip-toeing up to her room every ten minutes when she's in. I've been listening for the squeak of the floorboards. Then I go right up to the door and press my ear against it for the sound. It's not possible for a lady to urinate in a sink, the magistrate says. I'm not sure whether, to his mind, 'possible' means 'unable' given the female apparatus or that a lady would never conceive of such an immoral act.

Either way, he's a fool. Because Nina Hamnett is not a lady, no. She's an Artist. A Bohemian. To that sort, seeing a sink as a sink, a washing vessel, is missing the higher purpose of life. No, she's an artist and must piss on impulse. She can't trot to the privy like the rest of us. Of course she thinks she got away with it. That little smirk of hers: you can't evict me; the magistrate said so. But I know she did it and I'm going to find her out.

I've been making sure to listen to my own expulsions in order to differentiate between the hot whizz of piss and the metallic sound of the faucet stream. I tried looking through the keyhole, but keyholes are not as easy to peep through as some make out. For a

# Piss Artist

A short story by SUNITA SOLIAR

start, the aperture is small, and the inner layers of the lock tend to obstruct the view.

Of course I carry the key to her room with me so I can come in on the act as soon as I hear it splashing against the ceramic. How do you think she does it? Do you think she hoists her skirt up, pulling back the big drape of her mosaic-patterned sleeves? Or does she do it starkers, cocking one leg up, spraying the sink and her thighs? She brushes her teeth in that sink. I bet she doesn't even wipe herself off afterwards, unless she's doing it on her bedding. Her towel perhaps. Her petticoat. It's horrifying for respectable people to have to think of such things, but she forces me. I'm hardly doing this for my own enjoyment.

I've been tolerant: you should see her room. Pillows tossed on the floor, clothes draping chairs, a clutter of canvasses on the stove.

This is no reflection on my es-

tablishment, understand: anyone should be proud to give my rooms on Howland Street as their address. No, it's her: she embraces filth in all forms, from the paint flecks up her arms to the smut of her sheets. And she tells the men she brings in, 'Watch the landlady. She's a perfect beast.' I, a beast! And then she goes on to tell them that this is the most evil-smelling place she's ever lived. She wants me to hear, and of course she won't entertain complaints about her male friends because they are artists and models, certainly not lovers — but the sink!

I know for sure about the sink. It wasn't just the pale tinge of yellow, it was the smell. She has made it astringent and heady in there with paints and other solutions, and that was the giveaway. The sweet, sticky smell, like golden syrup. The irony that her pee should smell sweet! Of course when I confronted her about it she



NINA HAMNETT (National Portrait Gallery)

had a ready answer. The yellow was paint from washing out her brushes. But I'm too smart for her lies. I told her, 'I know your ways, Nina Hamnett, drinking to all hours. You used to be in and out to the latrine all through the night. How come you stopped? I haven't heard the door.' She had the cheek to say, 'And what are you doing up at that hour? Perhaps you've been at the bottle yourself.' A mouth like that on her and her cheeks blotched from alcohol. The magistrate must have had his eyes on inside out.

Yesterday, I almost had her. I was just on my way to her room to do one of my checks when she came out. Good job I thought to carry a feather duster and I made a great ruse of cleaning the banisters. It was her oddly defiant manner that gave me the tipoff. She said, 'I've left the window open. There was a funny smell.' I thought that was pretty clever. To throw me off the scent, so to speak, by mentioning it herself. If that doesn't sound like guilt, I don't know what does. She said, 'You've been cleaning this part of the hall a lot recently, haven't you?'

But I didn't have time to chat. I needed to get into her room before the smell dissipated. I didn't say anything and waited for her to go past. When she was out of the front door and I'd counted to ten, I went into her room. There it was. That faint, sweet smell. I looked at the sink. Droplets of something, alright, but these were clear. Still, pee is sometimes clear. I looked closer and closer until it was right under my nose, but I couldn't tell the origin of the smell. One would have to employ other senses to be sure. Taste, for example. But that would be absurd! How could anyone think of such an idea. It only crosses my mind because this is how her sort corrupts. I must catch her: one needs to preserve one's dignity.

## Poetry corner

### HAWKING RADIATION

By Terry Egan

Here's the thing -  
that her eyes' pupils  
are not black,  
that in them's the sun,  
the moon and the stars...

I kiss her  
that her lids stay closed:  
in that void  
there's no world I know -  
O! this planet Earth...

### ALMOST FORGOTTEN

by Sandra Goodrick

I remember butterflies  
And hiding in the rhubarb  
Black and White  
Super 8 film rolling  
capturing the story  
of a little girl's life.

