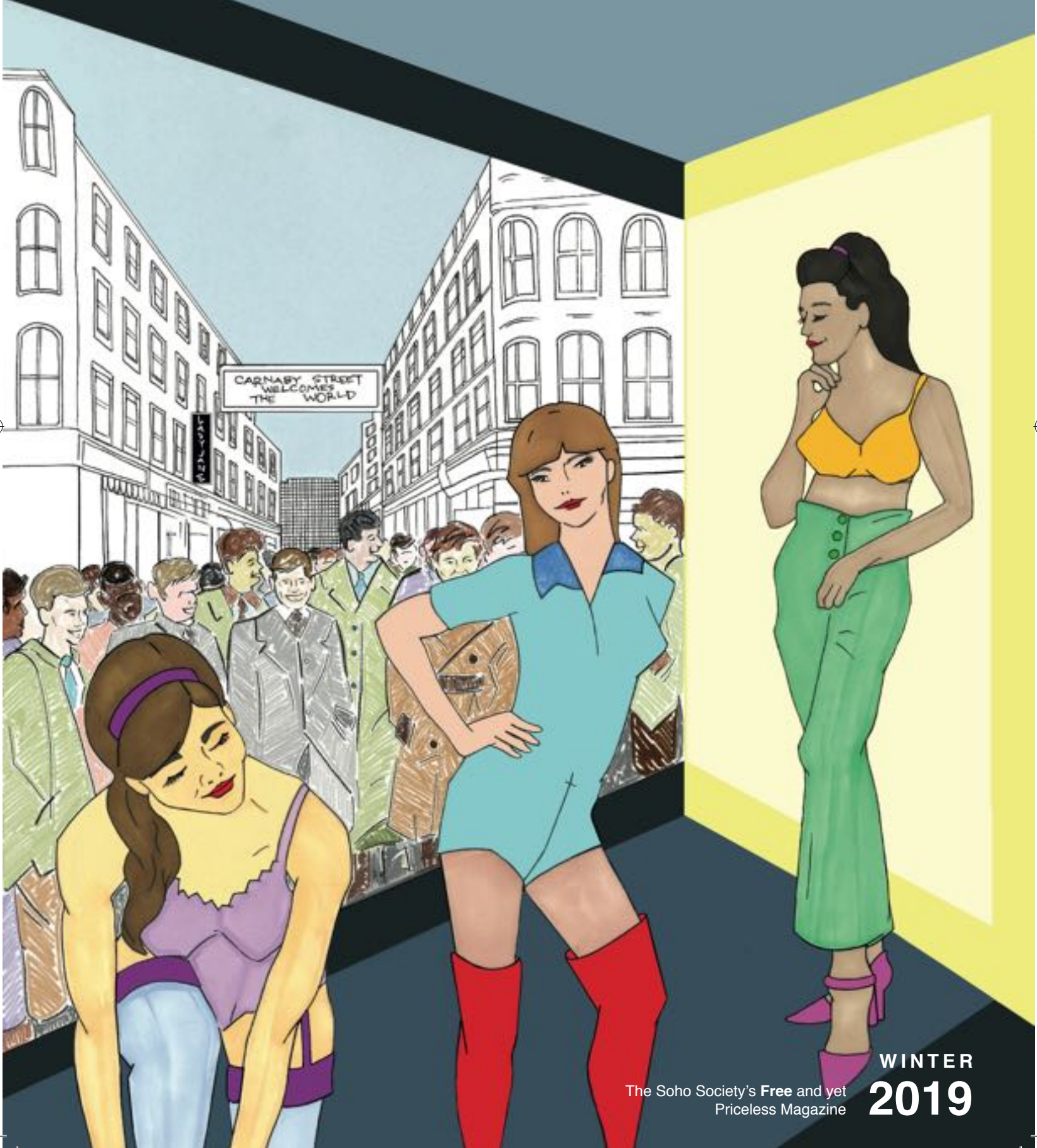




SOHO

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NO. 175
THE CLARION
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WINTER
2019

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EDITORIAL

We had no idea when we planned to produce our Christmas Clarion that Mr Johnson would call an election in the middle of everything, and, although inconvenient for everyone, we have, consistent with Soho Society tradition, decided to “keep bugging on” regardless and make best of a bad job. Accordingly, we have sections in this Clarion on each of the general election candidates and asked them to answer some local Soho questions to test their mettle. If all goes to plan we will also have held a hustings which we are in the process of organising as the Clarion goes to press. Leslie and Clare may also have dragged some candidates on to Soho Radio by the time you read this for further detailed cross-examination. There is only a brief period of time when politicians are keen to answer your questions and we intend to make the best of it.

Our local MP for nearly twenty years, Mark Field, has withdrawn from the field as “his beliefs stand at odds with the current administration’s impatient approach to getting Brexit done” and “he has no desire to become a disaffected, dissenting voice from the back benches, undermining a government under whose colours I have been elected.” See Mark’s article at page 8.

Time was that political parties of all hues offered a broad church in which people of many different views could happily work together to further a common cause. Anyway, that sort of collegiate behaviour, which we encourage and practice at the Soho Society, is clearly no longer popular amongst our main political parties. This seems a pity and we doubt that this new approach will work in anyone’s interests.

Nickie Aiken, currently leader of the Council, is taking up the baton handed on by Mr Field. One of our own West End ward councillors, Tim Barnes, did offer to take up Mr Field’s baton but came second which is a pity as he now lives in Soho and ideally we would like an MP just for Soho, but it is not to be. Similarly, Pancho Lewis, offered to take up the reins left dangling by the Labour candidate the Rev Saxby, but he too has lost out to the former general counsel of the Labour party - Gordon Nardell QC. We also have a serious and new to the field Liberal Democrat candidate in the form of Chuka Umunna. You can read about them all here and we wish them luck on the 12 December. They are all excellent candidates and we are lucky to have them and the winner will have our support whoever it is.

On Soho news we are asking Historic England to list Twentieth Century House. If you want to help with the campaign get in touch. If we fail it may be hard for the Council to prevent its destruction with just its planning powers, and the demolition of a building deeply connected to both Soho and the film industry will leave all of us poorer for its loss. Construction of the new building will blight Soho Square for two years at least, drive out local businesses that need quiet and the proposed new building is a big and shiny one which will dwarf the listed Soho Hospital for Women on the other side of Frith Street. One might ask what the Soho Conservation Area is for if we are unable to save this building ...

The NHS is closing the walk-in centre in the Soho Hospital for Women. Apparently, all these useful clinics are to close nationally but, we think it’s a stupid idea to close this one - it is always busy, provides a valuable resource for residents and workers in Soho and also provides an alternative to A&E which is under real pressure. We hear that its charges to non-UK resident patients mean that it actually makes money, making its closure seemingly pointless. I have, like many people, given up trying to understand how the NHS makes decisions.

We have had a bit of a ding-dong with Shaftesbury plc and the council on the proposal to remove traffic from Beak Street. For information on the informal on-line survey the Society did see page 36. The exchange of letters that appeared in the Westminster Extra is on our website. Their key thing now is for residents and the Society to come up with a traffic reduction solution that actually works and start engaging with the Council about it. We have had a useful meeting with Living Streets to kick the process off. Once the election is over we will be writing to Council about next steps.

The planning group has had a number of presentations on Film House in Wardour Street. Developers already have a permission to turn it into a hotel and add another storey but are now talking to us about an alternative scheme that would leave most of it in office use and install three new restaurants on the ground floor with a total of 270 covers. While we welcome the change of plan from hotel to office we are concerned about the restaurant use. Of course one of the attractive things about Soho is that entertainment uses vary in intensity as you walk through it. With this scheme, and the recently consented to scheme on Great Marlborough Street for a 300 cover restaurant, there is an increasing risk that Oxford Street to Leicester Square will become just one undifferentiated mass of bars and restaurants. The plans for Film House are on our website if you want to take a look. Join the planning group if you want to help.

We have a date for the Annual General Meeting - Monday 20 April 2020 - please make a note in your diary and come along. If you are interested in joining the committee get in touch.

Finally, real thanks from everyone at the Soho Society to each of our ward councillors who together awarded us the money to refresh the information technology in the office. Our iMac is super fast now, we have InDesign software to layout the Clarion, Filemaker to run our membership and planning databases and a new A3 printer for printing out planning applications and other documents. Trustees and members have been on training courses and the 1gigabit per second fibre broadband will have been installed when you read this. I have installed my last inkjet printer cartridge and it feels very, very good.

Have a wonderful Soho Christmas and New Year and “keep bugging on”.

Tim Lord



What we'll miss, what we welcome and

First and foremost we'll miss having Dennys on our doorstep, though it must be said, they're not closing down, they're leaving their Dean Street home and going north of Oxford Street, to Berners Street (see page 28).

The Boulevard Theatre and restaurant on Peter Street has now opened - they have a full programme of events which can be seen on their website.

At 15 Frith Street, we have a new pop-up (a bakery/café by day and a Singaporean restaurant by night), which is certainly a premises with a difference. At the bakery, Arôme, you will be able to get breads, and sweet and savoury pastries from master pâtissier Alix Andre, such as Gula Melaka Coconut Bun, Laksa Tomato Coriander Roll, Arôme Milk Bread Toast (a caramelised milk loaf similar to both French toast and candied bread) and Kaya Toast (two slices of Arôme milk bread toasted on the grill and slathered with homemade coconut jam) - just the thing after a hard day's shopping! In the evening it becomes Singapulah, a Singaporean restaurant - and yes, you'll be able to have a Singapore Sling.

At 64 Dean Street, Rambla has undergone a makeover and a change of style. Victor Garvey has reinvented it as So/LA which focuses on West Coast American cuisine and Californian wines.

At 40 Beak Street, we have Sticks'n'Sushi, a Japanese/Danish restaurant, where you can eat their signature dishes such as Hell's Kitchen maki with bubbly tempura shrimp or yakitori skewers such as Buta Yaki with organic pork from Denmark.

Last but certainly by no means least, opposite the medical centre at 63-64 Frith Street, Sussex opened on 4 November (www.sussex-restaurant.com). This is the fourth venture from the Gladwin brothers, Oliver, Richard and Gregory. The restaurant will focus on showcasing hand-picked ingredients from the family's farm in Nutbourne, West Sussex. There are daily specials will include a rotating range of Wellingtons, filled with the likes of rare venison with chard and black figs, or hare with quince and lovage. There will also be home-cured charcuterie, cheeses

and wines from a counter, while more snacks will be available in the bar area. The kitchen will also feature a chef's table for up to 20 guests, which is set to host events from intimate dinners to butchery masterclasses. There will be wines from the family's vineyard in Sussex, as well as global wines chosen by Richard Gladwin. Our intrepid reviewer will be visiting and reporting in the next issue of the Clarion.

As to building works, these continue - who knows where we are with 90-104 Berwick Street. The date for completion, rather like CrossRail keeps getting put back - we are not taking bets on which gets finished first, but Most of the scaffolding has been removed from the front of the building - see picture.

If any of our readers have anything they'd like to include in future issues, please let us know.

