

FitzroviaNews



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

Issue 150 Autumn 2018

Nursery building empty again after charities disagree on future plans

New childcare provider sought to fill important facility for local families and workers

By Linus Rees

The children’s nursery in Whitfield Street closed at the end of August after more than ten years of serving the community with the loss of 25 places for under-fives because of a disagreement between two charities over improvements to the building and plans to redevelop the site.

A new childcare provider is now being sought to fill the vacant building which is the only children’s nursery in Camden’s Bloomsbury ward and is regarded as an important facility for local families and people working in the area.

Camden Council which owns the freehold closed the previous nursery on the site in 2005 and wanted to sell the land for redevelopment. But after a campaign by local people the Fitzrovia Trust property charity acquired a 20-year lease on the site and refurbished the existing building.

It was re-opened as a nursery in 2008 after the Trust made an agreement with the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) charity which now runs 37 nurseries across London. An Ofsted inspection of the Fitzrovia Community Nursery in February 2018 rated it as “Good”.

However, in June this year parents and carers of the children at the nursery — which is running at nearly full capacity — were told it would close at the end of August and they were invited to discuss future childcare available at the LEYF’s other sites.

One parent contacted *Fitzrovia News* to say: “This is a huge shock”.

According to its 2017 annual report the Fitzrovia Trust wants to build a new nursery, improve the playground, and construct up to 13 flats to be let at social rents.

The Trust is still negotiating with Camden Council to acquire a 125 year lease on the land and is yet to submit any planning application to develop the site. It is unlikely that any redevelopment will take place for at least another two or three years.

Meanwhile LEYF had its own plans for the nursery and wanted

to reconfigure the layout so that it could improve the space to meet the demand for more children aged under two years and comply with health and safety requirements.

While both charities strenuously denied there was any dispute between the two of them they both issued conflicting statements to *Fitzrovia News*.

Mike Abbott of LEYF said: “After careful consultation with Fitzrovia Trust, sadly we were unable to secure an additional five year lease for the property and it is therefore with deep regret that Fitzrovia Community Nursery is to close at the end of August 2018.”

However Colin Bascom director of the Fitzrovia Trust said an agreement had been reached but LEYF had then changed their minds.

“Both sides agreed that the simplest arrangement would be to agree a new 5-year lease but insert a break clause exercisable by us that would allow for any potential redevelopment of the site. The lease was in fact signed,” he said.

Both the LEYF and the Fitzrovia Trust have faced challenges over the past decade but the two organisations have until now worked together to bring community benefit.

Nick Bailey, a member of the Trust board said: “Property prices within Fitzrovia have risen steeply in the last few years with no sign of abating. This has militated against our efforts to provide new affordable housing.

“The Whitfield Street site is a unique opportunity to provide a new, purpose-built nursery as



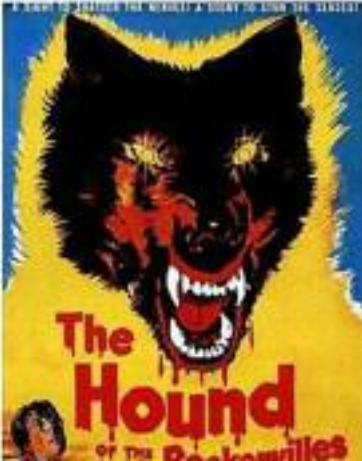
All Saints Margaret Street, feast of the Assumption, 15 August. This year over 200 people joined in this annual High Mass in honour of the Virgin Mary, followed by a procession around the parish boundary, including a stretch of Oxford Street, during which the enthusiastic singing was supported by the All Saints’ choir and a brass band.

Photo: Andrew Prior andrewgprior@blueyonder.co.uk

well as affordable housing which will be a direct benefit to the community in Fitzrovia,” he said.

LEYF says that staff from the nursery will be employed in its other nurseries, and all children

will be offered places. The nearest alternative nurseries run by LEYF are at 10 Carburton Street at Holcroft Court and 23 Brewer Street in Soho.



**WIN ALL
SHERLOCK
HOLMES
STORIES**
see page 12



**Guy Ritchie
buys local pub**
see page 7



Fox on the roof
see page 2



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Letters, email and comment

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Was Vasi's the last Greek restaurant in the area?

When I moved into Fitzrovia in 1975 the area was full of Greek Cypriot restaurants.

Among them were Anemos, famous for plate-smashing and dancing on the tables at 32 Charlotte Street.

And Charlie Kasopis's cafe at 29 Tottenham Street, a few doors from the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, where you took your own wine and ate really cheaply.

The Cypriot residents of Fitzrovia have almost all moved away now, along with their lovely eclectic food stores. And now Vasi's in Maple Street has gone (see page 4).

My heart is breaking. Was this the last of the family-run traditional Greek restaurants in the area? That's a genuine question - is it the last?

Sue Blundell, Goodge Street.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Do readers know of any remaining?

Rodney was a regular worshipper at All Saints

Dear Editors,

On page 8 of the summer issue, you have an article about Rodney [Bickerstaffe] in which you suggest that he was being remembered in the prayers for the departed at All Saints, Margaret Steet, because of his work for the homeless.

In fact, Rodney was a regular worshipper at our 8am Mass on Sundays. As such, he was prayed for throughout his illness and received the last rites shortly before he died. In his public life he rather hid the light of his Christian faith under a bushel, but it informed and undergirded his passionate concern for justice.

His funeral took place at All Saints. My copy of his mother's scrapbook of press cuttings about the Spanish Civil War, which he had published, rested on his coffin beside the Book of the Gospels.

Kind regards

Fr. Alan Moses, Vicar of All Saints, 7 Margaret Street.

Correction

It seems 16-year-old swimmer Alex Rowson, of Gresse Street, was not quite as super fast as our headline stated in the last issue. When his coach said his time of 53.61 seconds for 100 metres was 6.7 seconds "off" the current world record he meant it was that margin away from it not under it.



Renard takes an early morning stroll along the roof of the former Strand Union Workhouse. People sitting in Pearson Square were amused one evening in August to find that Renard was being chased by Amadeus, a bold, four-year-old, tabby tom cat who lives with his family on Tottenham Street. When Renard loped into the square in search of scraps of food, Amadeus who prowls it like its his own manor stalked him before chasing him out into Riding House Street. Onlookers were then amused to witness a few minutes later Renard run in again from Cleveland Street with Amadeus in hot pursuit. This puss is no wuss, it seems.

Doorstep disturbance

We live in a mixed use area, shops offices restaurants live cheek by jowl with residents sometimes there are inevitable tensions and sometimes conflict. A resident recently told us about problems he has been having outside his flat. He lives next door to office premises with a ledge outside. Recently the space outside the offices have been used as a late night meeting smoking and drinking spot.

I think the group work in the area (not connected to the office premises) and have found this spot a convenient place to socialise after work.

I did approach them a couple of

Whitfield Gardens - free and forever

Dear Sir or Madam — I read in *FN149* that 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.

On the memorial in Whitfield Gardens the children of a resident who lived in Tottenham Court Road left it to the public to enjoy as gardens free and forever.

Best wishes.

Name and address withheld

times to ask them to keep the noise down but they became abusive.

I then approached the office company to see if they would do anything about the nuisance on their property they were reluctant to listen to my concerns or do anything about the situation.

The group still meet late at night outside my flat and it has become a low level abuse situation but it still disturbs me and means I cannot work in the evenings which is sometimes necessary for my job.

Do any other *Fitzrovia News* readers have similar problems and do they have any suggestions as to how one can deal with this sort of disturbance on our doorsteps?

Name and address withheld

**The next issue will be out
Tuesday 1 December 2018.**

**Deadline for articles, features and
advertisements 17 November.**

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Camden Council gets £870k to tackle rough sleeping

Camden Council has secured £870,000 of government funding to assist homeless people in the borough after a count of rough sleepers identified a more accurate picture of its street population.

The money, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), is the highest amount awarded for any individual local authority. Neighbouring Westminster Council will receive £534,466, Islington Council £265,987, and the Greater London Authority will also receive £3,300,000.

The funding for Camden will be used to employ more outreach workers, provide better support for people with complex needs, and invest in the Housing First service, provided by charity St Mungo's, which delivers housing and tailored support to rough sleepers with a history of living on the streets. The funding will also provide for a co-ordinator to work specifically with female rough sleepers.

Official statistics state that Camden had a rough sleeper population of 127 in the autumn of 2017 — the first time an attempt had been made to properly measure its street population in recent years.

The figure drew headlines which said rough sleeping had gone up by 647 percent in a year. Camden previously claimed

there were only 17 rough sleepers in the whole of the borough in 2016.

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association (FNA), which publishes *Fitzrovia News*, criticised Camden for failing to admit to the true extent of street homeless in the borough and carried out its own street counts to challenge the council on the statistics it was giving to central government. The FNA argued that without proper record keeping Camden was denying itself essential government funding to tackle the problem of street homelessness.

But until last year Camden was reluctant to mend its ways and actually bother to go out and count people on the pavements, most of them within 20 minutes walk of the Town Hall in Judd Street.

In February 2017, after hearing evidence from the FNA, a scrutiny committee of Camden Council agreed that "counting of rough sleepers was not adequate and there needed to be a method that reflected the real number on the streets".

If you are concerned about someone sleeping rough in Camden, please contact Camden Safer Streets Team via camdensst.com

In Westminster contact westminster.gov.uk/rough-sleeping-helpline



An artist's illustration of what Whitfield Gardens could look like if Camden Council manage to get away with it. Source: Camden Council/LDA Design.

Open spaces designs published

Camden Council has this summer published landscape designs for a new public park at Alfred Place, and a redesign for the existing Whitfield Gardens, writes Linus Rees.

The plans, produced by LDA Design, are available to view on Camden's website but while they show lots of glossy images there is little in the way of detail or any accurate views expected of professional drawings.

The design for Whitfield Gardens shows an increase in hard surfaces and a reduction in greenery and the design for Alfred Place incorporates a loading bay as a central feature. The narrative accompanying the images says the public open spaces will meet "secure by design principles" and the graphic images show rows of cramped tube train-style seats with a few individual chairs.

The brochure for Alfred Place proudly displays haemorrhoid-inducing granite seating — reminiscent of the notorious Camden bench, derided as the "perfect anti-object" and an example of "hostile architecture".

Whitfield Gardens is due to

be closed this winter and open again in the spring of 2019 after the redesign. Work on Alfred Place is due to start at the end of 2019.

Councillor Adam Harrison, cabinet member for improving Camden's environment, said in a statement:

"It's time to green the West End, or Camden's part of it at least. We are creating a totally new park in Alfred Place, innovatively turning road space into green space. This will be the first new park for this part of the borough in a quarter of a century.

"We will also transform Princes Circus in Holborn and Whitfield Gardens close to Goodge Street tube, both of which can be much improved. Working with LDA Design we will also create a string of pocket parks along Tottenham Court Road at Capper Street, Bedford Avenue, and Bayley Street. We are also adding over 20 new trees across the area," he said.

You can see the plans at the West End Project website: camden.gov.uk/westendproject

Tours of hidden sex

Two fundraising guided walks to support international LGBT activists will take place in September and uncover the hidden sexual history of some familiar surroundings.

From Mollies to Pride: London's LGBT Heritage, 6.30pm Wednesday 5 September 2018. Meet at the Eleanor Cross in front of Charing Cross Station. Pay on the day (suggested contribution £10).

From Prejudice to Pride: Our LGBT heritage in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury, 6.30pm Wednesday 26 September 2018. Meet outside Goodge Street Station. Pay on the day (suggested contribution £10)

Contact by text on 07852 14 1425 or book by searching for the walks on Eventbrite.

News in brief

Westminster council is to hold a public consultation in November on plans to revamp **Oxford Street** and its immediate surroundings. Pedestrianisation will not be part of the plans say the council.