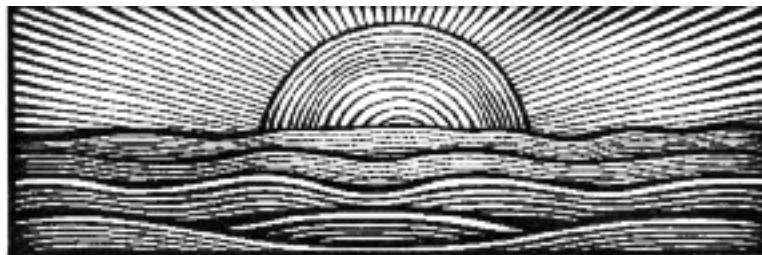


Illustration by Clifford Harper

Brothers and sisters  
playing Jack in the Box  
cats and dogs play chase  
images forever  
frolicking in the cat mint  
in my memory almost lost.

Till in another country  
far away  
with both tide and time  
a little pair of black velvet wings  
silently flutter by  
with the key  
to unlock those old treasures.

And a woman begins to cry  
as her life showreels  
and flickers by  
on the wings of a creature  
almost extinct in England  
but not in mind

Where did all the butterflies go  
What happened to my daisy chain  
Where's my childhood  
captured like a feature  
on the super 8 of my brain.

### HIGH SUMMER

By Wendy Shutler

Summer glitters, a rustling dream  
Of long light evenings, leafy,  
green.  
Ripening cornfields, swifts on the wing,  
Tinkle of ice in a jug of Pimm's.  
Deckchairs, Wimbledon, straw-  
berries and cream,  
Intoxication of love's young  
dream,  
When roses scent the humid night  
Where all will vanish. A trick of light

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# NHS celebrates 70 years of advances in patient care

By JOSIE WALES  
(UCLH Archivist)

On 5 July 2018, the NHS will celebrate 70 years of caring for patients and transforming the health of the nation through medical advances and improvements to public health. The UCLH archives tell the story of how healthcare has evolved over the centuries, providing opportunities to consider the financial barriers that many people faced in accessing medical treatment before 1948, and further appreciate the impact and achievements of the NHS.

The Middlesex Hospital [in Mortimer Street] was founded in 1745 as a voluntary hospital to treat 'the sick and lame of Soho' who could not afford private medical treatment. However, as demand grew, prospective patients were expected to contribute towards the cost of their stay in hospital, or provide evidence of their inability to pay.

These patients would also be visited at home by the Lady Almoner, whose purpose it was to assess their eligibility to receive treatment free of charge. Individuals with a regular income or financial support from relatives would be advised to seek private treatment elsewhere.

Governors of the Hospital and regular financial supporters were able to refer patients to the Middlesex by signing a Letter of Recommendation, offering an alternative means of accessing treatment.

Following the introduction of universal healthcare free at the point of access, the health of the population quickly improved. Adult life expectancy has increased and infant mortality rates have dramatically reduced.

A significant step was the widespread immunisation against common childhood diseases such as diphtheria. While vaccinations were offered prior to 1948, their provision was dependent on local authorities. The NHS became the central instrument for coordinating and providing routine childhood vaccinations free of charge, and programmes quickly expanded to include immunisations against tuberculosis and whooping cough.

After several outbreaks of polio in the 1950s, the introduction of routine vaccination against the virus has largely eradicated the disease.

The NHS continues to drive innovations in public health and patient care, and by 2020 UCLH will be home to one of only two



*In 1925 the Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Street was found to be structurally unstable and a successful fundraising campaign was launched.*



NHS proton beam therapy centres offering advanced cancer treatment in England.

None of this would be possible without the skill, dedication and compassion of NHS staff, as well as the many volunteers, charities and communities that support the service, continuing a long-standing tradition of philanthropy.

Both University College Hospital [originally in Gower Street now round the corner in Euston Road] and The Middlesex Hospital opened their doors as charitable institutions, and were reliant on public contributions for the continuation of their services.

Voluntary societies such as the Middlesex Hospital Ladies' Association raised money to hold concerts for patients and also established a hospital Library.

In 1925 The Middlesex Hospital was found to be structurally unstable, and a successful fundraising campaign was launched, appealing for donations to the Reconstruction Fund. The brand new hospital opened ten

years later on the same site.

Today, UCLH carries on this legacy, with sponsored events such as this year's Amsterdam to London Staff Cycle Challenge raising money to support new building projects. Donations to UCLH Charity and UCLH Arts and Heritage also support patients, staff, equipment and research, all helping to further improve the patient journey.

Celebrating the last 70 years is an opportunity to thank NHS staff and volunteers for their hard work, and also enables the public to connect with their local health service through a range of themed events and exhibitions.