Jane Doyle

We're Watching

It has been a relatively quiet period since our last Clarion. The issues of note are: that more applications are coming in which propose roof terraces. These can be useful ways to allow employees a place to relax away from their workstations, to smoke for those who still do and to add various greening and planting schemes. On the other hand, there are the problems of overlooking into other offices or residents' flats and also the additional problem in the evening of noise caused from people after work relaxing and partying which can get noisy. So, the issues for our planning meetings are often about putting in place appropriate screens and railings and conditions about hours of use so that evening use does not create nuisance to others.

Some readers may be aware that Westminster City Council recently declared there to be a 'climate emergency' and are now setting plans to move towards becoming a zero carbon borough. Welcome though this is, it will be interesting to see in planning terms if this is just a slogan or heralds a real change in approach. As an example, we continue to see applications to install external electric or gas heaters outside pubs and restaurants. These so clearly waste energy, and the gas ones also cause carbon emissions. It will be a quick way

to judge whether the new commitment is real or not.

The use of these heaters underlines the approach of increasing numbers of businesses to things like public space and the weather. First, they want to use all that lovely public space as much as they can to get more trade for themselves; and second, rather than just be content to achieve this in the summer, quickly seek to put in awnings and heaters to try and control the weather and temperature. This gap between the green PR words and slogans we all now use and what actually happens in pursuit of a few extra quid just illustrates how far we all have to go, whether as customers or business owners, to really understand the behaviour change needed and the actions required to nudge us all to behave more responsibly towards the climate which we are so carelessly changing.

It is worth also thinking of the much publicised troubles of the chains - think Jamie Oliver, Carluccio's plus Patisserie Valerie and sadly maybe even Pizza Express which was founded here in Soho. Also, have you noticed how many 'new restaurant concepts' from independents are here for a while and then disappear? But these indications of a 'peak' in food and beverage don't seem to have been picked up and acted on yet. Applications for new A3 restaurants keep on coming. Will Soho never have enough? I suppose only when we have real bust and then, like the Queen after the financial crash, people will say "why did no one see it coming?" Soho is surely stronger, more interesting and more resilient if we have a diverse offer in our street facing businesses. It makes us less vulnerable than if one trade sector dominates and then catches a cold.

Soho Neighbourhood Forum

Thank you to everyone who completed our survey over the summer on the draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan. 205 of you did so and we garnered 1,074 individual comments even if one of them was only 'hello'. We are working our way through them and will amend policies and the reasoning for them as required in the light of these comments. We also received useful comments from a number of local stakeholders and bodies like WCC, GLA, TfL and Historic England. Their detailed comments will



also help to strengthen the plan. Still a way to go but we hope to send it in to WCC around the end of the year for them to start the process which will lead to its adoption. We just have to remember the fable of the tortoise and the hare and keep faith that we will get there.

Matthew Bennett

Licensing

Old Compton Street feels like the main thoroughfare in the neighbourhood and performs all the functions of a village centre. It's where people meet, shop, eat, drink, and fall out, down, and – presumably - in love. In the evenings and through most of the night the street itself overtakes the premises lining it to become the main entertainment venue as punters promenade along from one place to another, or just hang out and party.

Whilst the whole of Soho is a teeming mix of shops, bars, restaurants and private houses, Old Compton Street feels like the intense front line of commercial and private property, where thriving businesses and domestic residences face off. The Soho ecosystem hinges on the balance of homes and hospitality, and nowhere is the intensity of this carefully negotiated pact more apparent.

Recently a busy venue on the street applied to remain open until 3.30 am almost every night of the week. Given the general nocturnal cacophony it seems hardly likely that such an application would make much difference. But we opposed the application, reasoning that the people living in the large number of flats above, either side and immediately across the street would not be too happy with the place serving then disgorging over a hundred punters three or four hours later at night. We met with the managers and discussed their application – noting their parent company already run a large bar until very late further down the street and were concerned that more late hours will result in serious problems for residents. When asked if they had sought the views of the people living close by, they looked blank.

We attended the hearing as did a local resident who gave very strong evidence describing the issues faced by residents on Old Compton Street, which the Committee clearly took account of and this may well have been critical in the

Licensing Sub-Committee's decision to refuse the application. It highlights how important it is for residents to object to applications and attend hearings, and we can help with this..... So if you have any issues please get in touch.

David Gleeson

Ward Panel

Our crime spots remain much the same. Cambridge Circus and its environs is still the 'go to' place for crack, etc. There does seem to be some improvement at the moment, which may be due to the weather, but every time I say that I hear further horror stories of open dealing and its related antisocial behaviour. There are certain times of the day and certain places where users congregate waiting for their dealers. So be careful and always report crime - 999 in an emergency, 101 or crime can now be reported online Met Police 'Report it'. Begging seems to have lessened a little, at least during the day, but equally this may have something to do with the weather.

There are still homeless 'tent dwellers'. Please report these via Streetlink, particularly in the cold weather, because there is help out there.

I understand there have been operations on pedicabs, which remain a menace and a number have been confiscated. One day hopefully there will be some legislation and they will be regulated, but I'm not holding my breath in the current political climate. Problems can also be reported to the council's noise team, particularly if there are persistent operators causing a nuisance.

There is still the peril of the 'incredibly annoying busker', who walks around with his speaker playing what he euphemistically calls 'music'. He 'plays' outside pubs, and knows exactly how long it takes for the Westminster noise team to arrive. He attracts people outside the pubs and bars, who spill into the road, and one day there's likely to be an accident. He has the remarkable ability to annoy people the length and breadth of Soho. So please keep reporting him, and perhaps one day he'll move on or be moved on.

Finally, Christmas is coming, so the main message is to warn you all to be very careful of your possessions as there are gangs of pickpockets and other

opportunists looking to relieve you of almost anything - particularly mobile phones, laptops, purses, anything in a shopping bag.

Lastly, I would like to thank Steve Muldoon and his fellow officers for their help and patience over the past year. Steve is always available if you need to see him.

Stay vigilant and have a great Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year.

Jane Doyle

Dates for your Diary

Soho Society General Election Hustings
6pm 29 November at Allen Room, St Anne's Church - registration required through our website

Last date for registration of proxy votes in the General Election 4 December 2019 at 5pm

Christmas Tree Light Switch On St Anne's Gardens on 5 December 2019 4pm

Lady Lambrini Quiz at St Anne's 6 December 2019

General Election 12 December - Remember to Vote

Christmas Celebration St Anne's 17 December 2019 at 7pm

House of St Barnabas Carol Service 18 December 2019

St Anne's Carol Service 19 December 2019 at 7pm

Christmas Eve Service 24 December 2019 5 pm with puppet nativity "Birthday in Bethlehem"

Christmas Day Communion 25 December 2019 at 11am

Soho Neighbours Private View at the Photographers Gallery 31 January 2019 5pm (RSVP required)

Soho Society Annual General Meeting 20 April 2020 (provisional)





COUNCILLOR
JONATHAN GLANZ
CONSERVATIVE



Short-Term Letting

Across Westminster, there are now some 10,000 residential properties which are being offered on short-term letting sites. This represents a significant proportion of the residential stock in the city, and is having a huge adverse effect on all aspects of the property market and on our residential communities. This is particularly keenly felt in Soho, where many properties now have the tell-tale signs of multiple key-boxes outside their door, and we see daily visitors, pulling their suitcases, using these flats in a way for which they are not designed and not permitted. The horror stories of party flats, pop-up brothels and the inappropriate use of the lifts, common parts and porter services in blocks of flats are all too true.

The Deregulation Act, which authorised 90 days as a maximum for such use on otherwise fully residential properties is an example of one-size-all not fitting Soho or the West End. Developers are now offering properties telling potential owners that they can obtain the enhanced rental stream of Airbnb. That increases the prices they are asking, and excludes potential owner-occupiers. The prices being charged mean that respectable buy-to-let Landlords who are offering properties at market rent are also being excluded from the market, and rents for those looking to occupy properties long-term are being pushed up.

Westminster City Council is now fighting back in a range of ways. We have over 1,000 Planning Enforcement cases pending, but this is a slow, expensive and cumbersome process. We are now working with responsible Landlords to look at other ways of enforcing against this pernicious trade. Most Leasehold flats have restrictions against short-term letting, which are not superseded by the Deregulation Act. Landlords can, and in some cases do, enforce those clauses.

Many flat owners have mortgages, and those mortgages will restrict the use of the property to residential. These are registered at the Land Registry, and where we have details, we are reporting flat owners to their mortgage companies. The threat of an instant requirement to repay the mortgage often concentrates the minds of those in breach.

Thirdly, most buildings are insured on the basis that they are used for residential use only. What amounts to a trading or quasi-hotel use is outside the terms of the insurance, and puts the insurance of the whole building in breach. Again, where possible, we are informing insurance companies of these breaches as we do not wish to see this lead to major insurance claims for water, fire or other damage being a catalyst to action being taken to make their own and their neighbours' insurance voidable and potentially ineffective.

I am well aware that the large and disproportionate number of short-term lettings picks away at the glue which holds our community together. We lose the eyes and ears which help the Council and the police to enforce against wrongdoers,

criminality and antisocial behaviour. We also lose the use and support of the local community and independent shops, whether they be newsagents, cafés or dry-cleaners because the occupiers of short-term flats do not use these services. Again, it makes a difficult retailing environment even harder.

I will be working alongside officers, property owners, managing agents, and others to address these issues, and help to reset this balance. If you are aware of properties which are being used in this way, please let me know so that I can inform the Enforcement Teams and we can start the process of rebuilding our residential communities with genuine long-term residents.

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COUNCILLOR

PANCHO LEWIS

LABOUR



Tackling the climate emergency

I usually begin my article in the Clarion with local issues. This time I'd like to start with a bigger picture issue: climate change.

According to the UN, we have 11 years left to prevent runaway climate change. Preventing a crisis will require action by government at an international and national level, but local authorities have an important role to play too.

Conservatives in Westminster Council say they want to embrace the green agenda, but they're moving far too slowly. So I've taken it upon myself to lobby them to show more urgency.

I'm pleased that following intense campaigning they declared a Climate Emergency and adopted Labour plans to become carbon neutral within two decades. To get them to adopt our plans, we ran a petition, helped convene a Climate Assembly public meeting, and I lobbied the Council's Cabinet directly.

This is an important step forward. The Council now needs to put in place a programme to rapidly decrease carbon emissions. I'll work to hold them to account.

Soho Square GP

The future of Soho Square GP is again in question. Living Care are evacuating the premise, and Central London CCG is looking for another provider. They have run a survey to hear the views of the community.

The local community, led by Wendy Hardcastle, have done some great work encouraging residents to feed into the process. I've written to the CCG making the following arguments, among others:

- the next service provider must genuinely understand the needs of the community, including the needs of LGBT+ and the Cantonese community and the elderly. Staff should be fluent in Cantonese;
- a local provider should be selected instead of one that has very few if any connections with the community. Ideally this would be a small-scale provider, not a big company;

- the surgery should continue to be housed where it is now.