A survey of **organisations** and **businesses** in Fitzrovia by **Resilience First** has revealed what keeps directors and traders awake at night. The reliability of **transport** came out as the most insomnia-inducing worry but surprisingly our famous **British weather** is more of a concern than **Brexit** for the district's captains of industry.

Quite the opposite of what David Moore owner of **Pied a Terre** on **Charlotte Street** thinks. The businessman blames **Brexit** for a spate of restaurant closures due to economic uncertainty.

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Man dies sleeping in park

We are sorry to report that a man who was sleeping rough in Whitfield Gardens on Tottenham Court Road was found dead on the morning of Friday 31 August.

The man, known as Igor, was originally from Ukraine and died in his sleep near where his friends were also sleeping rough. According to those who knew him he was aged 40.

In *FN149* we reported on the death of another man who died while sleeping on the street on Tottenham Court Road in March.

Decision on traffic order due

Camden's officers are recommending that the current traffic order making Torrington Place and Tavistock Place one-way for motor vehicles and more space for cycle lanes is retained. A final decision on the traffic order will be taken at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday 5 September.

The decision comes despite an inspector's report recommending that the direction of traffic be changed from eastbound to westbound.

A decision to retain the current traffic order will be welcomed by residents at the junction of Torrington Place and Huntley Street who are concerned about air pollution which already exceeds legal limits at this location.



Super swimmer / surfer

August was a good month for super swimmer Alex Rowson (featured in the last Fitzrovia News issue).

Born at the Yorkshire Grey in Langham Street he attended All Souls Primary School while living at the Champion on Wells Street (where his brother Daniel was born), and now lives at the Bricklayers Arms, in Gresse Street (with Meg the dog).

There was a successful conclusion to the 2017-18 swimming season after many early mornings on the back of mum Juliet's motorbike, and evenings using public travel, to train all over London.

Based on good results at galas as far afield as France, he qualified for both the English and British National Swimming Championships in Sheffield in August.

"In his final outing as a

Chelsea & Westminster club member he qualified for all three finals, doing himself, his family and Fitzrovia proud," said his father Paul.

These were the British 100m freestyle, the British 200m freestyle, and the English 50m freestyle, all for 16-year-olds.

He now swims for Brompton under head coach Bram Montgomery.

After five years at Regent High School he achieved nine good GCSE results and now moves on to City & Islington Sixth Form College to start A level studies in three subjects.

He has also been accepted onto the two-year Aquatic Diploma in Sporting Excellence course from Dudley College of Technology.

On top of all that he is a super surfer as well (pictured above).

Terry Dumbelton

Terry Dumbelton was born in 1938 in Camden Town. Then his family was bombed out during the war and had to move to Regent's Park. He attended school in Haverstock Hill and Camden.

Terry was the youngest of 13 children, now only one sister is still alive living in Canada.

He married Mary in 1957 and they had two daughters. They were one of the first families to move into Holcroft Court in 1971 which has been the family home since.



After the war Terry worked as a radio engineer, then for 35 years worked in maintenance at London Business School in Regent's Park. Later he worked at London Zoo. Terry's daughter, Tracy, tells of many funny stories about how her father had tussles with Guy the gorilla over his oranges.

Terry loved animals and fed birds on their balcony which became a bird sanctuary with visits from some rare species. At one time the family had five fish tanks in the flat.

He loved sports such as cricket, snooker and football (he was a Tottenham Hotspur fan), and fishing, travelling all over Britain with friends to fish lakes and rivers.

A DIY handyman, he built tables, shelves and fittings in the flat.

Most of all though Terry was a family man, having two children, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

His wife Mary says: "He was a great dad loved by family friends and neighbours. He had a great sense of humour and left everyone he met with a smile. He was generous with his time and would go out of his way to help anyone who needed it."

Terry died on 5 August at UCLH. Over 80 family members and friends attended his funeral at Golders Green.



Eddie when he enlisted in 1953.

Eddie chalks up 65 years

Eddie Duke-Low, who lives in Cleveland Street, first lived there 65 years ago!

It was in 1953 and he had just enlisted for his two years' national service in the Royal Air Force.

"I got sent to West Kirby in Cheshire to do eight weeks' training (square bashing), where they either make you or break you," he stated.

"When I successfully finished and departed from the course I got posted to Kelvin House, Central Medical Establishment, at 32 Cleveland Street, for further training before joining a team of well established medical crew, performing x-ray duties as we travelled up and down the country x-raying all personnel of the RAF stations.

"Towards the end of my service I got posted back to Cleveland Street before my demob. May I add I believe it would be a better country today if a form of conscription was introduced."

After his national service he joined the Royal Air Forces Association, a welfare charity providing support and friendship to all serving and ex-serving RAF personnel and their dependants.

He was in the Central London Branch and after a few years became its Standard bearer, and was later the association's Honorary Welfare Officer for many years.

After that, he concluded, "I was highly honoured in receiving the National Presidential Certificate by Air Marshall Sir Dusty Miller, KBE,

Rent doubling ruins two restaurants

Two popular restaurants have been forced to close by huge rent increases.

Vasi's at 56 Maple Street had been there for 16 years, having previously been at 80 Cleveland Street since 1980.

Just before it closed, at short notice, it was visited by long time customer John Cleese who was filming in the area. Other celebrity diners in the past have included singers Alvin Stardust and Demis Roussos.

Villandry at 113 Great Portland Street, which also had its rent doubled, has gone into administration, after trading since 1998 and been extremely popular, again attracting celebrities such as Alan Bennett.

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New plans for mental health services in Camden and Islington

Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust are consulting on plans to change mental health services and build a new hospital and community health hubs, a project to be partly funded by the sale of a property at Tottenham Mews in Fitzrovia.

The consultation is seeking the public's views on moving patient beds from St Pancras Hospital to a new site to be built next to the Whittington Hospital on Highgate Hill, and create two community hubs at Greenland Road in Camden Town, and at Lowther Road in Holloway. Some services will also stay at St Pancras under the plans.

The redevelopment will cost £135.4 million and will be funded by leasing some of the St Pancras site, and selling vacant property.

The Tottenham Mews Resource Centre in Fitzrovia was sold by the Trust to property developer Derwent London in April this year.

Public meeting: 6pm to 8pm,
Wednesday 26 September, St Pancras Hospital, NW1 0PE.
islingtonccg.nhs.uk/stpancras

Opening and closing

Closed

The Larder *cafe* 8 Pearson Square
Eat *sandwiches* corner Charlotte / Goodge Street
Eat *sandwiches* 62 Tottenham Court Road
Maplin *electical electronics* 218-219 Tottenham Court Road
Maplin *electical electronics* 6-10 Great Portland Street
Reynolds *coffee food* 53 Charlotte Street
Villandry *restaurant provisions* 170 Great Portland Street
La Pastia *pasta* 144 Great Portland Street
Obika *restaurant* 11-13 Charlotte Street
Subway *sandwiches* 4 Berners Street
Masters *sandwiches* 53 Great Portland Street
Saucy *pasta* 52 Tottenham Court Road
H Mart *Korean store* 115 Tottenham Court Road
Royal Bank of Scotland 171 Tottenham Court Road
Coppa club *bar restaurant* 9-10 Market Place

Opened

Bump’n’grind *esspresso bar* 22-and-a-half Warren Street
Al Sud *Italian restaurant* 21 Berners Street

Al Dente *pasta* 51 Goodge Street
Evans soft furnishings 55 Warren Street
Jay the Barbers 132 New Cavendish Street
Rovi Ottolenghi *deli restaurant* 59 Wells Street
Pastation *pasta* 76 Tottenham Court Road
Halifax bank 118 - 132 New Oxford Street
Clutch *cafe dry goods outfitters* 78-80 Great Portland St
Townhouse *beauty salon* 88 Great Portland Street
The Whiskey Exchange *spirit retailer* 90 Great Portland Street
Chel *pharmacy and post office* 173 Great Portland St
Infinity *motorcycle clothing* 171 Great Portland Street
Zakti *activewear* 62 Tottenham Court Road
Holland and Barratt *healthfoods* Unit 3 254-256 Tottenham Court Road
Mountain Warehouse *activewear* 230 Tottenham Ct Road
Tongue & Brisket *salt beef bar* 24 Goodge Street
Glow bar *beauty treatments* 70 Mortimer Street
Luxe *hairdressing* 92 Cleveland Street
Mr Foggs *cocktail bar* 48 Newman Street

Caravan *bar eatery* 152 Great Portland Street
5mm design *luxury homewares* 100 Great Portland Street

Opening soon

Oseyo *Korean store* 115 Tottenham Court Road
Flesh & Buns *Japanese eatery* 25–33 Berners Street
Erpingham House *vegan and vegetarian restaurant* 19 Percy Street
Ikea mini store 95 Tottenham Court Road
Cubitts *optitians* Charlotte / Goodge Street corner
Elan *cafe restaurant* 9-10 Market Place
White Pine *coffee shop* 35-36 Rathbone Place
Pantani *Italian ices and food* 104 Great Portland Street
Omotosando Koffee *Japanese coffee* Newman Street
Dezato *creative desserts* 53 Charlotte Street
Polu Poke *Hawaian fish bar* 1 Charlotte Place
Genuine Liqueur *American bar* 6 Rathbone Place
Caffe Morganti Tornatora *Italian* 187 Tottenham Ct Rd
Said Dal 1923 *Italian Chocolate* 29 Rathbone Place

Coffee that hits the right note



Photo: Etienne Gilfillan

Alex Lais has a passion for the music of J S Bach. He describes his love of Bach’s music as a disease, an obsession that he caught when he was eight years old. “His music is mathematically ordered, humorous and has an intellectual and emotional diversity that connects with me on many different levels,” he said. “I play guitar and piano and was a semi-professional musician for a while”

Alex comes originally from Athens. He first came to the UK as a student studying law and philosophy and has lived in Manchester and London and been in the UK for over 20 years.

For some time he worked as a lawyer but for the last 9 years he ‘s found his niche and passion in coffee as a barista.

Within the last year Alex opened up his store Alex Coffee at 1 Hanson Street in the old Ships Galley cafe. “I was delighted when this shop became available as it gave me the opportunity to make my mark and do everything the way that I want.”

Making coffee for Alex is as meticulous as Bach’s composition techniques. “The craft of coffee I believe marries the scientific and artistic just as J S Bach did.”

Alex making coffee is like looking at an alchemist at work carefully grinding, measuring, tamping, checking temperature, pouring, then finally magically the finished nectar is brought to the customer. “There is a focus on every ingredient, every process, every aspect has a particular purpose. For instance I import honey from Greece using small scale producers and artisanal farmers. I blend my own coffee and every couple of months I introduce my new blend. The current one uses beans from Honduras and India. The beans I use are from the last harvest at the end of the season they are within the best 2% of the total crop.”

Advertisement

Fitzrovia’s Marvellous Margaret Street

Margaret Street has a long and fascinating history. It was built in the Georgian Era and was named in honour of the 2nd Earl of Oxford’s four year old daughter, the Lady Margaret Harley. Development of the street began in the 1720s and continued throughout the 1700s. Over the years, Margaret Street grew to become one of the most prominent streets in Fitzrovia as a result of its location near the famous Oxford Market – now known as Market Place which has a wide range of restaurants, perfect for every taste.

There is a wide range of different styles of architecture on Margaret Street, as a result of the gradual development of the area over the centuries. Ranging from stunning Georgian buildings, to the Victorian church located on the street, right through to stylish, modern developments with all the amenities a resident could possibly require. It is this variety which makes Margaret Street so unique.

Margaret Street eventually became home to the garment industry and rag trade who made the area north of Oxford Street their home during the 19th and early 20th Centuries. In the modern era, as the rag trade moved out of the area, Margaret Street gradually changed to become far more diverse. Reflecting Fitzrovia’s traditionally bohemian culture, Margaret Street has been graced by performances from many iconic artists including Jimi Hendrix, and Pink Floyd.