**From 28 June 2018, a new exhibition in the UCH Street Gallery will showcase advances in patient care since the NHS was founded. The annual research open day will take place from 2:30 to 5:30pm on Thursday 5 July, providing an opportunity to discover some of the groundbreaking research going on at UCLH.**



*Aneurin Bevan (National Portrait Gallery)*

## Nye's long crusade for health and housing

**The architect of the National Health Service on July 5, 70 years ago was Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960).**

At the time he was the Minister of Health & Housing, and a regular in the Fitzroy Tavern at 16 Charlotte Street with his friend and fellow Labour MP, Michael Foot.

"Nye", as Bevan was nicknamed, spent the last two years of his life at 35 Gosfield Street when he and his wife Jennie Lee were in town.

When he was made the minister in 1945 he already had experience of both health and housing as a councillor in Wales.

He started working in the coal mines at the age of 13.

Through this he contributed to the Tredegar Medical Aid Society, which had been founded in 1890 and provided health care free at the point of delivery to miners and steelworkers, in return for a weekly contribution of three per cent of their wages. By 1923 he was serving on its hospital committee, experience that served him well in creating the NHS.

One of the doctors employed by the society was A J Cronin who wrote two novels about coal mining communities, *The Stars Look Down*, in 1934, and *The Citadel* in 1937 (recently serialised on radio), and later the Dr Finlay's Casebook stories.

And it was in Tredegar that he served on the urban district council's Health & Housing Committee. His approach here on housing was the same as when he was the government minister - he preferred quality to building more cheaply and quickly.

Tredegar's library also had a

copy of *Capital* by Karl Marx, but Nye's communist friend Archie Lush noticed that there were finger marks on the first 27 pages but the rest were seemingly unthumbed.

Bevan was elected in 1928 on to Monmouthshire County Council, where health was chronically underfunded, partly because high unemployment meant the rates paid to the council were lower. Local government was also vulnerable to cuts from central government funding.

That is why when he formed the NHS he rejected the case for hospitals to be run by local authorities, and decided to nationalise them instead.

Despite some reservations from parts of the medical profession he managed to steer the forming of the NHS through parliament with great skill.

Another piece of legislation he introduced was the National Assistance Act, also in 1948, which finally got rid of workhouses.

In 1951 he resigned from the government in protest at the transfer of £13 million from health to arms spending and the introduction of charges for NHS dentures and spectacles in the budget by chancellor Hugh Gaitskell.

Gaitskell then beat Bevan for the leadership of the Labour Party in 1955. But Bevan seemed to bear him no personal malice. Indeed he stood in for him at a press conference in Moscow in 1959 when Gaitskell had got drunk on vodka and could not be woken.

**SOURCE: Nye, the political life of Aneurin Bevan, by Nicklaus Thomas-Symonds (publisher I B Tauris).**



# Providers of the first royal water closets

By LAURENCE BOULTING

Most Fitzrovians will be familiar with the three fine mosaics, ornamenting the façades of that cluster of Art Nouveau buildings making up Candover Street and the corner of Little Riding Street.

With their gold lettering set on a green background, they announce with some fanfare, (including an ampersand worthy of a Byzantine master), "T.J. Boulting & Sons - Electrical Engineers, Sanitary & Hot Water Engineers, Range and Stove Manufactory, Established 1808".

Of course, behind every façade lurks a story...or two. Mine come to me through my paternal grandmother, "Mamma" Rose Boulting, who died aged 96 with every tooth still in her head, her black hair barely streaked by grey and a fag in her mouth. She was, as they say, a bit of a character.

When it came to telling a story, Mamma Rose could not be called shy about adding a bit of ornamentation and embellishment herself either: after all, nothing like an extra splash of colour here and there to liven things up, now is there?

I was, therefore, brought up to believe by her – and still do – that the Boultings' singular claim to a modicum of fame and a mention in the history books was that it was they who installed the very first flush lavatory in Windsor Castle. Since T.J. Boulting was established as far back as 1808, this would suggest that their revolutionary contribution to humanity and the sanitary conditions of the royal household might well have come about at the invitation of no less than Prince Albert himself,

that dedicated follower of scientific and social progress. However, service to the Crown as this undoubtedly was, that didn't prevent the Royal Warrant, on the matter of Her Majesty's comfort and well-being in the privy, being awarded to their rival, the celebrated Thomas Crapper.

This sleight to the family name was a trifle vexing. To think it could have been 'Boulting' which had gone into the English vernacular instead of 'Crapper', with all its associated nouns and verbs, certainly does give pause for thought, but I, for one, am rather relieved (if that's the right word) it didn't.