It's crucial that we get a good provider. Let's work together to secure that outcome.

Beak Street pedestrianisation

The Council and Shaftesbury have brought forward plans to pedestrianise a section of Beak Street. Many residents have written to me saying they are opposed to the plans.

Whilst we need to find ways to discourage car use, any proposals for pedestrianisation need to be treated with the utmost caution. Pedestrianisation can have unintended consequences, like increasing rat-running and making access for elderly and disabled people difficult.

I fear the proposed Beak Street pedestrianisation is an attempt to extend the Carnaby empire to another part of Soho. Carnaby is dominated by big brands. I want to contain this spread and support local, independent businesses.

I will work hard to put the concerns of the community at the centre of what happens next on Beak Street.

Contact Pancho

Pancho holds advice surgeries on the third Saturday of every month. No appointment is needed.

You can find him:

- from 10:00-11:00 at

Danceworks, 16 Balderton Street, Mayfair.

- from 11:30-12:30 at

68 Dean Street, Soho

Alternatively, email plewis@westminster.gov.uk or call

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MARK FIELD

As I am sure many readers will have seen in recent days and weeks, I have taken the immensely difficult decision to not offer myself as the Conservative candidate at the forthcoming General Election called for Thursday 12 December. The feverish speculation about a winter election, which has now come to pass, pressed me to reach this conclusion in the middle of October. After almost twenty years as the local MP (not to mention my being a member of the Conservative Party for 35 years), coming to this decision caused me great distress and anxiety, not to mention many sleepless nights.

I have been proud of my local reputation as a moderate, consensual MP, invariably keen to work effectively across party lines to the benefit of constituents and communities alike, something which I hope has been the case in Soho. However, such a pragmatic, co-operative approach to public service has been tested to destruction in the fractious, febrile and deeply divisive aftermath to the EU Referendum in 2016. I had dearly hoped that by the time of the next General Election these issues would have been resolved. However, it is increasingly clear that divisions over Brexit and our future relationship with the EU-27 will dominate and define domestic politics for many years to come.

As a Party Vice-Chairman and then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office I was until recently constrained by collective responsibility, although during free, indicative votes in April having the opportunity to express a personal preference for ruling out a 'No Deal' Brexit and for revoking Article 50 (albeit to restart the two year clock, rather than override the Referendum result entirely). As a Conservative Party member for 35 years (and representing it in elected public office over the last quarter century) I shall continue from the bottom of my heart to wish it, and the wonderful people and communities which make this truly the greatest constituency in the country, the greatest of success. The truth is that emotionally and geopolitically I still believe in my heart that the UK would be better served by remaining in or very closely aligned to the EU, not least given our privileged position of opt-outs over immigration, the Euro and our hard-won budget rebates. Nevertheless, from my recent experience as Minister for Asia and the Pacific I am also confident that in time our people and businesses have the innovation, enthusiasm and drive to make an economic success of Brexit in the decades that lie ahead.

Naturally, leaving parliament does allow a certain amount of introspection and reflection on my years representing this seat, and in writing this piece, on Soho in particular. I think back to my campaigns which have delivered in the community, such as the reduction of the maximum stakes on fixed odds betting terminals, a campaign which gathered pace in recent years until the government ultimately brought this down to £2, to calling for reform to business rates and leading efforts to secure the introduction of a fund to support businesses worth hundreds of millions of pounds in 2017. Campaigns on improving access to superfast broadband and improving the quality of the air we breathe have borne fruit. These campaigns will naturally continue and I look forward to my successor and Westminster

City Council continuing to drive these going forward.

Our local authority, Westminster City Council, has been blessed with consistently outstanding policymakers and flair in an era when we all know city centre living has become tougher – whether it is anti-social behaviour, round-the-clock noise, daily disruption or protests on our streets. We take for granted this superb local leadership and I am sure, regardless of who the new MP for this seat will be, that the Council's vital work in Soho and beyond will continue. The leader of the Council, Nickie Aiken, has been selected as the Conservative candidate and I wish her every success in the forthcoming election. Her record as a local champion is outstanding and I am sure that she will be a fantastic representative for the Cities of London and Westminster in parliament.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support you have given me over these past two decades. It has been a privilege to represent the best constituency in the country, and it is areas like Soho with its unique vibrancy and history that make this the case. Please ensure that even amidst these unprecedentedly turbulent political times you provide as much encouragement and friendship to my successor as you have given me over these many years.



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CHUKA UMUNNA

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT



When were you last in Soho and what do you like about it?

I'm Chuka Umunna and I'm the Shadow Foreign Secretary for the Liberal Democrats and their local candidate in the Cities of London & Westminster constituency. I was born in October 1978 to a Nigerian father and an English-Irish mother. I studied Law at the University of Manchester and the University of Burgundy, as part of the Erasmus programme, followed by Nottingham Law School. After training at a City law firm, I specialised as a solicitor in employment law acting for both employees and employers in Westminster and the City of London for just under a decade. I've been a London MP since 2010, serving as Shadow Secretary of State for Business between 2011 and 2015 under Labour, and joined the Liberal Democrats earlier this year. I am a proud Remainer, taking a leading role in the Britain Stronger IN Europe campaign and co-founding the People's Vote campaign. I sit on the Home Office's Serious Violence Taskforce, and in the wake of the Brexit vote founded the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration. I was last in Soho on Monday when I visited Bar Bruno on Wardour Street with Jenn Selby, an inspirational campaigner on sexual assault and violence against women. Jenn previously was previously the Women's Equality Party candidate in the General Election in this constituency but has stood aside and backed my candidacy instead, not least because she believes we are the party best placed to beat the Conservatives here. Soho is such a unique, diverse and vibrant community, and manages to maintain the feel of a village despite being at the heart of central London. It is a very special place and should be protected.

Many residents believe Soho is under threat from endless and insensitive re-development - do you agree and if so what would you do to protect it?

I am aware of the numerous problems that previous and currently ongoing developments have had in Soho. The Crossrail works having put the London Gin Club out of business since the beginning of the year is only one example, with delays to the project exacerbating the impact on the community even further. Soho is a historic cultural district where the LGBTQ+ community, film, arts and music scenes, Chinese community, and so many others have their roots firmly planted. Developments should always ensure that Soho's unique heritage is protected, and that local residents, business owners, and community groups have a say. It is good news that Soho has been designated a "Special Policy Area", where in theory the unique characteristics of the area will have a greater impact on planning decisions, but this policy has been weakened since its announcement and ongoing problems with current developments should be treated in this spirit too, not just in regards to new proposals.

National planning policy and London planning policy has prioritised economic growth over heritage - which may play out well nationally but is in fact the opposite

of what Soho needs. How would you help us get a planning system that will protect Soho's unique value?

There will always be competing interests between local communities and the management of larger projects, so it is vital that we have a much stronger Complaints Commissioner for major developments and an effective voice for residents and small local businesses on the Council's Planning Committee. Local grassroots groups like the Soho Society need an MP that will support and elevate their voices on a local and national level. Our Liberal Democrat London Assembly member, Caroline Pigeon, has done some great work taking local complaints directly to the Crossrail Complaints Commissioner, but it is clear that Commissioners need to be publicly accessible, and empowered on big planning projects to put the voice of local residents front and centre.

Soho currently has eight major construction projects ongoing, Dean Street - Crossrail, Berwick Street Market (Hotel), Broadwick Street - National Magazine House (Refurbishment) and corner of Berwick Street (New Hotel), Piccadilly Circus, Charing Cross Road and Film House on Wardour Street. We have had two street collapses (D'Arblay and Poland) only one of which has been repaired after a 2 year delay. D'Arblay Street remains closed and has been for over a year. The street collapses into the underground vaults are almost certainly a result of the construction traffic. WCC has no plan of the vaults and has no plan to mitigate the risk of further collapses. Would you support a moratorium on new large construction projects in Soho until the current developments have been completed?

Major construction projects in Westminster have been allowed to fail local people too often. It is clear that the treatment of the London Gin Club and collapses in D'Arblay and Poland Street are unacceptable, but wider problems of dirt, unwieldy construction traffic, and disruption have an impact on the whole community. We need tough new standards to ensure that these cannot be repeated, and when problems do arise, are dealt with quickly to minimise disruption to residents and businesses. In extreme cases, local representatives should be empowered to step in. If I am elected I will work closely with Caroline Pigeon AM who has done a great job ensuring these problems are not brushed under the carpet.

WCC has been working for at least a year with Shaftesbury on proposals to close Beak Street to vehicle traffic with deliveries from 7am to 11am. Beak Street is one of the main arterial routes for traffic out of Soho. Although WCC and Shaftesbury say the plan is aimed to reduce traffic by closing a rat run

little evidence of this has been put forward. More likely is that the closure will displace traffic onto residential streets - Great Pulteney, Bridle Lane and Golden Square. Further, Shaftesbury would benefit significantly from the closure as it owns many of the frontages on the Street. Do you support the proposed closure? Would you support other methods of traffic reduction such as restricting traffic entering Soho to residents, timed deliveries and licensed construction traffic? Do you think it is appropriate for WCC to work closely with property developers in this way? If not how might the transparency of these processes be improved?

The local community knows best on the most effective ways to manage traffic in the Soho area, and I am very open-minded to proposals to reduce traffic and congestion. Restricting traffic entering Soho to residents, timed deliveries, or licensed construction traffic are all sensible alternatives to the partial closure of Beak Street. The Council needs to work with developers, but that should not come at the cost of ignoring residents, businesses or other stakeholders who may be adversely affected by proposals. It is in all our interests for all sections of our communities to be involved in decision-making, to ensure that no one loses out from rerouted traffic or disruption. As a minimum, Shaftesbury PLC should be required to make their traffic survey, which was used to justify the pedestrianisation project, public so it can be scrutinised by local residents too.

On the corner of Soho Square Twentieth Century House is a 1930's unlisted building of merit in the Soho Conservation Area which has extensive links with the history of film production in Soho and the UK over many decades. Royal London, the freeholder has applied to demolish the building in order to build a much larger modern office building. The existing building works well with the other listed buildings in the Square, the proposed replacement does not. The project would involve at least 2 years of construction work. Residents and the public are opposed to the loss of the building - what is your view?

The Twentieth Century House building in Soho Square is a unique part of both Soho and London's filming heritage and history and it would be an immense shame if it were demolished. Soho's historical connections to the film industry have played a great part in the vibrant culture of the area today, and should be celebrated and protected, as 1500 people have called for in a petition to Royal London. I believe a compromise can be found with local residents where the existing building is protected but a new commercial purpose is found for the building.

The NHS is proposing to close the Walk In Urgent Care Centre on the ground floor of the Soho Hospital for Women. The Centre is always busy, provides an important service for residents, office workers and visitors - and, as a result of charging visitors, actually makes a profit. It also provides spare capacity to reduce pressure on Accident and Emergency Units nearby. Do you support its retention and what would you do to ensure that outcome?