Robert Irving Burns have been based on Margaret Street since the 1980s and in that time we have become the foremost agent in the area, helping hundreds of people find their ideal home on Margaret Street. As a result of this, we are delighted to market a fantastic new development of luxury apartments on Margaret Street which would make the perfect home for anyone looking to live in this vibrant part of Fitzrovia.

RIB 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 viewing an apartment on Margaret Street, or any of our other properties in Fitzrovia, please contact us on 0207 637 0821.





Word from the Streets

By CHARLOTTE STREET and her siblings



Illustration by Jayne Davis

Pavement artist

One street that might really be paved with gold is **Windmill Street**. Back in 1998 the Australian Aborigine artist, **Jimmy Pike** (1940-2002), painted on the pavement outside the art gallery where his works were being exhibited (and selling for £25,000 or more).

Camden council in its wisdom paved over it. But it is still there and is probably worth thousands of pounds.

Jimmy learned painting while in prison for murder, from psychologist Pat Lowe, whom he later married. Earlier he had worked at **Fitzroy Crossing**, a cattle station in the Western Australian outback. So it was only natural that he should have a drink in **The Fitzroy Tavern** in Windmill Street, while over here. Sadly they were not able to serve him the Australian "Fitzroy cocktail" - made with methylated spirits, ginger beer, and a teaspoonful of boot polish!

A retrospective of his paintings were exhibited by **Rebecca Hossack** at her **Conway Street** gallery in 2014.

Let's trumpet Jim Bowen

Sad to hear of the death of comedian **Jim Bowen** at the age of 80. He was often to be seen in the audience at the **100 Club** in **Oxford Street** by my brother **Mortimer**.

Jim was indeed a jazz fan and in fact played the trumpet. But not wishing to "blow his own trumpet" as it were, he played down his ability while hosting the darts quiz television programme **Bullseye** (still being repeated on the **Challenge** channel). But he was quite accomplished and played the instrument in the **Hot Rhythm Orchestra** when on **QE2** cruises.

He changed his name from **Whittaker** to **Bowen** as it would be quicker to sign autographs!

Madness filming in Hanway Street

The group **Madness** may have been filming recently in **Hanway Street**. This poster (pictured right), billing **Morris & The Minors** (the name of Madness around 1978), was photographed outside number 15 by **Paul Rowson**, who runs the **Bricklayers Arms** in **Gresse Street**. He would love to know more.

Our piano columnist, **Cliff Slapper**, was able to refer him to a **Guardian** article about a new documentary called "One Man's Madness - saxman Lee Thompson skanks down memory lane."

The **Music Machine** was the name of the club, now called **Koko**, off **Mornington Crescent**. The **Snivelling Shits**, by the way, changed their name to **The Hits**, claiming it was just an abbreviation.

Flavours of flower power

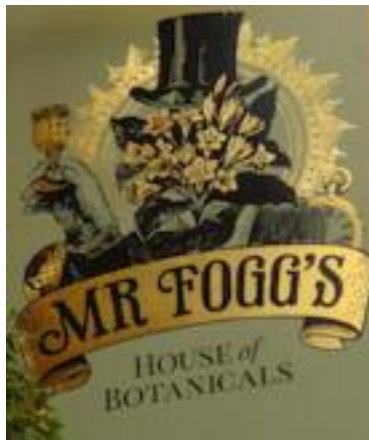
Mr Fogg's House of Botanicals new cocktail bar at 48 **Newman Street** has greatly impressed my sister **Margaret**. "Apart from the cocktails the smell of the flowers is very refreshing," she told me.

The name of the bar and its theme are based on **Phileas Fogg**, who travelled around the world in 80 days in a Victorian novel, collecting plants and bringing them home.

Many of these plants adorn the bar, upstairs and on the ground floor, and all the cocktails are flavoured and named after them.

"I am hoping to change the plants seasonally," said assistant general manager, **Abraham Drewry**.

Good to see a pictorial hanging sign as well (above right).



Star neighbour

Has anyone spotted actor **Hugh Grant** wandering around **Riding House Street**? My brother **Percy's** plumber swears his friend sold his flat in that area to the star for a huge fortune. He should know about fortunes going by what he charged **Percy**.



Gert by **Elsie Waters** (left) and Daisy by **Doris Waters** (right)

Ballroom blitz on the tube

A wartime sing-song in **Goodge Street** underground station was shown in the 1942 film "**Gert & Daisy's Weekend**", screened recently on the **Talking Pictures** channel.

Gert & Daisy were a popular comic cockney double act played by **Elsie** and **Doris Waters**, who broadcast from the late 1920s to the early 1970s.

Daisy was played by **Doris** (1904-1978) who was treated in **Middlesex Hospital**, **Mortimer Street**, not long before her death. **Chris**

Kaufman, who lived overlooking the hospital, went there to visit a friend called **Hetty Waters** there. Because of the same surname he was shown to **Doris Waters** by mistake. "She seemed pleased to meet me anyway and we parted on good terms," said **Chris**.

In the film, **Gert & Daisy** organise a party for those sheltering from the blitz, with singers, dancers, and musicians joining in. **Gert & Daisy** got **OBEs** for their services to the forces during the war.

Goodge Street station in **September 1940** was locked up during air raids on the orders of home secretary **Herbert Morrison** for the ludicrous reason that "children might fall on the line and be killed." Local workers broke down the gates and sheltered there, forcing the government to back down.

On Hitler's death list

Talking of the war, two **Fitzrovia** novelists, **Virginia Woolf** and **HG Wells**, appeared on **Hitler's** death list to be executed in the event of him invading Britain.

The reason becomes apparent from an exhibition called "Defending 'Degenerate' German Art", on until **September 14** at the **Wiener Library**, **28 Russell Square**.

Hitler had organised an exhibition of paintings he deemed to be "degenerate" and so to be suppressed in Germany in 1937. The following year in London the same artists were exhibited approvingly at the **New Burlington Gallery**. The catalogue, now on show, lists the patrons, including, of course, **Virginia Woolf** (who had lived in **Fitzroy Square**) and **H G Wells** (who had lived in **Candover Street**).

Charlotte Street

Steamy encounter at Charlotte Street restaurant

A charming true love story that started in rather "steamy" circumstances in a **Charlotte Street** restaurant was told in a **Radio 4 Extra** play recently.

The scene was **Antoine's** restaurant at 40 **Charlotte Street** in 1929.

Alison Grant, a young **New Zealand** student of Chinese poetry, was sat outside the restaurant, over the pavement grid, underneath which was the kitchen. An overboiling of ingredients led to a cloud of steam which

rose through the grid all over **Alison's** dress, rendering it temporarily transparent.

Arthur Waley, an older English gent, came to her rescue shielding her until the dress dried and provided adequate cover again.

In conversation she revealed the only book she had brought from **New Zealand** was of Chinese poetry... translated by **Arthur Waley**. He did not reveal that was him. But they formed a relationship, being near neigh-

bours, she living in **Gower Street** and he in **Gordon Square**.

They both had separate partners but eventually married in 1966, a month before he died in her arms, as revealed in the play called **The Man on the Green Bicycle**, by **Jennifer Curry**.

The restaurant in those days was run by **Antoine Dolgontchouk**. It is now called **Ousia** (recently changed from **Andreas**). There is no longer a grid in the pavement outside, so it is safe to dine al fresco there.

Guy Ritchie buys local pub

But you can still buy Shaun's gin locally

The Lukin pub in Conway Street is soon to reopen as The Lore of the Land owned by film director Guy Ritchie, who has a house around the corner in Fitzroy Square. Maybe he should instead rename it "Here's Lukin at you kid" - the famous line from the film Casablanca.

Anyway the director of "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels" will soon be emptying beer barrels instead of smoking ones.

The pub had been run for ten years by Shaun Beinton, who is now distilling gin in Cornwall.

"In fact I first started distilling Caspyn gin in the cellar at The Lukin, having got a distilling licence in 2015," he told Fitzrovia News. "And I am glad to say that it is still being stocked by the Tower Tavern and the King & Queen in Cleveland Street.

"So although I have left the area I have left some gin behind for local drinkers."

He was told earlier this year by owners Mitchells & Butler that they had received an offer to buy the pub and that as he had just 18



The Lukin, boarded up for renovations

months left on his lease he could either work that out and then leave, or accept an offer to go earlier.

"It was a decent deal so I took it in order to concentrate on my other interests in Cornwall," he explained.

Asked about the pub's famous table football game he replied that it went to Cornwall when the pub closed in July. "It is now distracting workers down there," he smiled.

He had changed the name of

the pub to The Lukin from O'Neills Irish Bar in 2008. Before that it was the Adam's Arms for decades until 1995.

Now when it opens as The Lore of the Land, locals will be hoping it is not as expensive as Ritchie's previous pub, the Punch Bowl, in Mayfair. Two portions of fish and chips and half a bottle of champagne there cost £75. This was served to the likes of the Duke of Cambridge, David Beckham, Al Pacino, and Robert De Niro.



Curtain up for artist

By GUY O'CONNELL

A seventeenth century theatrical tradition is being revived in Fitzrovia - thanks to an up and coming artist. Jack Fawdry Tatham, 28, is opening a print studio for original etchings and commissions but also to reproduce Toy Theatres first produced in London two hundred years ago.

"It's an old-fashioned Victorian printing process that's just now back up and running here in Fitzrovia. We're using the old methods and the old copper etchings to bring back to life some designs that haven't been seen for one hundred years."

Toy theatres were part of life for children until the mid Twentieth century. One of the most famous - Benjamin Pollock - printed



in Hoxton right up to the Second World War. But modern technology saw them off - until now. Like sales of vinyl records, many people of all ages are turning back to reality.

"My Great Grand-Ma started the Pollocks Toy museum on the corner of Scala Street and Whitfield Street. Fitzrovia feels very different to the stories I heard of the area back then. Even in the 1960s, it was full of artists, traders, car dealers, people could afford to live and work in the West End. Though people were poorer, there was a Theatre on Scala Street famous for cheap tickets."

Jack, who graduated from the Royal Drawing School, has just been selected for the prestigious Bloomberg New Contemporaries scheme which aims to help young artists. He is looking for local exhibition space and is planning to run print workshops for residents and artists alike.

"The printing press weighs one tonne. It arrived on the pavement from Holland and four of us dismantled it on the street and took it downstairs. It's a miracle we're alive! At the end there was one bolt left over and we still don't know what it does."

Jack's selling a limited print run of famous Fitzrovians including Karl Marx and HG Wells, and hopes local businesses and residents will support him by buying one.

"We will be the most central print studio of this kind for etchings, copper plate. We don't want to re-invent ourselves for the digital age, we want to be ourselves as we are. So please call in at Pollocks and ask for more information."

Jack's online at: www.jackfawdrytatham.uk and he's up and running in the basement of the Toy Museum, along with that missing bolt.

Turkish with a difference

By the DINING DETECTIVE

KYSERI, 64 Grafton Way (closed Sundays and Mondays)

I do have to admit that when I heard there was a new "posh Turkish" restaurant with no kebabs in our area it did make me laugh - I've always loved Turkish food but it seemed I was in for a new adventure.

A Turkish restaurant without a sign of a kebab? Really? And I do also have to admit that I then found a splendid review of this restaurant in the Evening Standard. Kyseri is yet another new restaurant in Fitzrovia but this one seems to be doing well, and is certainly a pleasure to visit. Not least because, again advised by the Evening Standard, we ordered (and you know by now how furious I can get with restaurant wines) a very pleasant Turkish wine, Diren, both white and red, for £4.50 a glass. But they also do interesting sounding cocktails like Watermelon infused vodka with Turkish Fizz for £9. Or a Sumac and Pomegranate Martini, £10, which contains both vodka and rum which sounded interesting but pretty lethal to me, so I stuck



PICTURE PUZZLE: The photograph on page 14 is at 82 Mortimer Street.

to the wine (my last memorable experience with martinis leading to a disastrous confrontation with a lamp-post).