Rather more irritating, how-

ever, was the question of property. Apart from the T.J. Boulting premises themselves, Mamma Rose averred that 'we' owned huge swathes of the area, including the entire site of what used to be the Middlesex Hospital. That's an eye-watering slice of prime real estate to be sitting on in central London and I'm not the only family member who would have dearly liked to have benefited from even a tiny share of it.

So where did it all go? On this, Mamma Rose remained uncharacteristically reticent. The answer might well have had something to do with her husband, Arthur Boulting, an individual every bit as colourful as

she was. His activities, as murky as fog, might be best described as 'entrepreneurial' – and left at that.

Whilst entirely possible that Arthur belonged to a different branch of the family with no claim on all that property, it is more likely, I think, that he had his chunk of it, cashed it in and then blew it on one of his many ventures, including apparently 'a scientific expedition to Siberia' which set off, after a lavish banquet at the Strand Palace Hotel, never to be heard of again...Yes, Arthur was...well, not altogether transparent.

Boulting is an unusual name. I have often wondered about its origins, but it was only on a visit to the Flemish city of Antwerp that I began to formulate a theory about our family roots – because there the name is almost, but not quite as common as muck. Antwerp has had a long association with the Jewish community who predominantly control and provide the skills for its world renowned diamond market.

My own theory, for what it is worth, is that the Boultings originated there, at some point fled persecution of the Jews, and came to England (probably through Ireland and bringing a bit of Irish blood with them on the way). My own father emphatically denied we had any Jewish or Irish blood whatsoever, but you only had to look and listen to his mother,

Mamma Rose, to know there was plenty of both, swilling around in buckets in the Boulting bloodstream.

Story-telling runs in the family, so let me conclude with one of my own. Years ago, I happened to be on an Air France flight the day they were celebrating their 50th anniversary. To mark the occasion they were handing out generous amounts of a very passable champagne. The gentleman next to me was a dour-faced Belgian who seemed disinclined to enter into the spirit of the occasion, but did begin to loosen up enough after the second glass to inform me he was on his way to the UK to attend an international paper conference.

"Oh? And what kind of paper would that be?", I asked. It was not until the third glass was in his hands, however, before he answered, with an embarrassed mutter: "Lavatory paper!"

"What an extraordinary coincidence!" I exclaimed with champagne-fuelled enthusiasm. He looked at me blankly. I explained, "You see, my family, we make the lavatories – and here you are, side by side with me, ready to provide the paper! Fortuitous seating arrangement, wouldn't you say?"

**Serendipity in action?**

**Or a whole lot of 'crap'?**

**Or should that be, a whole lot of 'boulting'?**

**Caveat Lector - you decide.**



Mamma Rose (left) and the T J Boulting sign that still remains today in Candover Street (above).

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# 100 years of Married Love

By SUE BLUNDELL

'More than ever to-day are happy homes needed. It is my hope that this book may serve the State by adding to their number.'

Marie Stopes' opening words in the preface to her book *Married Love* set the tone for the whole endeavour. Her desire to improve the lives of married people – 'to increase the joys of marriage, and to show how much sorrow may be avoided' – was admirable, and no doubt genuine. But her wider aim of serving the State may be more questionable.

It was Stopes' unhappy first marriage which persuaded her to write *Married Love*. In 1914 she had been granted an annulment on the grounds of non-consummation. 'In my own marriage I paid such a terrible price for sex-ignorance,' she later wrote in *Married Love*, 'that I feel that knowledge gained at such cost should be placed at the service of humanity.'

And so was born Stopes' resolve to write about sex, with the emphasis on women's sexual desires, and on explanations to both parties about how they could be satisfied. 'It should be realised that a man does not woo and win a woman once and for all when he marries her: he must woo her before every separate act of coitus.'

*Married Love* was published in March 1918 and caused a sensation. It went through six printings in a few weeks, and was read by people of all social classes – from



Marie Stopes (National Portrait Gallery) and the plaque to her at 108 Whitfield Street

aristocrats to housemaids, if Downton Abbey is to be believed. But people seeking similar enlightenment in America would have had to resort to smuggled copies of the book. Publication was banned there for twenty years.

Marie Stopes' first connection with Fitzrovia had been established in the early 1900s when she studied Palaeobotany at University College, gaining a Doctor of Science degree in 1905, at the young age of 25. Later she became the first female member of the science faculty at Manchester Uni-

versity when she took up a post there as a lecturer in Palaeobotany.