These are incredibly tough times for the NHS, with staff doing an excellent job in trying circumstances. The Liberal Democrats are committed to putting an extra penny on the pound on Income Tax with the proceeds going to giving the NHS the funding it needs to continue providing the high quality services people need. We would also ensure there was parity between mental health care with physical health care, which for too long has been allowed to lag behind other services. Walk-In Urgent Care Centres like the one in the Soho Hospital for Women are vital community services and have a beneficial impact on surrounding care centres, A&Es and hospitals. I support its retention and would vote to ensure that the NHS gets the funding it needs to expand rather than close services.

The Central London Clinical Commissioning Group is running a new tender for the GP service in the Soho Hospital for Women following the early end of the contract with Living Care - its a beauty contest, fixed price but with little detail on the specific needs of the practice - Chinese speaking patients and the LGBTQ community. We are concerned that the process last time gave us Living Care that fired the Cantonese speaking GP's, appeared to only be able to hire locums, lost many patients and collected large management fees. CLCCG seemed ineffective at monitoring compliance of these contracts. How would you support the PPG is ensuring that a reasonable provider is selected this time and is held to performance of a contract which properly specifies what the community needs?

Tendering processes for care provision must put the needs of patients first, and any potential provider must be asked to demonstrate how it intends to meet the unique needs of Soho's Chinese and LGBTQ community patients. This means as a bare minimum that there are GPs that can speak the necessary languages to treat local patients and who are sensitive to the requirements of LGBTQ+ citizens. Although MPs are not participants in the tendering of services, if elected as your MP I would ensure that patient concerns were brought to the Commissioning Group directly if they believed their voices and priorities were being locked out of consideration during the process.

As social housing becomes affordable housing and variations of the same we seem to be losing tenants with children - for whom the rent is increasingly not affordable, this in turn is threatening the viability of our primary school. What can you do about it?

Rising rents pricing out families and small businesses is a huge problem in Soho, and there is a dual issue with private developers getting around commitments to build a certain percentage of social housing, and a lack of space to build homes in the centre of London at a rate that would reduce rents. Like many of these issues, local residents are currently reliant on Westminster Council to side with them in their decision-making on these projects and too frequently the Council are allowing companies to shirk their obligations to residents - in this case to build and provide good quality social housing, alongside private properties for sale and rent. The Mayor also has a role to play in insisting on a minimum

requirement for social housing provision as part of wider housebuilding contracts. Soho has repeatedly been let down by the Westminster local authority, and it is time that it was represented by a Council and an MP that put the interests of

local people first. Electing a Liberal Democrat MP would send a strong signal that local representatives can not be complacent about their support when failing to take action on serious issues that local residents are facing.

NICKIE AIKEN

CONSERVATIVE



As a fellow resident I am delighted and humbled to be standing as your Conservative Candidate for our home, the Cities of London and Westminster, in the General Election on Thursday 12th December.

I've lived in the Cities of London and Westminster for over 20 years. It is where I am raising my family and as Leader of Westminster City Council it's where I work - day-in, day-out - to improve our area. I'm standing for Parliament to ensure we have a strong, local voice to champion the issues we all care about. Soho is special place: it has a strong community, a creative spirit, it is the beating heard of the nation's culture, entertainment and energy. A place for artists, entrepreneurs, romantics and dreamers. Put simply - everyone has a place in Soho, and we need to keep it that way.

When I became Leader I made a commitment, that Westminster would remain a City for All. I believe that politicians should work in partnership with the people they represent. Working together with residents, we've achieved a great deal:

- We've started the largest council home building programme for a generation;
- We've reformed the planning system to give residents an earlier and bigger say in planning applications and introduced the right to speak at Planning Committee
- We are cleaning up our air with the #DontBeIdle campaign, persuading more drivers to turn off their engines.

But there is much more to do.

Listening to Soho residents, I know how frustrating constant redevelopment is and how challenging it can be to manage an area, which attracts so many visitors. That's why I support the new measures outlined in the recently published City Plan to introduce a Soho Special Policy Area to protect Soho's character.

This is my commitment to you. If elected to represent Soho, I will work tirelessly to ensure you have a strong and effective voice in Parliament. Working on the priorities that matter to all of us: more police, changes in legislation to deal with short term letting abuse, new regulations on pedicabs, and an end to rough sleeping. These things can only be done from Parliament. Together, we will keep the unique spirit of Soho.

I am asking for your support, to stand with me, to vote for me and together we can continue to improve the lives of all of everyone in the Cities of London and Westminster.

Many residents believe Soho is under threat from endless and insensitive re-development - do you agree and if so what would you do to protect it?

Soho is special and under the new City Plan (2019-2040), we have created a special policy area for Soho for the first time, recognising its unique needs and the pressure it is under, which is greater than ever before.

That plan is now with the Planning Inspector for approval. I have insisted on a new policy called Managing Development for Westminster People that requires developers at the outset to demonstrate how they will manage noise, infrastructure, odours, operation hours and the like. Applications won't get past base until the developer has satisfied the council of this that there's a plan to manage this sympathetically.

And this isn't just a promise, this is something I've already activated to be in force from spring next year.

At present, no local authority in the land can prevent anyone from making an application to build something and the law requires councils to assess applications on its merits. But I have been worried about over development in Soho since becoming Leader of the Council. Meeting with resident representatives of Kemp House early on in my leadership made me realise that we had to do more to help protect residents from further large developments. That is why I worked with them to establish a new protocol that sees successful planning applicants of large developments provide a named individual who will be a proactive resident liaison; a council officer for the same purpose; and a fund that developers make available for residents to pay for independent professional support such as surveyors, environment and noise advisors.

Lastly, enforcement is one of the most difficult part of a council's function, but as your MP, I will have the knowledge and experience to lobby both the Government and Parliament on further Primary Legislation to clamp down on developers who break the rules.

National planning policy and London planning policy has prioritised economic growth over heritage - which may play out well nationally but is in fact the opposite of what Soho needs. How would you help us get a planning system that will protect Soho's unique value?

In Westminster City Council's new City Plan includes the Soho Special Policy Area in order to preserve its heritage. In addition, it also includes new policies restricting the size of new hotels, which specifically protect Golden Square, Soho Square and St Anne's Churchyard.

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Yes, I would. One of the biggest frustrations of my time as Council Leader has been how the national legislation curtails local authority's powers in this area. At the moment the law

prevents the council putting in place a moratorium, but Soho is badly in need of one. As your MP I will push for a change in legislation to empower local authorities to pause further large developments in Soho. The developers won't be happy and will challenge both the council and the law. But they don't live here and don't have to put up with the stress and upheaval such collapses cause to residents and businesses. I know that my council colleagues would be delighted if I secured legislation change to permit a moratorium.

I'd even go further. Local councils should be permitted to consider the cumulative effect of multiple developments sites planned for an area at or near the same time. If elected your MP I will campaign to empower the council to grant planning permission but suspended for two years to give residents a rest between developments.

WCC has been working for at least a year with Shaftesbury on proposals to close Beak Street to vehicle traffic with deliveries from 7am to 11am. Beak Street is one of the main arterial routes for traffic out of Soho. Although WCC and Shaftesbury say the plan is aimed to reduce traffic by closing a rat run little evidence of this has been put forward. More likely is that the closure will displace traffic onto residential streets - Great Pulteney, Bridle Lane and Golden Square. Further, Shaftesbury would benefit significantly from the closure as its owns many of the frontages on the Street. Do you support the proposed closure? Would you support other methods of traffic reduction such as restricting traffic entering Soho to residents, timed deliveries and licensed construction traffic? Do you think it is appropriate for WCC to work closely with property developers in this way? If not how might the transparency of these processes be improved?

At the moment this is no more than an idea. The impetus comes from real fear of pedestrian safety on Beak Street – it's very narrow and there have been too many accidents. There is a consultation currently being carried out. Residents and businesses must have their say. If I am elected MP I will work with local people and the council on such issues to find workable solutions to ensure we keep pedestrians safe and allow local businesses to thrive.

I am fully supportive of improving residents' amenity. Especially in neighbourhoods such as Soho. That is why when I was Cabinet Member for Licensing and Chairman of the Licensing Committee I introduced new policies to encourage less alcohol-led late night activity. Even though the Mayor of London's Night Tsar tried to stop me!

Since becoming Council Leader, I have strived to make Westminster's planning process as open and transparent as possible. I think my record of appointing new Councillors to oversee the planning department and Major Developments Committee and introducing speakers rights clearly show how determined I was. It's an evolving process and improved by the council working closely with Amenity Societies such as the Soho Society.

As a central London-based local authority Westminster must work with property companies. The Council's role is to ensure it secures as much as it can from planning applications in the form of CIL, Section 106 and affordable housing contributions. There is certainly transparency in the process now and we keep doing more. I launched a major CIL spend consultation some months ago with Amenity Societies as I wish to encourage more local involvement and ideas into the process.

On the corner of Soho Square Twentieth Century House is a 1930's unlisted building of merit in the Soho Conservation Area which has extensive links with the history of film production in Soho and the UK over many decades. Royal London, the freeholder has applied to demolish the building in order to build a much larger modern office building. The existing building works will with the other listed buildings in the Square, the proposed replacement does not. The project would involve at least 2 years of construction work. Residents and the public are opposed to the loss of the building - what is your view?

Historic England have been asked to list this building. As the current Council Leader, it would be unwise of me to make a public comment at this stage as I would not wish to prejudice any decision. What I would say is that I am surprised it hasn't been listed before. It is a beautiful building. If I was your MP this is exactly the type of campaign I would see myself working with the Soho Society to secure agreement with Historic England and the council.

The NHS is proposing to close the Walk In Urgent Care Centre on the ground floor of the Soho Hospital for Women. The Centre is always busy, provides an important service for residents, office workers and visitors - and, as a result of charging visitors, actually makes a profit. It also provides spare capacity to reduce pressure on Accident and Emergency Units



nearby. Do you support its retention and what would you do to ensure that outcome?

It's beyond me how the CCG can want to close this. They say it's under-utilised, but residents have been telling me for years that's not the case. As your MP I will lobby as hard as I can directly to the CCG to have this kept open. This does highlight though one of my greatest frustrations with the NHS – the lack of accountability. NHS directors are not accountable to the public and if elected as your MP it is one of the areas that I think needs addressing. I support the need to give more powers to local authorities on community and primary health care services to give local people a more direct say on the services they need and want.

The Central London Clinical Commissioning Group is running a new tender for the GP service in the Soho Hospital for Women following the early end of the contract with Living Care - it's a beauty contest, fixed price but with little detail on the specific needs of the practice - Chinese speaking patients and the LGBTQ community. We are concerned that the process last time gave us Living Care that fired the Cantonese speaking GP's, appeared to only be able to hire locums, lost many patients and collected large management fees. CLCCG seemed ineffective at monitoring compliance of these contracts. How would you support the PPG is ensuring that a reasonable provider is selected this time and is held to performance of a contract which properly specifies what the community needs?