It seemed when I looked at the menu, that there was a whole other kind of Turkish cuisine about which I felt ashamed to admit I was totally ignorant. However I found out that the chefs are from Cyprus so it is really a kind of Turkish-Greek cuisine that is being offered. Which includes cherries, and garlic beets, and pistachios, and courgette flowers and pine nuts, and candied lemon (and pasta).

The dishes on the short and

therefore unimposing menu are on the whole small, and are all made for sharing: there are five starters, two pastas, and seven mains and there are very nice, welcoming staff who will advise you about ordering. The dishes don't arrive together, they just appear at your table when they are ready.

I think this sounds slightly unusual in a 'Turkish' restaurant (but I now remember I said the same about a new local Greek restaurant and need to shake up my ideas about who makes what). My favourite dish was one of the two pastas: pasta packets of: beef, sour cherry, tomato-chilli butter, pine nuts and yoghurt sauce (£16) which - although my companion and I shared, which meant we had only two pasta balls each - were absolutely delicious, satisfying, filling.

I felt that with a Kyseri salad (£6.50) I wouldn't have needed anything else. I then reminded myself that I'd already had a slice of sort of yummy fried bread (seeded Sumac bread) with a spicy-tasting dip called Muhammara (£1.50 each piece).

But we had ordered more. A

dish of spiced cabbage with many ingredients including pistachios and dates (£14) which was mediumly interesting; and crispy fried hake which was my companion's favourite, with green tomatoes and pickles and candied lemon (£12.50): I enjoyed it but the fish didn't seem crispy fried to me because it was in a sauce.

I looked again at the menu and did find a kebab after all - this is what it was called: £4 each: Hampshire Trout Skewer and Garlic beets (!) There is also a dessert menu but we had eaten quite enough. And we had only just (although we were quaffing that very pleasant wine) strayed over our £35 per head budget.

Looking around the pleasant, quite small restaurant, which had tables outside because it was warm, I saw that many diners had ordered the other pasta (walnuts, lemon braised greens, sage, egg, Tulum cheese and Erise, £12) and I will certainly be trying that dish next time. I look forward also to sampling - but it was expensive: £24 - Aged Cornish Duck, Grape Molasses, Aegean Greens and Black Garlic...

I will be back there soon!

Beige Holes of Fitzrovia

New squares are generic nowhere places derived from transactions and contracts

Two new privately owned public spaces (POPS) in Fitzrovia are products of development and real estate speculation in a wildly distorted market. The first project, completed in 2016, is GROSS.MAX.'s design for Fitzroy Place, and the second is Gustafson Porter + Bowman's Rathbone Square, completed in September 2017. Both developments are responding directly to market forces: "form follows finance."

In each, no expense is spared on the landscape, as these landscapes are what drive the sales of the apartments on overseas speculative markets, along with images of the interiors. All aspects of the design are geared toward their imageability on real estate websites and in glossy brochures. "Landscape is a commodity," acknowledges Eelco Hooftman of GROSS.MAX.

Of course, it can be argued that landscape has always been a commodity — certainly when it is employed as the scenography of power and private wealth, as it has so often been. It is an irony, though, at a time when the landscape profession is more focused than ever on themes of sustainability and ecology and social benefit, that the most lucrative work for Britain's best landscape practices is rooted elsewhere — and nowhere. The scenography of contemporary capital demands a virgin space so that its business logic is not disrupted by the ethical obligations that the real city demands.

Fitzrovia's urbanism is much more than scenery, though. It is both the result of and the reason for its particular sociality. Everywhere different floors of the same building yield space for different uses: a tailor or a lampshade maker below street level under a mansion block; a studio over an embroiderer over a café. Tiny mews streets filled with work spaces are capped at their ends with cozy pubs that become raucous as Friday approaches. The

scale and grain of the area is changing fast, though, as it "modernises."

The Beige Holes of Modernisation

Robert Fitch, in *The Assassination of New York*, wrote of the postindustrial city that it "is a mutation masquerading as a modernization." The industrial city in the extensive phase of capitalism, in which labour, resources, and thus "surplus" wealth were extracted from far-flung empires and agricultural hinterlands, could afford the illusion of "inevitable" progress. Earlier a more agrarian extensive capitalism had declared vast stretches of land "empty" — terra nullius — to justify colonialism, simply erasing lives and cultures in the process. The Jeffersonian grid, which divides America into neat squares, is an emblem of that ideology of emptiness. Now the postindustrial city is driven by intensive capitalism, which is forced to transform itself from within, shaping itself around markets and services that cannibalise the city.

Asset stripping in colonialism gridded vast territories, mapping them for exploitation. Now cities are turned inward, and the new terra nullius must be found within. All the nooks and crannies necessary to everyday life in urbanism are ironed out, and the grid manifests itself as vast floor plates: office space and lateral apartments. The ideology rationalising these tyrannical spaces visualises them as "open," "democratic," and "free" "spaces of engagement" just as the colonial grid was spuriously theorised as a guarantor of spatial equity. As the grid of extensive capitalism worked a mutation upon rural land, so the grid of intensive capitalism now skews the space of the city. As Darwin saw, however, mutation rarely leads to evolution.

The urban spaces within which these vast grids are being

Creative, thoughtful landscape architects may be trapped in the making of non-spaces by development processes, says Tim Waterman

realised I call "beige holes." They have the power to attract, compress, and trap money in the financial system as black holes consume all matter in their supergravity. Beige, though, because driven by real estate imageability they must be styled to be sleek, tidy, and generic. Beige because they reflect the non-tastes of the elites in the FIRE (finance, insurance, real estate) sector. Beige because they must place the power of the transaction over local distinctiveness. Realtors and developers themselves call these places "safe-deposit boxes in the sky" or "concrete gold," which clarifies their function as financial instruments rather than as places for living, working, playing — or for dwelling.

A whole generation of architects and landscape architects have read Marc Augé's *Non-Places*, and yet find themselves trapped in a system that endlessly replicates the model. The non-place is defined as a place of transit, a space that defies acts of dwelling, and is exemplified by the modern airport. "The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude." "Since non-places are there to be passed

through, they are measured in units of time."

The beige hole is a type of non-place — a place of transit. In this case the beige hole is a place of the transient wealthy their money. The units of time with which these spaces are measured are amortised in mortgages, counted in leasehold years, in annual contracts, in fluctuations of boom and bust. They are the relics of a financial system in which transience itself is the operative factor. If money in the current system ever stopped for long enough, it would only take a moment's examination to discover its value is baseless and placeless, a fiction in motion, of motion. As Augé says, "the user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it)," and these contracts are temporal. Beige holes are non-places that exist as records of transactions and contracts, as intangible and impermanent as flickering numbers on a stock market screen.

Fitzroy Place

"Certain projects should not shout," says Eelco Hooftman of

GROSS.MAX. landscape architects as he shows me the small site at the centre of Fitzroy Place.

"This is not a statement project." Indeed, it is luxurious understatement as a cipher for the financialised non-taste that characterises the project. Fitzroy Place, launched in 2016, is a major development on the site of the former Middlesex Hospital. It is now home to Estée Lauder's London office and some of London's most expensive apartments.

The hospital's former chapel (by architect John Loughborough Pearson, completed 1929) juts into the new square (named Pearson Square) but because it is so dwarfed by the scale of the surrounding buildings, it was clearly not possible to use it as the square's focal point. A steel colonnade and pergola, developed by GROSS.MAX. with architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, help to step down the scale of the surrounding buildings to the chapel. Then the chapel is shrouded behind a screen of evergreen magnolia trees. A stone sculpture serves to refocus the square, while further stepping the scale down to the human. These are deft tricks, exercising the designers to new levels of virtuosity, but to ends



that could have been avoided earlier in the design process.

The plants that have flourished most in this dark chasm are graceful multitrunk serviceberries, which have been placed in giant gunmetal-gray containers placed on the pedestrian lanes that serve the square. Elegant as they are, their body language is aggressive. They are placed as obstacles, deterrents as effective as beefy bouncers to physical and visual access into the site from the surrounding neighbourhood. This is a clear statement that the pretensions to publicness expressed in the planning applications were the usual whitewash.

Rathbone Square

Rathbone Square, completed last year, has become the new London headquarters for Facebook as part of a commercial/residential complex. Its central gated square was designed by Gustafson Porter + Bowman, the surrounding buildings by Make Architects. The square, like Fitzroy Place, opens up important east-west pedestrian access in an area with a pronounced north-south grain.

Here the gravest planning error was committed early on, with a failure to provide a direct east-west pedestrian connection at

the north of the site that would have created ease of passage for locals as well as new small retail possibilities. Instead the route jogs south, frustrating access, and the passage is constricted through verdigris-green ceramic-clad tunnels. Inside the space, the building massing is more successful than at Fitzroy Place, allowing in more light.

Seating is refined, stepping up and down at right angles to provide a maximum of sittable space and defining a dark grid against the light grid of the granite paving that establishes a rhythm with the building's facades. Here, though, the richness of the square's materials is at odds

with the building cladding, which appears to be stretched as thinly as cling film across the surface of the buildings. Windows are set into metallic panels at Rathbone Square that possess the dull lustre of Bacofoil.

At the centre of Rathbone Square, curving into the edge of Facebook's offices, a crescent of lawn has been provided. Here it is intended as a catalyst for activity. "Private squares in London don't support actual activity," says Doncha O Shea of Gustafson Porter + Bowman, and time will tell whether Rathbone Square actually comes to serve as a community space.

seem inclined to do: they are our very humble servants, and will build what we ask for; remember, that rich men are not obliged to live in ugly houses, and yet you see they do; which the builders may be well excused for taking as a sign of what is wanted."

If we want a world less peppered with beige holes, then we will have to work with political and economic processes to transform development. There is hope here, with cooperation and communication improving year-on-year between architects, planners, and landscape architects, and with new models for development emerging in forms such as community land trusts. Then, perhaps, we can begin to make our cities more in ways that are genuinely wanted by those who authentically live in them.

A World Less Beige

I hope I have not portrayed the landscape architects as villains or failures. They are neither. Indeed, they are full of talent, ambition, and verve. If there is villainy or failure, it is systemic, and bred in the bone of development processes that are conceived of first and foremost as extractive and profit-driven. These forces also militate against artistry and urbanism, catering to generic international non-tastes and imageable outputs. William Morris diagnosed the same problems in his time in 'Hopes and Fears for Art': "Only we must not lay the fault upon the builders, as some people

Tim Waterman lives in Fitzrovia and teaches at the University of Greenwich and at The Bartlett. He is co-editor of Landscape and Agency: Critical Essays (2017, Routledge); and The Routledge Handbook of Landscape and Food (2018, Routledge). Find him on Twitter @Tim_Waterman. (This is an edited version of an article that was originally published in Landscape Architecture Magazine, The magazine of The American Society of Landscape Architects, July 2018.)



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Death on the gallows

By MIKE PENTELOW
New light on the French revolutionary who killed two people in Warren Street in 1854 is shed by a book just published.

"The Murderer of Warren Street, The True Story of a Nineteenth-Century Revolutionary", by Marc Mulholland (Hutchinson, £16.99) is about Emmanuel Barthelemy.

Born in 1821 in France he spent many years imprisoned there for his revolutionary actions, then came to Fitzrovia where he befriended (temporarily) Karl Marx. Barthelemy also killed a fellow French revolutionary exile in the last fatal duel in England, was immortalised by Victor Hugo in his novel "Les Misérables", and was finally publicly hanged in fog and snow in front of up to 10,000 people.

During the 1848 uprising in Paris his brave role on the barricades was described in Les Misérables. After it was crushed he was imprisoned, but managed to escape.

On coming to London in 1849 Barthelemy quickly got a job as a "mechanical steel staymaker" (or corset maker) with Mr Coptel in Berners Street (probably the corset makers run by Mr and Mrs Caplin at 58 Berners Street shown in the 1852 street directory). He also joined a socialist society based at St George's Tavern in Wardour Street.