But Stopes' most lasting legacy has been as a pioneer of birth control. With her second husband Humphrey Verdon Roe she set up Britain's first family planning clinic in Holloway in 1921. This moved to Fitzrovia's Whitfield Street in 1925, and other centres opened across the country.

The Whitfield Street clinic is still in operation, and still attracts opposition from people who refuse to accept women's right to control their own fertility.



Ever a controversial figure, Stopes took the link between contraception and 'service to the State' to unacceptable extremes when she began to champion the cause of eugenics in the 1920s. She believed that one of the benefits of birth control was that it could be used to discourage the lower classes and people with 'flaws and defects' from reproducing. These harsh views make it difficult for many people, including myself, to hail Marie Stopes as a feminist hero. Perhaps we can call her a flawed hero, and leave it at that.



## New edition

In Fitzrovia News, issue 136 (Spring 2015) we covered the publication of Fitzrovia musician (and Fitzrovia News columnist) Clifford Slapper's biography of Mike Garson, who was David Bowie's most frequent musician, on stage and record, from 1972 to 2006. Clifford also worked closely with David Bowie, playing piano for his last ever television appearance in the world. That limited first edition of the book sold out but has since been picked up by Backbeat Books in the USA, a subsidiary of Hal Leonard, the world's biggest producer of sheet music and music books. A new, updated and much expanded edition will now be published in paperback, including coverage of David Bowie's death in 2016, and its effect on his lifelong collaborator, Garson.

There are six new chapters, new photographs including some of Bowie never before seen, plus a new foreword from Garson himself. *Bowie's Piano Man: The Life of Mike Garson* by Clifford Slapper is published in the USA in May, 2018 and is released in the UK and Europe in July, 2018. It can be found on Amazon and in all good bookstores.

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## Picture puzzle



How well do you know Fitzrovia? Can you identify where this picture was taken? Answer below the Dining Detective picture on page 9..



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# Welcome to the House of Osman



**The Piano Man  
No 13 by  
CLIFFORD  
SLAPPER**

This has been a busy time for the Piano Man, so here are brief spotlights on several local developments in the world of the arts.

The southern part of Fitzrovia has been enjoying something of a style renaissance in the past year or two, as the two parallel streets linking the bottom of Charlotte Street to Tottenham Court Road have seen the opening of numerous fancy boutiques and restaurants. On Windmill Street we have Drakes, Tombo, Rivet & Hide (high-end jeans), Bao and several other places of interest.

Percy Street, meanwhile, is one of our most fascinating Fitzrovia streets, in terms of its colourful, arts-related history. It was built in the 1760s on land owned by William and Francis Goodge. Those in the arts who have lived there include Wyndham Lewis, Charles Laughton, Sonia Orwell and Coventry Patmore.

Number 1, Percy Street, in the early 20th century was the Eiffel Tower hotel and restaurant, frequented by the artists of the Vorticist movement. Painter Augustus John took the future wife of Dylan Thomas to one of its rooms on an assignation prior to her marriage. George Bernard Shaw was also a regular. The Eiffel Tower later became the legendary White House, then Bam-bou, before opening as current Vietnamese restaurant, House of Ho.

The Elysée, at number 13,



Cartoon by Chris Tyler

Percy Street, was opened in 1936 by George Varnava and has had an extraordinary history, remaining in the same family ever since. Alois Hitler, half brother of Adolf, lived at 4, Percy Street, London W1, in the years leading up to the First World War.

Local landlord, Pearl and Coutts, have gradually added properties on Percy Street to their portfolio in recent years, to the point where they now effectively own the whole street, like a successful player of the Monopoly board game. Their head, David Pearl, is a likeable eccentric who once featured as one of television's 'Secret Millionaires'.

Into this street we welcome the ascendant clothes designer, Osman Yousefzada. Housed in a former opium den, his beautiful new showroom encompasses art gallery, book shop, design studios and office. Even the rails on which his latest collections hang are works of art designed by Osman himself. On my first visit I was shown round by the charming Head of Atelier, Lahah. Watch out for a more detailed piece in a future issue of Fitzrovia News, as well as for some live music events

which we are discussing holding there in future.

A nearby club which hosted much music and merriment in its long and decadent history was the Colony Room Club. I often played there in the early 2000s at the monthly live show nights. Artist Darren Coffield is now working on a book documenting its story via the experiences of those who frequented it: *Tales from the Colony: the Lost Bohemia of Bacon, Belcher and Board*. To join the crowdfunder campaign or to offer Darren personal recollections of the Colony, visit: [unbound.com/books](http://unbound.com/books), then click on "tales from the colony."