I'm aware that when Living Care had the contract there were significant issues to the extent that they handed their contract

back to the CCG. The CCG can't be left to run the tender themselves this time and as MP I will fight for the council to be part of this tendering process. While ultimately it's up to the CCG, I will make the case this isn't any ordinary GP provision

– there are 5,000 registered patients with a very high concentration of Chinese speakers and the LGBTQ+ community. The previous errors can't be allowed to be repeated. It goes back to the point I made in the previous question: the NHS must be more accountable to the people it serves.

As social housing becomes affordable housing and variations of the same we seem to be losing tenants with children - for whom the rent is increasingly not affordable, this in turn is threatening the viability of our primary school. What can you do about it?

I want families to be able to stay in Westminster. That is why since I became Leader of the Council three years ago I have prioritised building more social rent and affordable homes, with a particular focus on family size units. Westminster City Council is also making adult children of social tenants top priority for our intermediate homes. Our WCC intermediate rent homes for example aim for lower quartile so a household with an income in low £30,000's can afford to live in Westminster. One of my proudest achievements to date is to have started the largest council home building programme for a generation. We are on target to have built over 2000 new homes by 2023.

GORDON NARDELL QC LABOUR



I'm a barrister, campaigner and activist with a long track-record in serving the community and giving people a voice. I was born and brought up in London, the first in my family to go to university.

The Cities of London and Westminster have been my professional home for over 20 years. In the 2000s I served as a councillor in Southwark -- an inner London borough with many features and problems in common with Westminster. I ran local campaigns on primary school places, renewable energy and many other issues. As a member of the Planning Committee I learned how to stop developers getting away with poor-quality, profit-maximising schemes that disfigure local character and fail to offer the affordable housing we need.

I've also worked on national issues. I have campaigned to roll back the cuts to legal aid that have left communities without advice on housing, benefits and divorce. Following the 2007/8 crash I worked alongside John McDonnell and others developing Labour's anti-austerity policies that now form the basis of Labour's economic platform – policies which have changed the national conversation on how we produce and

share the nation's wealth.

I was part of the Parliamentary legal team working on the Bill that became the Modern Slavery Act, and more recently on the Domestic Abuse Bill which aims to protect survivors and improve the response to domestic violence and coercive behaviour.

As the first ever Labour MP for the Cities of London and Westminster I hope to be part of a transformative Labour government in the radical tradition of 1945, rebuilding services slashed under Conservative and Liberal Democrat austerity policies and taking action to tackle the climate emergency. I'm going to fight against the rise of intolerance, racism and extremism, just as I have done since I joined Labour.

Labour is committed to building genuinely affordable homes and insisting that private developments provide a proper share of on-site units for social rent. I will also campaign for reform of leasehold law to ensure that residents – not landed estates

or large property corporations – are in charge of repairs and maintenance.

But most importantly I will listen to local people, of all political affiliations and none, who want to see real changes for the Cities of London and Westminster. I want to add my voice to theirs to improve lives and neighbourhoods.

When were you last in Soho and what do you like about it?

A couple of days ago – at Berwick Street market. There aren't many parts of London with as much character as this.

Many residents believe Soho is under threat from endless and insensitive re-development - do you agree and if so what would you do to protect it?

National planning policy and London planning policy has prioritised economic growth over heritage - which may play out well nationally but is in fact the opposite of what Soho needs. How would you help us get a planning system that will protect Soho's unique value?

Soho currently has eight major construction projects on foot, Dean Street - Crossrail, Berwick Street Market (Hotel), Broadwick Street - National Magazine House (Refurbishment) House and corner of Berwick Street (New Hotel), Piccadilly Circus, Charing Cross Road and Film House on Wardour Street. We have had two street collapses (D'Arblay and Poland) only one of which has been repaired after a 2 year delay. D'Arblay Street remains closed and has been for over a year. The street collapses into the underground vaults are almost certainly a result of the construction traffic. WCC has no plan of the vaults and has no plan to mitigate the risk of further collapses. Would you support a moratorium on new large construction projects in Soho until the current developments have been completed?

These three questions have a common theme – the way the planning system, nationally but especially in the hands of Westminster City Council, has prioritised landowners, developers and their profits over the needs of the community. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced by the Conservative-LibDem coalition government, creates a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. But “sustainable” is defined in an arbitrary way that prioritises crude economic growth. Real sustainability means enriching the built and human environment. It means high quality development that preserves local character and reduces carbon emissions while benefitting the whole community – not just large landowners and speculative investors.

I would think seriously about a moratorium while these troublesome big schemes are completed. But I don't think that answers the deeper issues about the kind of development we encourage, and the way it's managed.

Locally I would press the Council to use planning conditions on construction management plans and timing of development to make sure large developments are sensibly phased, and construction traffic is routed safely and sensibly. We still have too cosy a relationship between the Conservative-controlled Council and developers. I want all pre-application discussions between developers and officers or councillors to be minuted, and the minutes published. The London Plan should provide

cover for these changes, and I will seek to persuade the Mayor to bring forward amendments to achieve this.

Nationally I think it's entirely possible to have a planning system that enables development that provides jobs, homes and affordable workspace while helping us move towards a net zero carbon economy. I want government to radically re-think the NPPF to give priority to genuine sustainability goals. We should encourage human-scale development, design that preserves local character, and maximising community benefit.

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Well-designed pedestrianisation schemes can work but only as part of a holistic approach to traffic reduction, and provided they take into account the needs of all users including the mobility-impaired. The decision-making process must be open and transparent. A scheme hatched behind closed doors with Shaftesbury and aimed at providing commercial benefits is bound to be ineffective and insensitive. I would work with residents to design alternative local traffic reduction schemes, and would press TfL to integrate a scheme for Soho into broader proposals to cut traffic volumes across central London.

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I agree the building should be retained. Re-use of existing buildings is a sustainable practice that the planning system should favour: a tonne of setting concrete releases a tonne of CO2. This is an excellent example of a sound, versatile and handsome building that could be sympathetically modernised and re-used.

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visitors - and, as a result of charging visitors, actually makes a profit. It also provides spare capacity to reduce pressure on Accident and Emergency Units nearby. Do you support its retention and what would you do to ensure that outcome?

The Central London Clinical Commissioning Group is running a new tender for the GP service in the Soho Hospital for Women following the early end of the contract with Living Care - its a beauty contest, fixed price but with little detail on the specific needs of the practice - Chinese speaking patients and the LGBTQ community. We are concerned that the process last time gave us Living Care that fired the cantonese speaking GP's, appeared to only be able to hire locums, lost many patients and collected large management fees. CLCCG seemed ineffective at monitoring compliance of these contracts. How would you support the PPG is ensuring that a reasonable provider is selected this time and is held to performance of a contract which properly specifies what the community needs?

These problems in local provision are symptoms of the "contract culture" that infests the NHS and has produced catastrophic failures in care, especially in central London. A private provider underbid a consortium of GPs to take over the Camden Road surgery. The contract collapsed and the surgery closed. We can't take that risk here. The CCG should choose a locally-based provider that really understands the community's specific needs. I'm impressed by the work members of the local community have done to persuade residents to participate in the CCG survey. Now the

CCG needs to listen to what local people want. I support Councillor Pancho Lewis's insistence that there should be at least one GP, nurse and receptionist fluent in Cantonese. The provider should run the PPG in accordance with best practice,

holding regular meetings, publishing agendas and minutes, and treating users as partners in strategic decision-making.

The Urgent Care Centre fulfils a vital local need. Centres like this were opened under the Labour Government, but they have faced a programme of closures under the Tories. Doctors and patient groups have warned that the wave of closure of facilities like this is storing up a winter crisis. If demand rises sharply it will simply be displaced to already stressed A&E facilities. There is no case for removing this facility, and I will back the community in resisting any attempt to close it. If elected, I will immediately organise a delegation of local residents to NHS management to explain why the Urgent Care Centre should be protected.

As social housing becomes affordable housing and variations of the same we seem to be losing tenants with children - for whom the rent is increasingly not affordable, this in turn is threatening the viability of or primary school. What can you do about it?

Soho Parish Primary is suffering a viability double-whammy. It has been systematically underfunded, and that should be reversed. Meanwhile we are losing families with children not just because of declining affordability but also a dwelling mix that prioritises 1- and 2-bed units over family-sized flats, because developers can squeeze greater profits from smaller units. That in turn forces up land prices and further reduces affordability. We have to stop this vicious cycle with changes to local and national planning policy, and new legislation to properly regulate the private rented and leasehold sectors. Westminster's City Plan should retain policy in favour of a 60/40 ratio of social to intermediate housing in the affordable element of new residential development - not the reverse, as the Council currently proposes. In the meantime the Council must properly enforce its current policy of at least 35% affordable housing in new schemes, and make sure that housing is provided on-site not elsewhere.

sussex
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RUBBISH ON THE STREETS OF SOHO

We are all getting fed up with the amount of bagged rubbish littering many streets in Soho – and sometimes unbagged rubbish too. It is getting worse and is now creating a health hazard as well as being very unsightly, often smelly, and sometimes forcing pedestrians to walk in the road round it. It also attracts pigeons and they often split bags, which adds to the problems. Also, the pigeons remember where and when the rubbish is put out, and home in on it. Added to this people see unsightly rubbish on the pavements and just throw whatever they wish to dispose of on top of it, which then remains there once the bags have been collected.



The Soho Society (TSS) has decided this is serious enough to have a project to try to improve matters. The background is on the Soho Society website (www.thesohosociety.org.uk/rubbish-in-soho).

There are essentially two main causes of the problem:

1. The current law allows (indeed encourages) commercial rubbish producers – mainly food and other retail outlets, to choose their own waste collector, which means that there are about eight different collectors ploughing the streets of Soho for their separate bags. One effect of this law is that it is not possible to make use of large bins for rubbish as the separate collectors only collect their own bags.
2. Although there are fixed penalty fines on waste producers that put their rubbish on the street outside the designated times, offenders are difficult to identify and the fines are derisory, seen by many of the outlets as merely part of the cost of doing business in Soho.

Unless and until the law is changed (and TSS will be considering how best to get that done), Westminster City Council (WCC) has its hands tied on both counts: it cannot insist on any rationalisation of collectors, much as that would make good sense to do so; and it has no powers to increase the level of fines – although premises persistently offending after warnings can be taken to court for a more serious fine (eg Starbucks was fined £160k).