He befriended Karl Marx with whom he sparred with swords, sabres and foils at a fencing salon in Rathbone Place. Marx's wife, Jenny, disliked Barthelemy however as his "piercing eyes were repulsive to her." So the friendship ended.

When Napoleon III staged a coup in Paris in 1851 and brutally slaughtered any opposition, one of those to escape to London was Frederic Cournet. A personal grudge developed between him and Barthelemy, resulting in a pistols duel between them in Windsor Great Park on October 19, 1852. Cournet missed his shot, then was killed by Barthelemy who fled the scene. He was however captured and tried for murder. The jury found him not guilty of that but guilty of manslaughter for which he served a short prison sentence.

On his release in May 1853 he moved into what is now the section of Whitfield Street between Howland Street and Maple Street (when it was called Upper John Street). He shared a flat and workshop with fellow republican exiles Tony Petitjean and Pierre Bourquin. All three set up as craftsmen and invented a new process for colouring glass.

Barthelemy moved on to a road off Soho Square, and then



back to Upper John Street where he shared lodgings at number 42 with Thomas Coddery. Coddery worked as foreman for George Moore where he manufactured ginger beer and soda water at 73 Warren Street, and got Barthelemy a job there repairing machines.

And it was here that on December 8, 1854 Barthelemy, accompanied by a young French woman, shot and killed Moore, then a retired policeman, Charles Collard, who tried to prevent him escaping. The woman managed to escape.

In his memoirs, the German revolutionary exile, Wilhelm Liebknecht, thought the argument between Barthelemy and Moore was over money which Moore owed to Barthelemy.

But in a confession, which Barthelemy had given to his lawyer after the trial and before his execution, he said he had no intention of visiting Moore's house until the French woman asked him to accompany her there. She then took a letter from her pocket and read it out loud, when Moore tried to snatch it from her.

Then Moore picked up a mallet and hit Barthelemy with it. So, continued Barthelemy, "I let the pistol off and shot Mr Moore, for which I am sorry - I having no ill will towards him." He then lifted the woman over the wall at the back of the house and they set off in opposite directions. When Collard grabbed Barthelemy, he said,

the pistol went off accidentally and killed him.

The inquest took place on December 12, 1854, at the Goat and Compasses Tavern at 60 Fitzroy Street, between Warren Street and Euston Road, where evidence was given by Moore's servant Charlotte Bennett, and several other witnesses. The verdict was wilful murder.

At his trial at the Old Bailey on January 3, 1855, he was found guilty of the murder of Collard.

Barthelemy was hanged at 8am on January 22, 1855 at Newgate. Unusually for a public execution the crowd fell silent as a mark of respect for him. A cast of his head was taken (a death mask) and displayed in front of the prison as a warning to others. Liebknecht looked at it and remarked: "The face still showed an iron determination."

Barthelemy's old overcoat was given to his lawyer in lieu of payment - to be sold to Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors.

Another murder at the same time in the same area is also recorded in Mulholland's new book.

An Italian tailor, Luigi Baranelli, shot and killed the landlord at Holbein Mansions, 25 Langham Street (which was 9 Foley Place at the time) and injured his wife in the arm and neck, on January 7, 1855. He then went to the room of one of the lodgers, his pregnant girlfriend Jane Williamson, a dressmaker who had recently ended their relationship.

When she would not let him in he locked himself in another room and shot himself but only caused wounds. Williamson went to his hospital side and treated him with great affection.

The couple had previously been lodgers in Newman Street with the same landlord and his wife before they moved to the scene of the murder. They went under the name of Mr and Mrs Lambert, but were in fact Joseph Latham and the wife of his friend for whom he had left his own wife.

At his trial on April 12 Baranelli's insanity plea was rejected and he was executed on April 30, 1855.



A drawing of Bethelmy just after his public hanging



Chief charlatan

The latest book by author Paul Willetts was recently launched at the Wheatsheaf pub in Rathbone Place.

It is called "King Con, The Bizarre Adventures of the Jazz Age's Greatest Imposter" (published by Crown, New York, part of Penguin Random House).

His previous books have been about the Fitzrovia eccentric poet, Julian Maclaren-Ross, called "Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia", and about a 1947 jewel robbery and murder in Charlotte Street, called "North Soho 999".

The subject of his latest biography was in fact a white French Canadian born in America called Edgar Laplante. After an unsuccessful singing career he dressed in native American robes and claimed to be Chief White Elk, head of the Indian tribes of British Colombia and chief of the Canadian Cherokees (pictured above).

He arrived in London in 1922 and stayed at an Oxford Street hotel, announcing he wished to see King George V to discuss improving education for Canadian Indians.

He borrowed money on the promise of gaining a fortune because, he claimed, the king had agreed to return a million acres of land taken from the Indians.

A spokesman for the king announced that he would grant an audience to Chief White Elk.

But the Daily Mail exposed his claims as fraudulent so the meeting never happened. Instead he was reduced to performing "the Great Scalping Dance" and other turns in music halls, with such acts as a "singing ventriloquist."

Coming soon

"Tales from Riding House Street" by Helen Evangelou is due to be published in November. The author lived at 57 Riding House Street when she grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, the daughter of Cypriot migrants. She later worked for ITN on the corner of Wells Street and Riding House Street, and lived in Carburton Street in the 1990s.



Alex Maclaren Ross

Before long he moved to France where he met a rich Austrian countess who financed his "royal tour" of Italy.

Among those at the book's launch party was Alex Maclaren-Ross, son of Julian.



WIN THIS BOOK. Answer this question: "Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia" was about whom?

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Sensation

A short story by SUNITA SOLIAR

a Diamond! — I cannot deliver. The nerves that bite and tear, the grind of bones in my wrist and hand — I cannot wield the pen. Why is the light so bright, bulging through my eyes and exploding into my head? Is there to be nothing but bright, white light?

‘Carrie!’

She comes. The rough rustle of her skirts, but a soothing sight of dark hair, a cool palm on my head. She, the only spark of life in the horror of this place: Howland Street. Rather call it Smeary Street, with its drab walls and windows staring out at the rot and squalor of the poor.

‘I can’t finish it.’

She looks at the clutter of papers, scrappy and blotched. She reaches for the pen.

‘Give it to me,’ she says. My flesh relinquishes it. The bones continue to gnaw. The stiffness drilling through my body. It is hard to move, to straighten my knees, but Carrie has a strong soul and a persuasive hand. She helps me out of this seat and settles me into the wingback. She pulls from her pocket the small brown bottle. Liquid mercy. She administers thirty drops.

‘Forty,’ I say.

She hesitates.

‘I need it.’

She relents. The thought of the ease to come! Soon enough my body will lift and drift away. Carrie settles herself in my former seat, shuffling and tidying the papers, preparing herself to write. She reads: ‘Lord bless us! It was a Diamond!’

‘Yes?’

‘That’s where you stopped,’ she says. Ah, yes! Always the diamond, resolving the mystery. What a trap I have set myself, to get to the bottom of it before sickness overcomes me, sickness stealing time, art. How heavy it is, the moonstone, a thing to sink or crush you. A stone as multifaceted as pain, though that isn’t apt. Better to have called it The

‘Ah, yes!
Always the
diamond,
resolving the
mystery’

Serpent’s Eye, a demonic thing willing one’s defeat, for pain darts and slinks like a serpent, flashing its tail and tongue, coiling around my joints, wherever I look or touch, there it is as though hidden behind sofa cushions, behind flower pots. It finds one everywhere. Evil lies in wait for us everywhere like pain. The tyrant of the brain. One needs something lighter, less sharp.

‘The hour presses on, pet,’

Carrie prompts.

Yes. The hour, the story. You sit ready to take it down. How many roles will you play for me? The first night I saw you running in the dark away from a man as though you had been kept prisoner under mesmeric influence and gave life to my pen. Now it is I who seek asylum with you. You who write the words to free me. Dickens be damned! Forgo one of his parties to be with you, and he remarks, ‘A visit to the doctor?’ But tonight, mistress, you are the doctor and the extension of my thoughts, the arm that commits them to paper. He’ll have you to thank for the latest instalment. Where would I or his All The Year Round be without you? Tonight we are both Wilkie Collins. But how can one think of the moonstone when weighed down with such oppressive sensation?

Carrie looks at me with worry. ‘You might feel stronger tomorrow,’ she says.

I might. But the instalment must be completed by morning, and I am not yet ready. The diamond must be seen in the excess of pain I feel. ‘It is a monstrosity. Beguiling. Unfathomable.’

‘Should I write...’

‘No.’ To write! What is to write? A hand, an arm. What is it

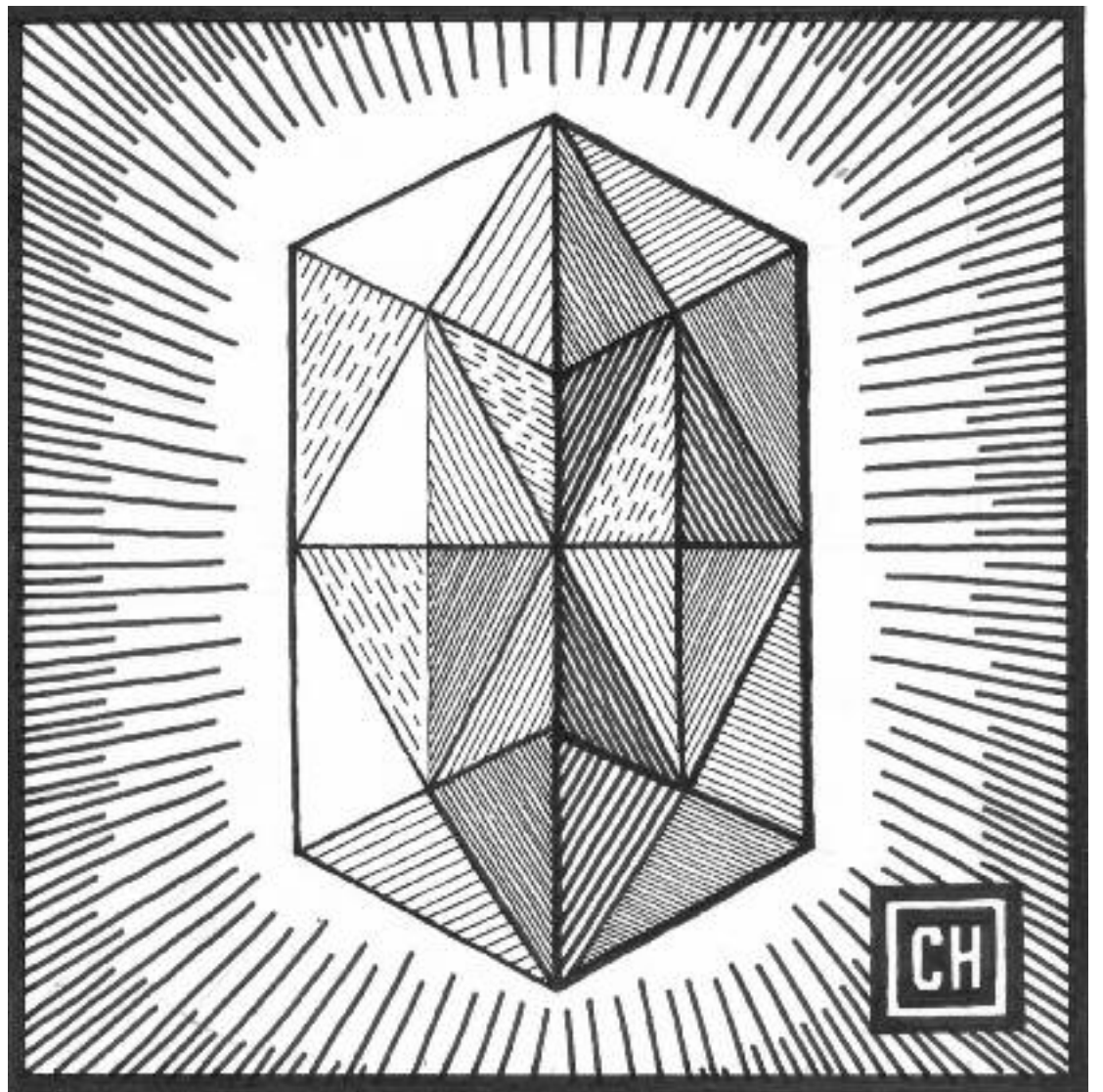


Illustration by Clifford Harper

to read? To read is to feel. Must give the readers all of it, sight, touch, taste, scandal, shock. Must deliver the diamond, grotesque and magnified, but to deliver feeling requires being lifted out of one’s own, the ones that shackle, the idea of writing unfathomable because — what’s this? Is something lifting? Where now are hands and arms? Can they be gone? Yes! Now I float, the body lost somewhere in a dream of

droplets. From here everything is easy, everything is lighter. Strengthened by Serpentstone renews his former fires and feels his veins inflamed with fresh desires. Its fumes in burning reptiles chase away. And can I write? Yes, Carrie, I can. You have let me lose flesh and up here where I drift, there is no sensation of nerves and flesh and bone, nothing that touches, nothing that hurts, only lightness, the swirling fancy of

thought. You have become my disembodied body. How freeing not to possess it. Unshackled, I can see unobscured, everything is larger, the lampshade, the colours. The air in here is less stuffy, the moon beyond not white but yellow. And you are largest of all, shining out of the depths of your own brightness.