In May I was invited to Leeds to give a lecture on the ideas of Karl Marx, on the 200th anniversary of his birth. His own studying, writing and carousing in Soho predated the Colony by just over a hundred years, but many of his observations on society remain pertinent today.

Also in May I went to Golders Green Crematorium, followed by the French House, for the funeral of Eddi McPherson, Soho legend and matriach, a very dear friend and jazz singer whom I often accompanied on the piano. She was always very proud of her "little boy", otherwise known as Suggs, of Madness.

I have had the pleasure of performing on stage with Suggs many times, including on tour for his one-man show.

He also has strong ties to Fitzrovia, having lived in the 1970s in a flat over Maples at 149 Tottenham Court Road, and still often visits the area.



## Publicly hanged for local murder

By MIKE PENTELOW

**The last woman to be publicly executed in London was Catherine Wilson (above) in front of a crowd of 20,000 outside Newgate prison on October 20, 1862.**

It was for the murder by poisoning on October 18, 1856 of her landlady, Mrs Maria Soames, at what is now 7 Huntley Street (but was 27 Alfred Street at the time), near the Marlborough Arms.

Wilson had moved to lodge there with a man called James Dixon, whom she claimed was her brother, in November 1855.

Samuel Barnes, the half-brother of Mrs Soames, had last seen her alive the day before her death when she was in good health. He said she also owned 13 Alfred Street, now the back of 90-103 Ridgmount Gardens in Huntley Street.

The next day he got a message that she had died in the early hours after vomiting a lot. When he saw the body, with the face very distorted and hands clenched, he was shocked.

Ann Naack, the oldest daughter of Mrs Soames, said that when the doctor had made up a tonic for her, Wilson had taken charge of it, administered it, then took it to her own room and locked the door. She claimed this was on the instructions of the doctor, who later denied this.

Half an hour after the death Wilson told another lodger, Emma Rowe, that Mrs Soames had taken her own life after a secret liaison with a man she was about to marry but who cheated her out of £80. Wilson said she was sure the man would send a letter demanding more money.

After the funeral Wilson told Ann that her mother had borrowed £10 off her which she wanted reimbursing.

When the letter from the man demanding another £10 arrived the word Wednesday was spelled wrongly as "Wensday".

At the time Wilson got away with it.

But six years later police found up to seven other people had been poisoned after giving Wilson money in their wills so they examined the case of Mrs Soames anew.

The letter claiming to be from the man asking for money, was then identified as being in the handwriting of Wilson. And when asked to write a sentence containing the word Wednesday she made the same wrong spelling of it.

Wilson had been found not guilty of attempting to murder another woman, whom she gave a "tonic" which burned her mouth so she spat it out and it burned her bedclothes. It was found to contain enough sulphuric acid to kill 50 people.

Then the other cases were uncovered, and the one with the strongest evidence was that of Mrs Soames. Her body had been exhumed, with no detectable poison.

But at the trial, medical experts stated the symptoms were consistent with colchicum poisoning, which had been found in Mrs Soames' house by her doctor when James Dixon had died there in June 1856.

The trial started on September 22, 1862 and this is when the evidence by her half-brother, daughter, lodger, and doctor was heard.

The jury took three hours to find her guilty and sentenced her to be hanged, outside Newgate prison, which is now the site of the Old Bailey.

## Looking back through the archives

### 40 years ago

### Nasty plunge

From Tower, June 1978:

Mrs Greta Maclay stepped out of her house in Middleton Buildings [since renamed Place] onto what she thought was solid ground. Next moment the earth moved and Greta was thrown headlong into a dirty great hole that had opened up beneath her feet. She found herself sitting in the debris of her own coal cellar, nursing a bruised ankle but otherwise unharmed. There, exposed for all to see was the shoddy brickwork and rotten foundations of the Georgian jerry-builder.

The Community Housing Association was willing to buy and Basil Samuel was ready to sell. "Meanwhile the hole remains, a mute testimony that the time is now ripe for things to happen," commented Tower.



### 10 years ago

### Guy down the chip shop a star

From Fitzrovia News, Summer, 2008:

Paul McCartney joined the queue for a bag of chips at Gigs restaurant at 12 Tottenham Street.

"He had been to an exhibition of pictures taken by his late wife, Linda, which was in a local gallery," said Chris Jordan, joint

owner of the restaurant, who served Paul. "We chatted for about five minutes and he was a very nice chap. Just before going he signed a a chip bag for me which we will have framed.

"He signed it 'Cheers for the chips' and added it might be worth more than the chips one day.

"The next day he dropped in with his latest CD that had his picture on it."