What WCC can do, and has done, is to set time periods for rubbish collection, street by street, which ALL collectors and the waste producers must observe; it also can, and does, levy the small fines on outlets that put rubbish on the street outside those times. A street by street chart showing the legitimate times for rubbish being on the street is on our website. Thus for example, there should NO rubbish in the evenings after these times on the following streets:

Brewer St : 6.00 pm
Dean St: 7.00 pm



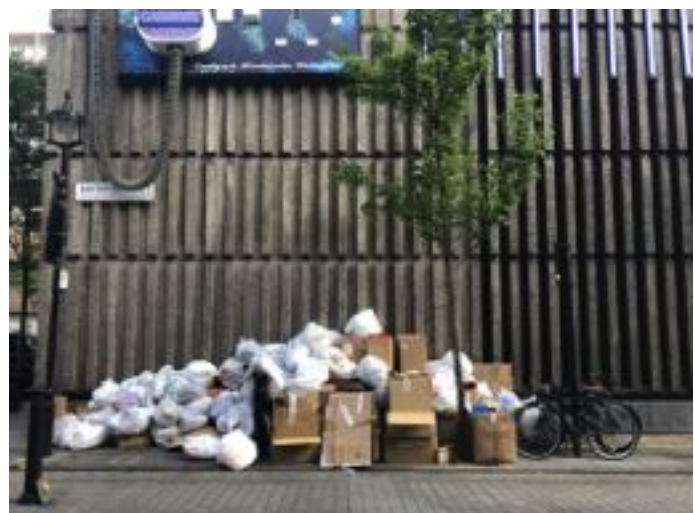
Frith St: 8.00 pm
Greck St: 8.00 pm
Wardour St: 9.00 pm

So what can we do? ANY commercial rubbish on a street outside its designated times has been put there illegally. We would like to make life less easy for these polluters. We ask everyone in Soho, residents and visitors, to note the collection times for their local street(s) and then, if you see rubbish on the street outside those times, report it either to WCC at www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it or to www.FixMyStreet.com in either case, the best heading for a report is 'Fly tipping'; a photo would help, but is not essential. Better still, if you see rubbish being put out at an illegal time, note where it came from – which shop, restaurant etc, and report that to WCC; again a photo would help.

Westminster may or may not act directly on all this info, but it will keep a log of such reports so they can focus on the bad spots and assess the extent of the problem.

PLEASE HELP US GET SOHO CLEANER AND LESS POLLUTED.

Quentin Thompson



SOHO BAKERS CLUB

Apple Mincemeat (Suet free)

200mls Cider medium or dry
225g soft dark brown sugar
900g cooking apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped
225g currants
225g raisins
1/2 teaspoon mixed spice
1/2 cinnamon
Juice and rind of 1/2 lemon
60g Glacé cherries
60g almonds finely chopped
75mls brandy or rum



Put the cider and sugar in a large saucepan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved.
Peel, core and finely chop the apples (you can use a food processor) and add to the pan.
Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the brandy or rum, and bring slowly to the boil stirring all the time.
Lower the heat, half cover saucepan with a lid and simmer for about 30 minutes until the mixture has become a soft pulp.
Remove from the heat and leave to get completely cold.
Stir in the brandy or rum.
Spoon into clean, dry screw top jars and cover with waxed circles or baking parchment before putting the lid on.
Store in a cool dry place until Christmas.
Once opened keep refrigerated.

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CONFETTI, SOHO AND TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

An unlikely trio, you might think, but no. Confetti was first made and popularised in the UK in Soho, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, the French Post-Impressionist artist, was commissioned to illustrate it – in what became one of his most famous lithographic posters.

Confetti is most familiar these days in the UK as the multi-coloured shreds of paper showered over bride and groom at weddings. But in earlier times, what was ‘thrown’ at celebrations was much more substantial. To bestow good fortune and fertility, the Ancient Romans used to toss wheat and rice grains; from the Middle Ages throughout Europe, sugar-coated seeds or almonds were the missiles of choice. (‘Confetti’ is a French take on the Latin/Italian *conficere*, ‘to put together’, and the closest related word in English is ‘confectionery’ – logical, considering the above. In Italian the word for confetti is *coriandoli*, from the coriander seeds used.) But sugar was expensive, so at some time, plaster began to be used instead of seeds or nuts, which was moulded into small lozenge shapes. These were thrown at carnivals, parades, at christenings and weddings, and were meant to explode white dust when they hit the ground or a person (perhaps a lady or gent admired by the thrower). Charles Dickens, on visiting Rome in 1844-45, described how ‘the spectators at some upper balcony or window...would empty down great bags of confetti, that descended like a cloud, and in an instant made them white as millers.’

In 1875, an Italian businessman began producing paper confetti. It is said he used the small discs which were a by-product of the holed paper sheets used by Milanese silkworm breeders. Despite this, in Paris plaster confetti was still in use in 1892. But after Mardi Gras that year, plaster confetti was banned when passers-by were injured. Paper confetti was obviously the answer, and Bella & de Malherbe, colour printers – based at 113 Charing Cross Road (where Foyle’s used to be) – would have been one of several companies across Europe who quickly stepped in. They would probably have used offcuts from their presses at first, but then quickly adapted to mainstream confetti production. The first recorded use of paper confetti in Paris – the supreme city of celebrations – was at carnival time in the late winter of that same year. Apparently the enthusiastic crowds bought more than 80,000 bags (which amounts to about 20,000 kilos)!

As well as a colour printer, Edward Bella was also an advertising agent, thus was well placed to take advantage of the most recent developments in mass marketing. The poster was advertising’s newest weapon, and Bella became a specialist in those produced by lithography. He would have known already about Toulouse-Lautrec’s work in the printed poster arena, and had probably met him, as he knew Paris well. So, to advertise his revolutionary new product, he commissioned the French artist to design a poster. This appeared in 1894, and was also used as the catalogue frontispiece for the huge poster exhibition Bella organised later that year, at the Royal Aquarium (where Central Hall, Westminster, is now). The poster acknowledges the printer (‘imp. Bella & de Malherbe, London & Paris’, and

also the manufacturers, now J. & E. Bella, 113 Charing Cross Road, London WC (the ‘J’ standing for Julia – wife, sister, mother, daughter?). It wasn’t until two years later, though, in 1896, that Julia and Edward were listed in the commercial trading lists as ‘confetti manufacturers’. (The Bellas were still manufacturing confetti in 1900, six years later, although by this time they had moved to 25 Soho Square.)

Several other Lautrec posters were included in the same 1894 exhibition, and this probably marked Lautrec’s introduction to the London art world. He attended that particular Royal Aquarium exhibition, and another in the same venue two years later. In May 1898, there was a retrospective of his work, entitled ‘Portraits and Other Works by Mr Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec’, held at the Goupil Gallery at 5 Regent Street (destroyed by a bomb in 1941). With some 78 pieces, this London exhibition, perhaps a direct result of his Soho-based confetti poster, was to be the largest show of his work in his lifetime.

In his confetti poster, Toulouse-Lautrec pioneered a special technique of splattering fine drops of ink on to the lithographic plate. This represents both the flightiness of the paper shreds and gives a sense of the girl’s giddy happiness. Toulouse-Lautrec was one of the greatest artists of the 19th century, and his altogether joyous poster advertising confetti may have helped transform the way the world celebrates. And it all started in Soho...

Susan Fleming



MAPPING OUT THE STORY OF SOHO

A Soho Square-based planning and design consultancy has produced a unique hand-illustrated map capturing the energetic streets of Soho with all money raised from its sale being donated to Centrepont.

Barton Willmore's map features hundreds of hand-drawn elements of history, architecture, culture, business and people painstakingly pieced together over many 100s of hours by their in-house Graphic Communication team with help from the Soho Society to form a unique visual interpretation of Soho. The team from Barton Willmore worked alongside Leslie Hardcastle from the Soho Society to help uncover the lesser-known aspects of the area and help bring them to life. It's this local knowledge which really captures the essence of Soho, and which makes the map so interesting to look at.

Adrian Babb, Graphic Communication Associate at Barton Willmore, said: "This is first time we've focussed on one area in detail having produced similar award-winning maps for a number of other cities across the UK. It's been incredibly interesting delving into the history of Soho and uncovering so many interesting facts and locations that I am sure many people who live, work and play here weren't aware of either."

Barton Willmore's hand illustrated map of Soho will soon be available for purchase in Gosh! Comics on Berwick Street and is also available through their website.

www.bartonwillmore.co.uk



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Hand drawn Soho Map £25 Barton Willmore
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THEATRES, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

BY JIM COOKE

WHAT WE'VE SEEN:

9 TO 5: THE MUSICAL

Savoy Theatre - ★★★★★ - Until May, 2020



Dolly Parton has always been about insight and intelligence packaged in a way we do not expect. Her persona and her reality challenge our stereotypes and this evening in the theatre does the same. In 9 to 5: The Musical we have all the fun and frolics of your big Broadway musical but some very serious political and social observations are being made. Jane Fonda who originally conceived this work

While being a thoroughly enjoyable piece of theatre, it determinedly reminds us that the dark realities of #MeToo are still here.

and writer, Patricia Resnick, knew that a spoonful of sugar helped the medicine go down. Even as the injustice of women's treatment in the workplace and some serious feminist issues are explored in 9 to 5, it is upbeat and always keeps the audience engaged. Dolly's music and lyrics are quite unforgettable and Lisa Stevens' choreography is perfect. Caroline Sheen, Natalie McQueen and Chelsea Halfpenny are all terrific in the roles created for Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton. They all manage to layer characters whom they have a limited time

to develop. Bonnie Langford as Roz brings down the house in her showstopper number Heart to Hart, and Brian Conley is amazingly dislikeable as the villain of the piece. He got the audience involved to the point I expected to hear booing and hissing on a couple of occasions! This is a musical farce which takes an energetic and comedic aim at sexism, hypocrisy and injustice. While being a thoroughly enjoyable piece of theatre, it determinedly reminds us that the dark realities of #MeToo are still here. Thoughtful theatre in a very attractive and engaging package!

Mon - Sat: 19:30
Wed & Sat: 14:30
Nearest tube: Charing Cross

TIM WALKER: WONDERFUL THINGS

Victoria & Albert Museum - ★★★★★ - Until Mar 8, 2020



Full disclosure: we absolutely loved this exhibition! Much of the show is Tim Walker's passionate responses to the Victoria & Albert Museum's own collections, but we begin by seeing the influence Cecil Beaton's work had on Walker early in his career. We then set out on an exciting journey, looking at how original artifacts from the V&A have inspired the artist. Ten evocative and intimate 'room sets' have been created for his new works, and it feels like quite an odyssey as we move from a glossy white space (fashion magazine work and celebrity portraits) to darker settings including a burnt-out cathedral! Later on we experience a vibrant yellow room suggesting a grand country house where Tilda Swinton channels Edith Sitwell. The Bayeux Tapestry is re-created, using amusingly amateurish costumes and props. Gay, homoerotic or gender-fluid characters strike a pose! Our ideas of beauty and context are constantly being challenged by Walker's approach which involves a visual storytelling that blurs fantasy and reality. He creates some wonderfully lavish, surreal and often touching pictures. Occasionally, the pieces work less well: the Aubrey Beardsley-based 'Pen & Ink' series may appear a little heavy-handed alongside the original illustrations. Nevertheless, Walker's inventiveness, whimsy and positivity are so uplifting. These are indeed 'Wonderful Things.'

Sat - Thu: 10:00 - 17:45
Fri & Sat: 10:00 - 22:00
Nearest tube: South Kensington

WHAT WE'RE SEEING:

THE SUNSET LIMITED

Boulevard Theatre: Jan 16 - Mar 14, 2020

Cormac McCarthy's look at a chance encounter on a subway platform that changes lives.