‘The light that streamed from it was like the harvest moon.’
‘Shall I...’

Poetry corner

AUGUST
A Day Out
by Wendy Shutler

*August is the purple month.
Hills and moors and misty heather.
Waves break soft on silken sand
In dreamy steamy sexy weather.*

*I’m barefoot on the coarser sand!
Gloriously itchy.
Grainy sandy makes you randy,
don’t you think?*

But here we draw a veil.

*From the train on the way home,
suddenly, the lavender fields,
unreal as a painting, appear,
and the South of France is here;
in Colchester.*



Illustration by
Clifford Harper

The Highest Form of Special
by Terry Egan

*How many times now has he crossed the Delaware,
tweeting from the state room of his deluxe liner;
full of superlatives, although he never docks,
his hair blowing in the wind - even when there’s none.
Oh! The Presidentialisation of it...
and look: His wife’s a sort of figurehead, what with
the immobility of her glazed expression.
He sawdusts a cherry tree - pulps it - the leader
of the walled-up world, and twitters: ‘I did it, I
cannot tell a lie!’ He builds money factories:
he’s going to make chopping great again - then some!
His orange blimp passes over us; it waves down
at the outpouring he himself boasts (on TV)
is so much bigger than his inauguration’s.*

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Sherlock Holmes and the villains of Fitzrovia

By MIKE PENTELOW

Many of the adventures of fictional master amateur detective Sherlock Holmes were set in Fitzrovia. Not surprising, perhaps, as his creator and author Arthur Conan Doyle lived a few streets both east and west of the area.

Dr James Watson, the trusty companion of Holmes, lived with his wife and had a consulting room in a street where the garden backed into Mortimer Street.

It was from here that Holmes was followed by his deadly nemesis, Professor Moriarty.

This is recounted in "The Final Problem" (published in 1893) where Watson recalls that late on April 24, 1891 Holmes walked into his consulting room looking pale and thin. He closed and bolted the window shutters, and said he was afraid of being shot by an air-gun.

Already that day he had been nearly run over by a two-horse van driven furiously at him just after he left Oxford Street and went into Welbeck Street, then a brick from a roof missed him by inches, and finally on his way to Watson's he was attacked by a rough with a bludgeon.

He was sure this was all done on the instruction of Professor Moriarty, who, he said, was "the organiser of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city... He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. But his agents are numerous and splendidly organised."

Moriarty had learned that Holmes was close to unmasking him and so visited him in his own room. Moriarty's face "protrudes forward and is forever slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion," Holmes told Watson.

Moriarty then threatened Holmes with destruction if he did not lay off.

For this reason, continued Holmes, he intended to go abroad the next day while the police followed up his clues, and he invited

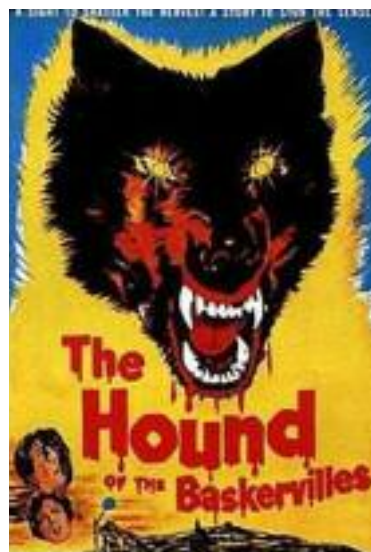


Watson to join him.

"It was in vain that I asked Holmes to remain for the evening," wrote Watson. "It was evident to me that he thought he might bring trouble to the roof he was under, and that was the motive which impelled him to go. With a few hurried words as to our plans for the morrow he rose and came out with me into the garden, clambering over the wall which leads into Mortimer Street, and immediately whistling for a hansom, in which I heard him drive away."

The next morning Watson made his way to Victoria station (for the boat train to Newhaven and Dieppe) where he met Holmes. Holmes then spotted Moriarty as the train left and deduced he must have followed Watson from his home.

Eventually Moriarty tracked Holmes down to Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland where they had a fight and both fell into the swirling water and were believed dead (but Holmes was later reincarnated by popular demand).



The title role in the 1959 film version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was played by Colonel, the giant blood-hound guard dog of the Duke of York pub in Rathbone Street.

A few months later, 4am on Christmas Day, 1891 (as related in "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle", 1892) police commissioner Peterson "was returning home from some small jollification" up Tottenham Court Road.

As he reached the corner of Goodge Street he saw a tallish man "walking with a slight stagger" and carrying a white goose over his shoulder being attacked by "a little knot of roughs." One knocked off the man's hat and he responded by raising his stick to defend himself, smashing a shop window in the process.

The policeman rushed forward to defend the man but the latter dropped the goose and ran off "amid the labyrinth of small streets which lie at the back of Tottenham Court Road."

The policeman took the goose and its owner's hat to Sherlock Holmes for assistance. He advised the policeman to eat the goose before it went off. When he did so he discovered inside the goose was a valuable blue diamond which had recently been stolen from a countess in a London hotel. A plumber had been arrested for the theft.

By examining various small details about the hat Holmes was able to identify its owner (aided by his name being on a small card attached to the goose's leg).

The owner of the goose told Holmes that he had got the goose from a Christmas club he was a member of at The Alpha Inn near the British Museum (just round the corner from where Conan Doyle lodged at 23 Montague Place in 1891).

From this Holmes was able to track down the real robber (who had hidden the diamond in a goose to avoid being found with it by the police, then the geese got mixed up with others). So the falsely accused plumber was released.

Apart from his observational and deductive skills Holmes was also noted for playing the violin and taking cocaine (which was legal in those days).

His violin was bought in Tottenham Court Road as revealed in "The Adventure of the Card-board Box" in 1893 (the box incidentally contained two human but unmatching ears). "Holmes would talk about nothing but violins, narrating with great exultation how he had purchased his own Stradivarius, which was

worth at least five hundred guineas [£525], at a Jew broker's in Tottenham Court Road for fifty-five shillings [£2.75]," stated Watson of their "pleasant little meal together" over a bottle of claret.

Earlier (in "A Study in Scarlet", 1887) Watson described how Holmes would "close his eyes and scrape carelessly at the fiddle which was thrown across his knee. Sometimes the chords were sonorous and melancholy. Occasionally they were fantastic and cheerful. Clearly they reflected the thoughts which possessed him, but whether the music aided those thoughts, or whether the playing was simply the result of a whim or fancy, was more than I could determine."

His cocaine was purchased at John Bell & Croyden, 50 Wigmore Street, which is still there on the corner of Welbeck Street, and a couple of streets away from where Arthur Conan Doyle lived at 2 Upper Wimpole Street in 1891 and 2 Devonshire Place in 1882.

Holmes had an account with The Capital and Counties Bank in Oxford Street (which did exist at number 68 between Rathbone Place and Newman Street).

It was also along Oxford Street that Holmes and Watson trailed Sir Charles Baskerville in Chapter 4 of perhaps the most famous book "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (first serialised from 1901 to 1902).

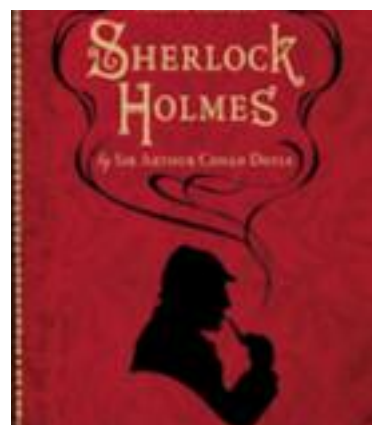
Other Oxford Street fictional references include a tobacconist, Bradley, which Holmes used to study different cigar ashes, which helped him at various crime scenes; a photographer's studio where a portrait helped identify a murderer in "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" (1904); and Latimer's where Dr Watson bought his boots in "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax" (1911).

In "A Case of Identity" (1891) Mary Sutherland, the daughter of a recently deceased plumber in Tottenham Court Road, consulted Holmes when her mother quickly remarried a Mr Windibank who made her sell the business.

Langham Hotel at 1 Portland Place is where Conan Doyle was introduced to Joseph Stoddart, an agent for American magazines, in August 1889, which led to his stories reaching an international audience.

No surprise then that this hotel featured in Chapter 2 of "The Sign of Four" (1890) when Capt Morstan was staying there but went missing; "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891) when the King of Bohemia stayed there; and the aforementioned "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax" when the Hon Philip Green stayed there.

Win all the Sherlock Holmes stories



Win this complete collection of all the Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Simply answer this question: Which street did Dr Watson's home back on to.

Post your answer (with your name, address, and contact details) to Fitzrovia News, 39 Tottenham Street, London, W1T 4RX; or email: news@fitzrovia.org.uk (with "Sherlock competition" in the subject box).

Dear Marie Stopes: the first birth control opera?

By SUE BLUNDELL

'I'm 37. I've had 14 children, nine living. The doctor said if I have more it might prove fatal. The doctor said I have a very weak heart. ... I should like your advice as soon as you can.'

After her book 'Married Love' was published in 1918, the birth control pioneer Marie Stopes received thousands of letters from desperate men and women. In 1925 she went on to set up a family planning clinic at 108 Whitfield Street (Fitzrovia News June 2018): the letters which convinced her that this service was badly needed are now in the archive of the Wellcome Collection, Euston Road. Composer Alex Mills came across them when researching a different topic, and was inspired to write his first opera, 'Dear Marie Stopes'. Moving excerpts like the one above have been woven into the work by librettist Jennifer Thorp. On 9, 11 and 12 August it had its opening performances in the Reading Room of the Wellcome, as part of the Tête-à-Tête opera festival. I'm so glad I was able to be there for one of them.

The piece begins when two archivists wearing white gloves walk down the stairs of the Reading Room carrying boxes full of letters. Soprano Alexa Mason and contralto Jess Dandy then transform themselves into the anxious women who are writing to Stopes. They're accompanied by a viola da gamba (Liam Byrne), cello (Lucy Railton), percussion (Tom Oldham), and electronics.