**A Banksy picture (above left) appeared on the wall facing the back entrance of the Royal Mail depot in Newman Street. Captioned "One Nation under CCTV" it was positioned audaciously below a CCTV camera.**

The Blue Moon sex shop at 60 Tottenham Court Road closed down. A sign was put up claiming it had moved round the corner to 23 Goodge Street - but this was its rival Simply Pleasure.



# WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email [news@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto:news@fitzrovia.org.uk) by August 17, 2018 for the Sept issue and put "Listings" in the subject box



Jeff Warner at the King & Queen

## MUSIC

**King & Queen**, 1 Foley St : Folk once a month on Fridays 8-11pm (visit [web.mustradclub.co.uk](http://web.mustradclub.co.uk)). Jeff Warner, plus tunes from Liz Giddings and Roger Digby, June 9. Sylvia Barnes & Sandy Stage, Sept 7. Jim MacFarland & Ken Wilson, Sept 21.

**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](http://the100club.co.uk)): Raintown, June 11. Mae Martin, June 12. Ray Gelato, June 30. Eddie and the Hot Rods, July 6. Special Kinda Madness, July 7. The Well Oiled Sisters, July 19. Souljazz Orchestra, July 24. Professor & The Madman, The Witchdoktors, and The Weird Things, Aug 10.

**Brunswick Centre**, Bloomsbury: Greek music festival with free food and drink, June 21, 6-10pm.

## THEATRE

**Bloomsbury Theatre Studio**, 15 Gordon St ([thebloomsbury.com](http://thebloomsbury.com)): Ithiel the Cushite of Venice (Hebrew version of Othello) by UCL Hebrew and Jewish Studies De-

partment, June 19-20. Othello on Trial, by Birkbeck students, June 23. Baby-Go-Round, cabaret about motherhood, June 28-29.

**Camden People's Theatre**, 58-60 Hampstead Rd ([cptheatre.co.uk](http://cptheatre.co.uk)): Big Bang, June 11. A Fortunate Man, by New Perspectives, and Doppelanger by She Goat, June 13-16. Misanthrope, June 19-30. Les Femmes Savantes, June 23-24.

**Dominion Theatre**, 269 Tottenham Court Rd ([dominiontheatre.com](http://dominiontheatre.com)): Bat out of Hell, the Musical, ongoing.

**London Palladium**, Argyll St ([london-palladium.co.uk](http://london-palladium.co.uk)): The King and I, until Aug 4. Sinatra at the Sands, performed by Curtis Stigers and Ronnie Scott's Big Band, July 15.

**New Diorama Theatre** ([newdiorama.com](http://newdiorama.com)), 15-16 Triton St (Euston Rd opposite Fitzroy St): Left My Desk, June 12-16. Director's Cut, June 23-24. The Iconoclasts, June 26. The Bearpit, and Anyone's Guess How We Got Here, June 27. A Heart at Sea, and A Clown Show about Rain, June 28. Love+, and Breakfast, June 29. Sex with Robots and Other Devices, June 30.

**RADA**, Malet St ([rada.ac.uk/whats-on](http://rada.ac.uk/whats-on)): GBS Theatre: Journey's End, by R C Sherriff, until June 9. Gielgud Theatre: Rotterdam, by Jon Brittain, until June 9. Jerwood Vanbrugh Theatre: 3 Winters, by Tena Stivicic, until June 9. Much Ado About Nothing, July 3, 6, 7. A Midsummer Night's Dream, June 28, 30, July 2, 7. Two Gentlemen of Verona, June 29, 30, July 5, 7.

**St Giles-in-the-Fields**, 60 St Giles High St: "The End of History" (about outcasts, originally to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the plague), certain nights June 5-23. Book through: [sohotheatre.com](http://sohotheatre.com) or 020 7478 0100.

## CINEMA

**Bolivar Hall**, 54 Grafton Way ([cultura.embavenez-uk.org](http://cultura.embavenez-uk.org)): London Socialist Film Co-op screen films at 11am on the second Sunday of each month (except June-Aug). Belonging: The Truth Behind the Headlines, Sept 9.

**Charlotte Street Hotel**, 15-17 Charlotte St: Film Club with meal and a movie for £40. To book tickets visit: [bit.ly/CharlotteStreetFilmClub](http://bit.ly/CharlotteStreetFilmClub).

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

**RADA, Jerwood Vanbrugh Theatre**, Malet St: Six short films: A Heart Shaped Stone, Deadpan, Nightswims, Stag, Witch Hunt, and With A Little Help From My Friends; tickets £5, July 4, 7.30-9.30pm.

**Regent Street Cinema**, 309 Regent St: For daily programme visit [regentstreetcinema.com](http://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](http://raifilm.org.uk/events)): Regular programme of interesting screenings.