TROY: MYTH AND REALITY

British Museum: Nov 21, 2019 - Mar 8, 2020

Helen of Troy and the Trojan horse... Explore the stories and the city that continue to fascinate.

For more reviews and ratings visit:
www.londonlivinglarge.com | Twitter: @LondonLivingUK

SOHO PREFERRED PROVIDERS

In the previous issue of the Clarion, I wrote about the Soho Society's scheme to award the accolade of 'Soho Preferred Provider'. The award will be made to a relatively small number of providers that the Society considers to be special in Soho. The criteria for 'Preferred Providers' are:

- Special, adding character to Soho
- Local, owned or managed locally
- Historical, been here for a long time
- Community oriented, judged by its behaviour

The providers can be retail outlets, cafes/restaurants, pubs or service providers (public or private). To be awarded 'Preferred Provider' status, they need to satisfy at least two of the criteria, although cafes/restaurants would need to satisfy at least three. The previous article listed seven examples of providers which clearly satisfied the criteria:

- **The Algerian Coffee Store**
- **Maison Bertaux**
- **MacCulloch & Wallis**
- **Romany's hardware**
- **Milroy's**
- **Vintage House**
- **Gerry's wines and spirits**

Six of these are retail outlets, so, to balance it up a bit, the Soho Society has now agreed three more which are not retail; we will announce further ones in subsequent issues of the Clarion. The three new ones for this issue are:

- **Andrew Edmunds restaurant**
- **L'Escargot restaurant**
- **Soho Primary School**

Please patronise these (ten) providers to help them survive and prosper in today's nasty economic climate, in which multinational chains are trying to take over everything of value.

Quentin Thompson



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Stop Smoking Service

戒煙服務

Minor Ailment Service

輕微疾病諮詢服務

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Medicine Use Review (MUR)

藥物使用跟進服務

Health Check Service (Blood pressure)

健康檢查服務 (量血壓)

Home Delivery Service (within 1 mile)

送藥服務 (一里之內)

Supervised Medication Consumption

藥物使用監管

Chinese Language Access Service

中文翻譯服務 (只限於藥物翻譯)

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星期一 上午九時 至 下午六時三十分
星期二 上午九時 至 下午六時三十分
星期三 上午九時 至 下午六時三十分
星期四 上午九時 至 下午六時三十分
星期五 上午九時 至 下午六時三十分
星期六 上午十時 至 下午四時
星期日 休息

Opening hours
Monday to Friday 9:00am - 6:30pm
Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday closed

CHILE

All Chileans are geologists,' our guide exclaimed. As part of an international assortment of umbraphiles there to witness a total solar eclipse due to pass over South America a little further north up the coast the following week, I was on a tour bus being shown the delights of Santiago, capital city and home to almost half the entire population of Chile.

It's easy to understand why she was so proud of Chilean geological expertise. The city is surrounded by snow-capped Andes: just breathtaking. She then proceeded to outline the science of plate tectonics, and she knew her stuff. The Nazcan/Antarctic Plate subduction under the South American Plate, forces the entire Andean mountain range upward. As astronomers, we knew that!

Apparently, there are tremors every day in Chile and there are over 2,000 active volcanoes in the Chilean Andes. Chilean architects are masters at designing buildings that withstand all but the most destructive of quakes. Good: the hotel in which we were staying, is tall with spectacular views from the roof terrace over the city. The Southern Cross and other constellations of the southern hemisphere provided the perfect backdrop as we sipped our Pisco Sours: a south American cocktail well worth a try. There was a pool on said terrace, and we were reliably informed that counter-intuitively, having such a body of water on top of a building, provides ballast when the ground wobbles. The Laws of Physics never cease to amaze...

La Higuera, our eclipse-viewing destination some 300 miles or so further north, is a beautiful coastal area, and a boat trip to see sea lions, otters and Humboldt penguins that languish on the rocks is a must. Cold Antarctic currents flow northward and keep the Chilean coastal waters chilly enough for them.

Ironically, despite the area being awash with observatories including the European Southern Observatory, the world's eclipse-chasers were scattered all over the hillsides with their own telescopes, cameras, eclipse glasses and kitchen colanders. Colanders? Yes, colanders. Colanders act like pinhole cameras, and as the moon creeps across the disc of the sun during an eclipse, the image is projected through the colander onto a piece of paper - simple. The shadow bands were good too.

Further north still, the Atacama Desert is high, dry and cold. It's difficult to breathe. Blinding sunlight, unfiltered by the Earth's atmosphere - we were at 4,600 metres - plays havoc with the fair-skinned, but worth it for the extremely salty flamingo nature reserve alone. Our base, San Pedro was a charming small town and a perfect location for spaghetti westerns with sleeping dogs lying about everywhere. The airline, having lost my luggage in Dallas on the way out, gave me the perfect excuse to buy a colourful poncho. Poncho, woolly boots hastily-bought in a Santiago department store, blonde hair and Panama notwithstanding, I tried my best not to look like a tourist. I even managed to escape to a dark, seedy-looking bar round the corner with a couple of other rebels, to swill Pisco Sours with the locals who were watching the footie. Peru was winning, but it didn't seem to dampen their spirits much...

Margaret Bloomer



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Kevin Brodie, 1968



William Klein, 1980

SHOT IN SOHO

at The Photographers' Gallery to 9 February 2020

This celebration of Soho seen through the lenses of seven photographers over a 50 year period is subtitled; Photographing Love and Lawlessness in the Heart of London, and references the 1980 TPG exhibition Shot in New York. Hung in Soho, which featured the work of sensationalist crime photographer Weegee. Soho may be constantly reinventing itself, but each contributing photographer documents the underlying themes that are always associated with the, often vicarious, thrill of Soho - sex, sin and hedonism, a hotbed of unpredictability, disobedience and diversity.

Shot in Soho offers a fascinating insider view of Soho, as seen by: William Klein, through a rare presentation of his candid 1980s Sunday Times commissioned photo essay; Anders Petersen, through a selection of his 2011 Soho series, which capture the neighbourhood with his trademark lyrical melancholy; Corinne Day, whose images take us off the streets into her Brewer Street home/studio where some of her most iconic editorial and personal work was shot, including a 16 year old Kate Moss; as well as work from less familiar figures such as Times photographer Kelvin Brodie's night-time forays with police teams, John Goldblatt's strip club dressing room scenes and Clancy Gebler Davies's work in The Colony Room Club. The exhibition also features a commission from artist, Daragh Soden who presents a new body of work focusing on Soho's reputation as a place of connection, performance and the pursuit of love.

Curators Julian Rodriguez and Karen McQuaid have given each photographer their own section of the gallery, and a different hanging scheme for each to reflect the character of the work, and demonstrate the differences between their individual visions. There are grids, rows and on Gebler Davies's wall, a random scattering against a background of Verona Green, that mimics the walls of the notorious Colony Room Club, whose members' antics she lovingly documents. Sadly her mentor the photographer Nic Tucker, who gave her the film stock and taught her to print, died on 4 November without seeing the show.

Separated from the main exhibition is a rather random section of historic ephemera relating to Soho, including the inevitable John Deakin shot of Francis Bacon and his cronies, all looking very serious in Wheelers restaurant; a Stanley Kubrick location still of Ronnie Scotts as the Korova Milk Bar in A Clockwork Orange and vintage magazines, such as Picture Post, presenting the more usual historic image of 'Sinful Soho'. Also a delightful Art Deco styled 'Soho Cadet' Bakelite camera, from the 1930s, manufactured, rather appropriately by Soho Ltd, of 3 Soho Square, and very familiar to your correspondent who owns a similar one, which belonged to my father.

Visitors to the show can also listen through headphones to a selection of Clare Lynch's podcasts Soho Then documenting the history and denizens of Soho. Most appropriately, while sitting on the Kirsty MacColl memorial bench bearing the poignant lines, "One day I'll be waiting there, no empty bench in Soho Square," (from her 1994 song Soho Square), that has been relocated to the centre of the gallery from its usual home in Soho Square.

The Photographers' Gallery, 16-18 Ramillies Street, W1F 7LW

Clive Jennings

There is a special view for Soho residents on 31 January at 5pm - see advert on back page.



Clancy Gebler Davies, The Colony Room, 1999-2000



SOHO PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL



What's all the fuss about school funding? Or 'First rate education, second hand toilet roll!'

As a primary school headteacher, I'm often asked whether the 'cuts' to education are real and how they affect us. Visitors to our successful fundraiser – The Soho Food Feast – often wonder how we can still be struggling, when we generate so much income from this wonderful event. It all comes down to numbers. We are a successful school, at 103% capacity when Westminster as a whole is facing a falling roll, with only 82% of school places filled. Yet, due to our tiny Victorian classrooms, we can only squeeze 26 into each class. A dream for our teachers. A nightmare for the budget. When I started teaching in 1999, it was a time of plenty. 'Education, education, education' was the government mantra. Teachers' salaries had been increased to encourage high-flying graduates, training was provided centrally from the government and rolled out to all schools and we had each just been provided with an interactive whiteboard in our classrooms (once again from central government funds).

Arriving at Soho Parish in 2004 was a shock to the system. The financial crisis was about to hit and, as a small school with no more than 20 pupils in a class, we were significantly poorer than my previous Westminster school, which had three times the pupils. Rachel Earnshaw, the Headteacher, had brought the school back from a large inherited deficit through a range of cost-cutting methods. Once I was laughed out of her office for asking what was in the 'maths budget'. There was one

budget and it paid for staff, pens and pencils. Everything else was fundraising. Each year the governors provided £30,000 to cover the difference between what we spent and what we received. And the governors' funds were running out...

The governors, staff and parents at Soho Parish have always understood that fundraising is half the job in our small school. Over the fifteen years I've been here, we have raised £1.5 million for our 'new' sports hall (purchased when the building next door was sold), £250,000 for our two storey playground 'roof garden' development and each year the Soho Food Feast, which is planned and managed by the school, raises around £40,000 to carry on meeting our funding gap. Over the last five years, our roll has grown to 26 pupils per class in order to meet demand and raise income. We receive approximately £6000 per pupil in government funding, so increased pupil numbers have helped enormously and we have in fact managed to balance the budget for two years.

This year, however, we are on a depressing slide back into deficit and, despite fundraising £900 per pupil last year, we will now have to look at making significant cuts in order to make ends meet. This is due to a range of issues affecting all schools, but hitting the smaller schools who have less of a financial 'cushion' first.

The primary cause for concern and the reason behind many of the 'education cuts' headlines is the 'national funding formula' ('NFF'), which aims to standardise school funding across the

country. London schools have traditionally received higher funding so for us this means our 'per pupil' funding will be slashed from £6000 to £4000. The formula is not yet officially in place, but many local authorities, including Westminster, are 'preparing' schools for cuts by gradually reducing funding. The Local Authority is also facing a dwindling education budget and difficult decisions about how to allocate it. This year we lost over £1000 per pupil due to the NFF and the slicing of our 'lump sum' (the amount all schools receive before per pupil costs are added) from around £200,000 to £120,000. We do not yet know whether allowance will be made in the NFF for the higher cost of teaching staff in inner London who are paid as much as 25% more than their counterparts outside London.