'Please help me!' is one of the refrains knitting the extracts together. Many of them are heart-rending. One seems funny, but only at first. It's from a woman due to marry a man who had an accident at work. In caring for



Dear Marie Stopes, with Liam Byrne (viola da gamba), Jess Dandy, Feargal Mostyn-Williams and Alexa Mason. (Photo Claire Shovelton)

him she helped to remove his clothes. 'Oh God, I saw! I couldn't help but see!' Ever since then the thought of marital relations has terrified her. 'I am very small,' she sings. 'I have no mother or sister to ask.'

Marie Stopes herself (excitingly played by countertenor Feargal Mostyn-Williams) is there to offer counsel. 'You must not marry!' she exclaims in a duet with a woman who has contracted gonorrhea. 'You should not have physical connections!'

But the woman is longing to have a child. 'Give your fiancé up to another woman!', Stopes insists. Gonorrhea was hard to treat in those days, and could be passed on to a baby during childbirth.

Some of the letters are from Stopes' attackers. Self-control is the best form of birth-control, one of them urges. (Try telling that to a wife desperate not to add to her 14 pregnancies). 'Sexual intercourse exists for the purpose of generation. This is the only truth!'

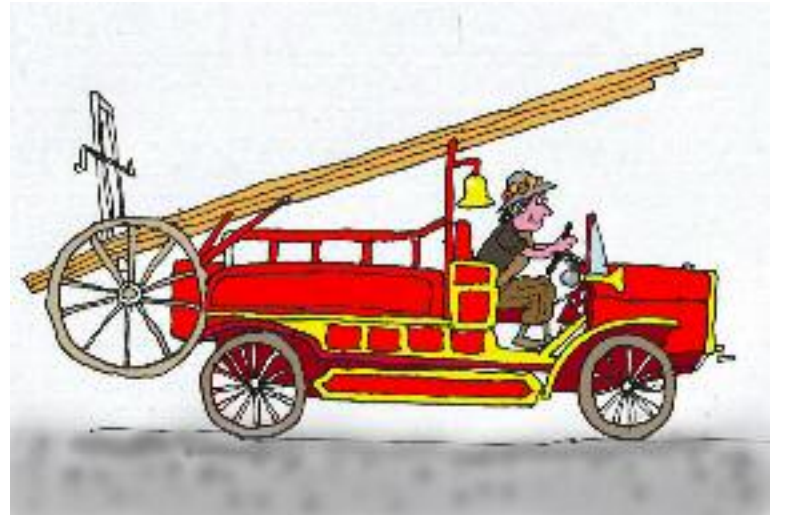
The strangest of the onslaughts declares, 'Decent English people are disgusted! Go back to

your own country, Marie Stopes!' I can only assume that this refers to the fact that Stopes was born in Edinburgh, though she had left there for London at the age of six weeks.

In another refrain, we're reminded that 1918 was also the year in which some women in Britain gained the vote. 'Women's political freedom is well worth the struggle,' Stopes sings again and again. 'But it is not as important as her personal and bodily freedom!'

'Dear Marie Stopes' was stunning in every way. I do hope it will be performed again. We may think we know how difficult life can be for some women, but it is only when it is spelt out to us in a powerfully emotional way that we realise how desperately important these issues still are.

Alex Mills first came across the Marie Stopes clinic while living in Fitzrovia (on Great Portland Street and then New Cavendish Street) between 2009 and 2013. You can find out more about his opera and his other work at www.alexmills.info.



Cartoon of Kathleen Brown by Chris Tyler

Suffragettes devised ingenious protests

By MIKE PENTELOW

One of the suffragettes' less well known actions to demand the vote for women was to steal a fire engine and race it down Tottenham Court Road!

This was done in 1909 by Kathleen Brown (1887-1973) just after she had been released from prison for throwing stones at Whitehall. While in Holloway jail for two terms she went on hunger strike.

She was awarded a suffragette medal from the Women's Social and Political Union inscribed "For Valour" with the dates of her incarceration.

She marched all the way from Edinburgh to London gathering signatures for a petition in 1912. Then she went to India where she opened a school.

The medal she received, and a portrait of her wearing it, are on display in an exhibition, which is open until September 28, at Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road.

It is called "A Stone's Throw from Westminster, Suffragettes and Other Feminists in Camden."

Also included is playwright, Cecily Hamilton (1862-1952), who wrote "A Pageant of Great Women" and others which were performed at the Scala Theatre, Tottenham Street, from 1909 onwards. The programme of one joint production by the Actresses Franchise League and the Women Writers' Suffrage League, on November 12, 1909, is on show in the exhibition.

There are also photographs of women students sketching a male nude model at the Slade School of Fine Art in University College, Gower Street. Women studied on equal terms with men at this college since its foundation in 1871, controversial at the time.

One of the students, Ernestine Mills (1871-1959), was very active in the suffrage movement.

Gower Street was also where three prominent feminists lived.



Millicent Garrett Fawcett's plaque at 2 Gower Street.

Millicent Garrett Fawcett, who became president of the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies, founded in 1897, lived at number 2, where there is a plaque commemorating this.

And in a flat in the same street lived Margaret Bondfield (1873-1953) and Mary Macarthur (1880-1921), who worked together for the Women's Trade Union League.

Margaret also became assistant secretary of the National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks. She had first joined it at the age of 18 when a shop assistant herself and she read an advert for it in the newspaper wrapping the fish and chips she was eating in Fitzroy Square.

Louise Michel (1830-1905), the anarchist refugee from Paris (after the Commune there was crushed in 1871) came to London and set up a free school in 1890 at 19 Fitzroy Square, according to the exhibition, although later research indicates it was at 19 Fitzroy Street.

The College of Working Women was set up in 1874, a few doors away, at 7 Fitzroy Street, by Frances Martin, aimed at single young workers who'd had a poor quality early education.

Many suffragettes joined the Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in 1888, which held its services in a vault in Clipstone Street.

Marie Stopes (see also this page) is credited with setting up the first birth control clinic, based from 1925 in Whitfield Street.

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The Aphrodites of Bourlet Close

By SUE BLUNDELL

It's well known that the goddess Aphrodite was born from the sea. Less well known is the story of how she got there. At the beginning of time, there were two mighty deities - Earth (Gaea) and Sky (Uranus). Sky made love to Earth continually, and she conceived many children. But she couldn't give birth to any of them, because Sky was always on top of her. She was in a lot of pain. So one night when Sky was asleep, Earth fashioned a sickle, and her oldest unborn son, Cronus, reached out and grabbed it. As Sky began to stir, quick as a flash Cronus cut off his father's genitals with the sickle.

He tossed them into the sea, and from them there spurted a fountain of foam, or aphros. A beautiful goddess took shape inside the foam and glided across the sea to Cyprus. When she stepped onto the shore flowers sprang up beneath her feet. She was given the name of Aphrodite, the foam-born.

It's worth noting in passing that when Cronus castrated his father (Freud loved this story of course), Sky was forced to separate from Earth. As a result, all the unborn gods and goddesses could emerge, and they were followed by mountains, rivers, plants, animals and humans. Our world as we know it came into existence at that moment – the moment when Aphrodite was born.

Like her Roman counterpart Venus, Aphrodite was the goddess of sex and love. It's significant

The third in an occasional series of Goddesses and Gods of Fitzrovia



cant that her birth was preceded by an act of castration. This tells us a lot about the Greek attitude to sex, and to the goddess who supervised it. Both could be dangerous, and you approached them with care. As is nowadays widely known, Greek men in general tended to give intellectual preference to sex with other men, believing this caused far less trouble. But they also knew it was



important to reproduce.

There are many stories that drive home this message. For example, the Greek hero Hippolytus refused to worship Aphrodite, being a keen sportsman and dedicated virgin. The goddess took her revenge by making his step-mother Phaedra fall desperately in love with him. Both died horrible deaths. So a little love is better than no love at all: we do have to keep the birth-rate up. But please don't take it too far. Incest is tempting, but by no means acceptable.

Most famous of all is the tale of how Aphrodite bribed the Trojan prince Paris to award her the



trophy for 'Most Beautiful Goddess'. She offered him the love of the most stunning of mortal women. No matter that at the time this woman was married to somebody else, a Greek king Menelaus. Paris went over to Greece to claim his prize, the wondrous Helen, and in this way the Trojan War began.

It was all Aphrodite's fault. (Blame women for your stupid wars, why don't you?) The Greeks won, of course. Adultery isn't acceptable either. Not if you're a married woman. It's OK if you're a married man, but only if you have sex with slaves, foreigners, prostitutes or other men.

Actually Aphrodite did get away with adultery. She was married to Hephaestus, the god of metal-beating, but had many affairs. The most long-lasting was with Ares (Mars in Roman mythology), the god of war. We might want to believe that this delivers a heart-warming message

about Love conquering War, but neither Greeks nor Romans ever for a moment thought in this way. War was their way of life. A more likely interpretation is that Love is inevitably mixed up with War. As for Aphrodite, it's alright for her to play away because goddesses are different from ordinary women. Don't try this at home, ladies, whatever you do. Adultery with a married woman was a criminal offence, punishable by death.

The male nude was the staple of Greek art, and it was many centuries before Greek sculptors started to remove the clothes from female figures. When they did, in about 350 BC, it was more often than not the goddess Aphrodite who came in for this treatment.

The two Aphrodites who hover above Bourlet Close are naked, or pretty close. The one on the left is a variation on a common theme, Aphrodite taking a bath (an illicit viewing, we've caught her unawares).

The figure on the right is one of my personal favourites. Still unfortunately shrouded in scaffolding, it's a copy of a famous statue in Naples Archaeological Museum, Aphrodite Kallipygos, or Aphrodite of the Beautiful Backside (middle). I'm aware that in this statue Greek sculpture has definitely crossed the line into soft pornography, but I still find it very intimate and lovely. I like to imagine the great goddess trying to catch a glimpse of her own bum in a mirror. But I'm afraid in the eye of the present-day beholder - I just have to admit it - Aphrodite is mooning.

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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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She draped all over my upright!



The Piano Man No 14 by CLIFFORD SLAPPER

The seductive prowess of the pianist has been trumpeted frequently in modern culture. As a young pianist in my twenties I much enjoyed the 1989 film, *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, in which Michelle Pfeiffer famously lay on a grand piano played by the eminently cool Jeff Bridges.

I also heartily recommend Kat French's 2015 novel, *The Piano Man Project*, in which a young, single woman's two best friends hatch a plot to fix her up with a pianist, as "all those hours of practising scales would make a man talented with his hands... and only clever, sensitive men would bother to learn the piano".

Discretion prevents me detailing what adventures may have come my way in the course of my work, but I can recall, for example, playing gigs for some of the Firkin pubs (Fuzzock & Firkin, Frog & Firkin etc.), and noticing on one occasion at the Angel that a woman had made her way over from the bar and was standing at my shoulder, studiously scrutinising my playing. She finally whispered in my ear cinematically, praising my digital dexterity and announcing that I was going home with her after the gig.

During my years playing nightly at Quo Vadis Club in Soho there was one club member who liked to climb atop the piano whilst I was playing and drape herself along it whilst singing along, even though the piano



Cartoon by Chris Tyler

there is an upright rather than a grand. More fully following the Pfeiffer choreography, a certain super model did likewise on the grand piano I played at The Club at The Ivy.

Speaking of choreography, there is great pleasure in the creative interplay between music and dance. At my live performance club nights, Slappers Club, I sometimes set up an experimental improvisation, with myself on the piano and a modern dancer, performing together. Dancer and choreographer Mel Simpson performed with me in this way at Soho's Arts Club on Frith Street, with her movements and my music evolving in symbiotic response to each other's inventions, a true mutual improvisation, as a form of creative expression. In a less disciplined setting, food supremo Margot Henderson would for a while perform wonderful expressive dance around my piano whilst I played at Gerry's, the unique Soho private members' club on Dean Street originating as an actors' club in the 1950s, and now, along with Trisha's on Greek Street, the last remaining club of its kind.