## COMEDY

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

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

## PUB QUIZZES

**The Albany**, 240 Great Portland St: Sundays, 7pm

**Carpenters Arms**, 68-70 Whitfield St: Tuesdays, 6.30pm.

**Prince of Wales Feathers**, 8 Warren St: Tuesdays, 6pm.

**Rising Sun**, 46 Tottenham Court Rd: Wednesdays, 6.30 for 7pm.

## OTHER EVENT

**St Giles-in-the-Fields**, 60 St Giles High St: Little Big Camp, play session for local children and their families, in churchyard July 1, 2-5pm.

## EXHIBITIONS

**British Museum**, Great Russell St ([britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)):

**Free:** Charmed lives in Greece, until July 15. The Past is Present (objects from 20th century Egypt), until July 22. Money and medals, until Sept 30.

**Pay for:** Rodin and the art of ancient Greece, until July 29.

**Grant Museum of Zoology**, 21 University St: Creature Creations, June 16, and July 14, 1.30-4.30pm. Explore Zoology, June 30, and July 28, 1.30-4.30pm,

**RADA Studios**, Chenies St: Costume & Technical Graduate Exhibition, July 5-7.

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

**UCL Slade School of Fine Art**, Gower St: Graduate degree show, until June 17.

**Wellcome Library**, 183 Euston Rd ([wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org)): Somewhere in Between, until Aug 27. Teeth, until Sept 16.

**RCN Library**, 20 Cavendish Sq: The Voice of Nursing (centenary of RCN), until Dec 21. Pandemic! Nursing 100 Years of Infection, until Sept 23.

## TALKS

**Bloomsbury Institute**, 50 Bedford Square ([bloomsburyinstitute.com](http://bloomsburyinstitute.com)): The Stories of My Life, with authors Kamilla Shamsie and Kamin Mohammadi, June 21, 6.30-8pm.

**RCN Library and Heritage Centre**, 20 Cavendish Square, entrance opposite John Lewis Food Hall ([rcn.org.uk/whatson](http://rcn.org.uk/whatson)): "Please Matron!" Hospital Hygiene in 1901, June 18, 5.30-7.30. Beat the bugs! (AIDS Histories and Cultures Festival), July 2, 6-9pm.

**Sohemian Society**, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: The new biography of Billy Fury "Half Way to Paradise" discussed by the authors, June 20, 7.30pm.

**UCL Darwin Lecture Theatre**, Malet Place ([ucl.ac.uk/events](http://ucl.ac.uk/events)): Lunchtime lectures, Tuesdays and Thursdays (1.15-1.55pm) during term time.

## WALKS

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

## ART

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



**Alison Jacques Gallery**, 18 Berners St: Michelle Stuart "The Nature of Time" (pictured above), until July 28.



**Josh Lilley**, 44-46 Riding House St: Brian Bress "Another Fine Mess" (pictured above), until June 27.



**Narrative Projects**, 110 New Cavendish St: Derek Parfit "The Mind's Eye" (pictured above), until June 30.

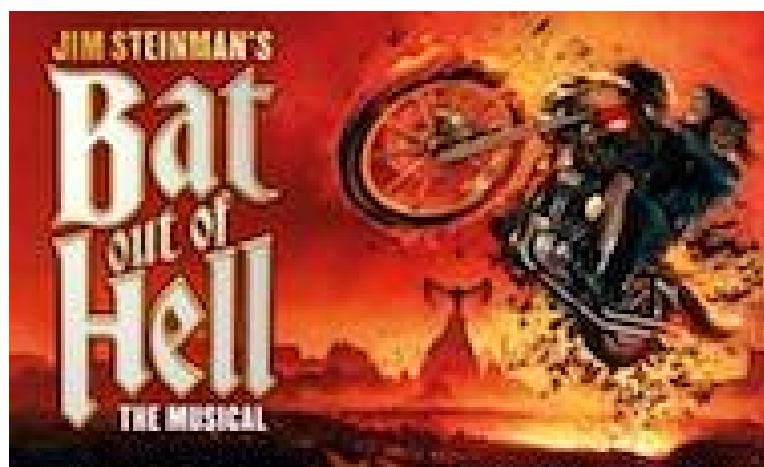
**Tiwani Contemporary**, 16 Little Portland St: Thierry Oussou "Timelines", June 21-Aug 25.



**Webber Gallery**, 18 Newman St: Senta Simond "Rayon Vert" (pictured above), until June 15.

**Woolff Gallery**, 89 Charlotte St: Carol Peace "25 Year Anniversary Show", until June 15.

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New musical at the Dominion Theatre