However, the oddest example of someone dancing on or around my piano was, bizarrely, comedian Vic Reeves, and was not at all seductive. I had been invited in 1998 by my friend Matt Lucas to the live tour of two hit television shows of the 1990s, *The Fast Show* and *Shooting Stars*. After the Brighton show, we were all in the lobby bar of the Grand Hotel. Mark Lamarr from Swindon nearly got into a fight with some card sharps in a side room. Eddie Izzard popped in after his own show nearby. I was persuaded to take to the keys on the grand piano in the lobby.

I played some Scott Walker for Vic Reeves and, sure enough, before long, he was stood on the piano singing, though not in "the club style" with which he regaled us on *Shooting Stars*! The Brighton hotel concierge was beside himself with anger and tried to talk Vic down. It was a far cry from Michelle Pfeiffer, but great fun.

On a separate occasion I was introduced to him and his wife Nancy Sorrell by my friend, Caroline Monk at the Charlotte Street Hotel in Fitzrovia, and he told me that his grandmother had worked as a cinema pianist in the 1920s. I played a set of David Bowie songs at last autumn's Art Car Boot Fair in Folkestone, where Vic Reeves, a.k.a. Jim Moir, was selling his art, including some portraits of Bowie. As I was playing the songs from my album, *Bowie Songs One* by Clifford Slapper & Friends (www.bowiesongs.com), I gave him a copy – but I'm not sure he remembered too much about Brighton.



Monroe too sexy for Hitchcock

Local film critic SANDRA SHEVEY saw a series of Alfred Hitchcock films at the Regent Street Cinema which reminded her of one of his last interviews which he gave her.

This recently renovated cinema is where the first film in Britain, by the Lumier Brothers, was shown, and later the first X-rated film in the UK.

Hitchcock's *Vertigo* opened the Hitchcock Week Festival on 13 July. This is the film that displaced Welles's *Kane* in the 2012 'Sight and Sound' poll as the best film of all time.

The novel was especially written for Hitchcock by Boileau and Narcejac who had written 'Diabolique' which Hitchcock greatly admired.

When I interviewed Hitchcock in 1972 I asked why he didn't use Marilyn Monroe instead of Kim Novak as I thought she'd create a better perspective of someone 'on the edge'. Hitchcock replied that she was 'too sexy' for the role. I protested he could have toned down her appeal. His reply: You can't change the myth.

Perhaps he is right. Certainly the director liked low-definition actors. He worked best with actors who were putty in his hands. He was an auteur, a creator.

The film was made in 1958 for Paramount and is one of four that James Stewart made with Hitchcock. I think it's also one of those he co-produced as Stewart and Lew Wasserman (the agent) connived for the removal of Vera Miles (who had been signed) and replacement by Kim Novak. Vera Miles at the time was under personal contract to Hitchcock as was Tippi Hedren years later.

Stewart was paired with Novak at Columbia Pictures and it was important to play up the bonding wherever and whenever. Columbia studio head Harry

Cohn advised Novak not to do the film as it would reflect badly upon her image. In short he said the role as written was that of a 'prostitute'.

Novak did not discuss or acknowledge the role until 2012 when it got the 'Sign and Sound' accolade.

I know because I first met Kim in the Fifties when I was writing for my high school newspaper. I interviewed her on Sutton Place (where I was born) and was bitten by her cat (Pyewacket).

I interviewed her again in Hollywood when she was filming 'The White Buffalo' and again she failed to mention Hitchcock and/or the film.

In the interview however Novak disclosed something about the impact of the role and I think this is true of all Hitchcock heroines. Tippi Hedren relates that she returns to Bodega Bay while Novak told me she haunts the San Francisco film locations of 'Vertigo'.

Novak also revealed reasons for leaving Hollywood and a strong film career ascribing flight to a series of harrowing near-fatal accidents.



Sandra Shevey guiding a Hitchcock walk

Sandra Shevey has been running an award winning Alfred Hitchcock London Tour since 1999. The tour runs daily for three hours at 11am (book: sandra_shevey@yahoo.com).

Looking back through the archives

30 years ago

Tesco saved

From Fitzrovia News, Sept, 1988: Campaigners have won an amazing victory, against all the odds, in their efforts to keep Tesco on Goodge Street open.

Tesco announced the agreement of a ten year lease for the store with the landlords, after intense lobbying.

Tesco chairman, Ian MacLaurin, said: "We are delighted we can continue our business in Goodge Street and remain part of the local community."

Campaign spokesperson, Max Neufeld, commented: "It is a great achievement for us. We brought the landlords and Tesco together when everybody had written us off." The death was announced of Charlie Allchild, aka "father of Fitzrovia" of Ridgmount Gardens (pictured above).

He had become joint licensee



of the Fitzroy Tavern in 1934 with his wife Annie (daughter of the original licensee Judah Kleinfeld), running it until 1956.

In that time the pub, on the corner of Charlotte and Windmill Streets, attracted many famous visitors including Dylan Thomas, Nye Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, Tom Driberg, and Inspector Fabian of Scotland Yard.

The couple raised huge amounts for local poor children throughout that time. Even after retirement, when he lived in Ridgmount Gardens, Charlie made toys which he gave to children all over the world.

10 years ago

Pop star crash

From Fitzrovia News, Autumn 2008:

Courier cyclist Joseph Matthey described how he nearly knocked over pop star Michael Jackson who jumped out in front of him in Charlotte Street. Joseph (Joe to his friends), who lived in Goodge Street, added that his stream of invective directed at the singer ceased when his four enormous minders surrounded him.

Lessons in how to make corsets, shoes and bags were given in Black Truffle at 52 Warren Street. The classes took up to eight people at a time and were mainly run at weekends. The shop had been recently opened by David Capon and Melissa Needham. "We really like the area and have had a positive response as people seem to be drawn to the shop because it is independent," said David.

Kim Novak tussles in "Vertigo"



WHAT'S ON AROUND FITZROVIA

Email news@fitzrovia.org.uk with listings by Nov 16, for the December issue and put "Listings" in the subject box



Landless, appearing at the King & Queen.

LIVE MUSIC

King & Queen, 1 Foley St : Folk once a month on Fridays 8-11pm (visit web.mustradclub.co.uk). Sylvia Barnes & Sandy Stanage, Sept 7. Jim MacFarland & Ken Wilson, Sept 21. Landless, Dublin Harmony Group, Oct 26. The McCarthy Family, Nov 30.

London Palladium, Argyll St (london-palladium.co.uk): Echo & the Bunnymen, Oct 18. King Crimson, Nov 2-3, Hawkwind, Nov 4-5.

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

ULU Live (The Venue), Torrington Place/Malet St (ulu.live.co.uk): Glass Tiger Oct 19. Snakecharmr Oct 26. Bat Touch, Nov 10. Caravan, Nov 16. The Alarm, Nov 28.

The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St (the100club.co.uk): Mike Sanchez and his band, Sept 23. Kris Barras Band, Sept 24. Paul Lamb and the Kingsnakes, Sept 25. Brotherhood of Breath, Sept 26. Sex Pistols Experience, Sept 28. Corky Laing plays Mountain, Oct 9. In Aid of Teenage Cancer Trust: Django Winedog's Rock Circus and others, Oct 16.



Recovery Songs at the Bloomsbury Theatre

THEATRE

Bloomsbury Theatre/Studio, 15 Gordon St (thebloomsbury.com): Recovery Songs (about falling down and getting back up again), Sept 28. Richard Carpenter Is Close To You, Oct 11-12.

Camden People's Theatre, 58-60 Hampstead Rd (cptheatre.co.uk): Camden Underground: Various plays, Sept 11-29 Big Bang, Oct 1. Everything I am, Oct 2-5. A Generous Lover, Oct 2-3. Risklab, Oct 4-5. Dice Festival, Oct 6-7. Elephant and Castle (live music and song), Oct 9-20, Kingdom (dreamscapes of drag kings), Oct 9-11.

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



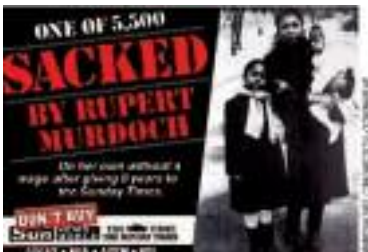
London Palladium, Argyll St (london-palladium.co.uk): The King and I (pictured above), until Sept 29. John Cooper Clarke, Nov 24. See also Live Music.

New Diorama Theatre (newdiorama.com), 15-16 Triton St (Euston Rd opposite Fitzroy St): 4.48 Psychosis, Sept 18-Oct 13. It's True, It's True, It's True, Oct 16-Nov 10. Boys, Nov 27-Dec 1.

CINEMA

All Saints Church, 7 Margaret St: Voices from Iraq (the plight of Christians in Northern Iraq), Sept 11, 7.30pm.

Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way (cultura.embavenez-uk.org): London Socialist Film Co-op screen films at 11am on the second Sunday of each month. Belonging, The Truth Behind the Headlines, Sept 9. The Spider's Web: Britain's Second Empire, Oct 14. The Murderers are Amongst Us (set in Germany 1945), and The St Pancras Rent Strike (St Pancras in 1959), Nov 11.



The Truth Behind the Headlines, showing at Bolivar Hall.

Charlotte Street Hotel, 15-17 Charlotte St: Film Club with meal and a movie for £40. To book tickets visit 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 or 08712 244007.

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

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

COMEDY

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

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.

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EXHIBITIONS

All Saints Church, 7 Margaret St: In Parish Room, John Lewis Arts & Crafts Club autumn exhibition, Sept 11-23, 12-6 pm. Child of War, an art exhibition by Syrian children, Sept 25-30, 12-6 pm.



CRW Nevinnon at British Museum

British Museum, Great Russell St (britishmuseum.org): Free: Christopher Richd Wynne Nevinnon: Prints of war and peace, until Sept 23. Money and medals, until Sept 30. What is Europe? until Oct 22. Pay for: I object: Ian Hislop's search for dissent, Sept 6-Jan 20. Iam Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria, Nov 8-Feb 24.

Royal College of Nursing Library and Heritage Centre, 20 Cavendish Square, Henrietta Place entrance opposite John Lewis Food Hall (rcn.org.uk/whatson): Pandemic Nursing 100 years of infection, until Sept 28. The Voice of Nursing: Celebrating 100 years of the RCN, until the end of this year.

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

Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Rd (wellcomecollection.org): Teeth, until Sept 16. Living with Buildings, Oct 4-March 3. Permanent exhibitions: Medicine Now, and Medicine Man.

TALKS

Sohemian Society, Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place: Ironfoot Jack: King of the Bohemians, by author Colin Stanley, Sept 19. The Edith Thompson and Frederick Bywaters murder case, by author Laura Thompson, Sept 26.

UCL Darwin Lecture Theatre, Malet Place (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.

OTHER EVENT

The news and production editor of *Fitzrovia News* celebrates his 60th birthday upstairs at The King and Queen on Sunday 16 September evening

ART

Featured exhibitions below. A full list of all galleries is on our website (news.fitzrovia.org.uk)

Bartha Contemporary, 25 Margaret St: Group Exhibition "Tactile Line", until Sept 22. Clay Ketter – Two Decades of Photographs, Sept 28-Nov 10.

Fitzrovia Chapel, Pearson Square: Exhibition of art from homes across Fitzrovia, throughout November.

Pi Artworks, 55 Eastcastle St: Maude Maris "Who Wants to Look at Somebody's Face?", Sept 29-Nov 9.



Pilar Corrias, 54 Eastcastle St: Christina Quarles "Always Brightest Before the Dusk" (pictured above), Sept 5-22.



Saunders Fine Art, 20 Charlotte St: Modern British and European Painting, by Appointment. Includes David Bridgeman (pictured above).



Tristan Hoare, 6 Fitzroy Square: Pierre Le-Tan "The Collection of Monsieur X" (pictured above), Sept 28-Nov 17.



White Rainbow, 47 Mortimer St: Taro Izumi, Sept 19-Nov 3. Meiro Koizumi (above), Nov 22-Jan 12