This year our employers' pension contributions went up by 43%, an amount which was supposed to be subsidised by the government for two years. However, due to our small size our 'compensation' falls short by about one third. In addition, following pay freezes on teachers' pay since 2010, the government have recently awarded two successive annual pay rises to teachers. Despite promising to cover some of this increase, ours once again falls short of the actual amount required.

Lack of funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs is a problem for all schools. We currently have seven pupils with EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans – once called 'statements'). One pupil with Autism has a plan requiring a full-time TA who costs the school £23,000 and we receive £8,300 to cover these costs. Even factoring in a 'notional £6000' for this child which we are told forms part of our overall budget, the funding falls woefully short of covering the costs of staff we are legally required to provide. Multiply this by the seven pupils and then add in the other thirty on our SEN register for whom we receive no dedicated funding, and we find ourselves without the funds to employ the essential staff required.

At Soho Parish we pride ourselves on offering an innovative, creative curriculum. We have a superb arts offer, including a dedicated music teacher who runs two rock bands. We also understand the crucial importance of pupil well-being in learning and future success, providing a dedicated mental health team including an emotional literacy support assistant, a learning mentor, a mindfulness teacher and a family therapist. Unfortunately, these are often the first services to be sliced when facing cuts.

But we don't want to cut them. Here are some of the things our children have to say about mindfulness, which is taught weekly in all classes.

'Before practising mindfulness I was a very worried and scared and sad person. I don't just do mindfulness at school, I also do it at home.'

'It has helped me deal with my difficulties as in my other school I was depressed.'

'When I have felt low self-esteem mindfulness has helped. When I do mindfulness the worries in the room have disappeared and nothing is real. Everything is about me and how I'm feeling.'

I read this feedback and a shiver runs down my spine. Our pupils have it harder than any generation before them. They have been raised in an era of austerity. Many of our local families

are facing real poverty but don't qualify for benefits. They will have to learn how to comport themselves in real life and in 'virtual' lives online. They will do jobs that haven't been invented yet. We have a duty to grow and nurture 'the whole child' so that they leave our school with excellent literacy, numeracy and thinking skills and sound well-being. And we need help to do it. Many of the local businesses around Soho already support us hugely. One example I recently gave is that Ham Yard Hotel provides us with the toilet rolls that are retired from their rooms once a new guest arrives. This wonderful gesture saves us hundreds of pounds per year. Sharing this at a recent governors' meeting, one governor was astounded that we could be providing this 'first rate education', while at the same time using 'second hand toilet rolls'. I nearly adopted it as our tagline, but I think we'll stick with 'small school, big heart!'

At Soho Parish, our doors are always open to our local community. And if any Clarion reader would like to share a fundraising idea with us, we are very open to suggestions. I have always seen Soho as a village and this is evidenced in the love shown to the children by restaurants, businesses, trusts and societies such as the Soho Society. A village needs a school and we need everyone in the village behind us.

Louise Ritchie
Head teacher



Soho Housing Association works to provide well managed affordable housing to enhance and sustain the diverse communities in the heart of London.

www.sohoha.org.uk

DENNY'S



Denny's says good-bye to Soho in a move across Oxford Street to Berners Street. Denny's has been a mainstay of the Soho catering industry for who knows how many years and now, sadly, they're leaving Soho partly due to rising rents. They have a long history with Soho and indeed St Anne's, going back to the 18th century. Early records show that Peter Denny, a carpenter, was commissioned to renovate the Parish workhouse.

Soho of yesteryear had many diverse businesses - furniture makers, silverware, glassware, watch and clock makers, and of course the kitchen suppliers all existing in Old Compton Street and its surrounds. Soho was badly bombed during the Second World War and St Anne's Church was badly damaged. Bombs landed in Old Compton Street, Shaftesbury Avenue and Great Marlborough Street, as a result of which many early records were lost.

In the early part of the 19th century, Mary Anne and John Denny had two sons - Peter and John - both christened in the parish of St. Anne. It seems that one of them would have been the grandfather of Mr Percival Denny, the founder of Denny's. History records that in 1893, Percy Denny began advertising in Kelly's Commercial Directory as a hosier, based at No. 14 Old Compton Street, although he could well have been trading for much longer than this. Since 1948, the shop at 39 Old Compton Street showed a sign "established over 100 years". Unfortunately, the records of these early years before advertising would have been lost in the bombing. It's possible the business during this period was run by Percy's father. Denny's was for years - in fact since c.1899 - at 39 Old Compton Street on the corner of Dean Street. It was a shop that sold almost anything you can imagine for those in the catering industry from shoes to chefs' hats, with everything in between.

The famous Denny's Clock was put up on 'Denny's Corner' (corner of Old Compton Street and Dean Street) in 1935. So good was the clock that it even withstood the blitz. It took the 98 years to move 50 yards across the road to larger premises in Dean Street, "But we moved with the times and took our clock with us!"

In response to increasing demand from abroad, Denny's expanded abroad and "in October 1996, we undertook mission

impossible - to take British-designed chefs wear to the land of 'grande cuisine' and Denny's France SARL was the result." They now export to all corners of the world.

In May 2012, Nick Jubert, together with Dominic Green, Sales Director, bought the Denny's business, and have now moved the warehouse and office to one location, launched a new website, improved logistics. They received a Royal Warrant in 2013. As a by-product of their success they took "the brave (and grammatically incorrect) step of dropping the apostrophe in our name and became Dennys Brands."

In 2014 Dennys Brands acquired London Tailors - suppliers to the public of the finest UK-made bespoke and made-to-measure suits and shirts.

In 2016 they moved across Oxford Street and opened their Berners Street, W1 flagship store as 55A Dean Street no longer had the space to promote the expanded range of the business. "Berners Street incorporated every uniform need for professional clothing, covering hospitality, facilities management, security and office."

Over all these years, Dennys has always supported the Soho Society and particularly our annual fete for which we would like to say a huge thank you. We hope they will continue to support us for many years to come, although it will mean a trip across Oxford Street. We would like to wish them every success in their new home. Soho and Dean Street will miss them.

Jane Doyle





Jugemu

3 Winnett Street, Soho, W1D 6JY.

Rustic Japanese bar-restaurant offering dishes not commonly found in London. Offers dinner all week and take away lunch on Wednesdays and Thursdays only.

Much like an *Amorphophallus titanum* which flowers spectacularly and pornographically at Kew Gardens once every decade Soho can welcome the flowering of a new Japanese Chef in this perfectly formed little restaurant. These entirely unpredictable natural events involve the opening of a tiny restaurant where it is impossible to book but the food is unspeakably delicious. People come from miles around and gape in awe and sample the most authentic Japanese cuisine for a bargain price. No one knows how long it will last. Anyway, it's happened again, and you need to get your skates on to sample the absolutely delicious food served

at Jugemu on a Wednesday or Thursday lunchtime. Start with the fish tempura with soba noodles and work your way through the short menu on the following days. This is the considered opinion of this jaded old resident that lunches, and I can assure you this is worth walking the length of Berwick Street market to get there. You will not be disappointed.

Tim Lord



FACING A RENT REVIEW? Speak to the leisure property specialists



Fleurets is regularly appointed to negotiate rent reviews involving pubs, bars, restaurants and nightclubs in Soho and the West End. Our extensive knowledge of rental values puts us in a position of strength to negotiate the best outcome.

“ Fleurets were invaluable in successfully negotiating my last two rent reviews and I look forward to working with them in the future. ”

Keith Todd, Soho Bars - Freedom and Soho Residence, Wardour Street

“ Truly professional and straightforward... pragmatic and brilliant negotiators who kept us informed throughout every step of the process. ”

Brian Brodie, Old Coffee House, Beak Street

If you would like an initial view of the likely outcome, please contact our Soho specialist, Philip Smith, to discuss how Fleurets can help you.

☎ 020 7280 4704
☎ 07786 510640
✉ philip.smith@fleurets.com

Fleurets
Leisure Property Specialists



BAR SHU

28 Frith Street, London, W1D 5LF, phone: 0207 287 6688

Deep in south western China, east of the Tibetan Plateau, between the Jinsha River and the Daba Mountains, lies the ancient states of Bu and Shu, today known as Sichuan. This province, inhabited four thousand years ago, home to 81 million people and four languages, is also home to the Sichuan pepper, the mainstay of Sichuan cuisine.

I first encountered this formidable spice on a trip to Chengdu. Nursing a particularly brutal hangover brought on by an exuberant previous evening's over indulgence of Baijiu. I was not feeling at the top of my game as I sat down to lunch, a weakness which I felt sure my hosts would take great pleasure in exploiting. First came the convocation of mystery meats in vivid fragrant red sauces liberally smothered in chilies and garlic. There followed large bowls stuffed with dried chilies with the odd protruding crab claw or chicken's foot. This was followed by jugs of black beer, and of course bottles of Baijiu. *Kill or cure* being my family motto, I got stuck in knocking back a shot of Baijiu, followed by a liberal slug of beer. I was now ready to tackle the mystery meat and mountains of chilies. That first mouthful is as memorable as that drag of your first cigarette. It fills you with wonder, and gives you a high that is near impossible to repeat, at least in the case of that first cigarette. The furious heat of the chili is quickly cancelled out by the numbing action of the Sichuan pepper, leaving a delicate flavour of spice, rather than burning pain. By the end of lunch I was a stumbling wreck, but a happy, and enlightened

stumbling wreck.

Bar Shu of Frith Street is the 'go to' place if you want to experience authentic Sichuan food in London. Gong Boa Chicken and Sichuan Beef, the staple attempt at Sichuan cooking by a majority of Cantonese restaurants, are but poor and pale imitations of what true Sichuan food can be. Bar Shu's menu, assisted by helpful images, is an extensive catalogue of the best that Sichuan has to offer. Offerings such as Ants climbing a tree or Buddha jumps over the wall, makes group selection of dinner so much more interesting.

I would recommend you to be adventurous and go for a selection of appetisers. Do not be put off by the exotic nature of some of the dishes. Although Prairie Tripe with fresh chilis, and spiced Pig's Ear with chili and fresh coriander may not be everyone's ideal dish, they are certainly worth experimenting with, along with the numbing and hot Dried Beef which is sensational. There are also many vegetable dishes if meat is not your thing - stir fried water spinach with chili and fermented bean curd, or blanched choy sum with sizzling oil among the options. I am a huge fan of the Gong Bro Prawns with Cashew Nuts and the Bar Shu fragrant and hot shell on Prawns (which they will do with shells off if you are not familiar with the anatomy of the unfortunate prawn), which sacrificed itself for your culinary enjoyment.

In true Sichuan tradition, try the Dan Dan Noodles at the end of the meal, with or without Minced Pork. The Peanut Sauce, combined with the heat of chili makes these noodles the ideal way to end such a feast.

Philip Antscherl

The Old Comedy: Collages by Keith Coventry at UPSTONE

40 Frith Street

In the turbulent London gallery scene, the epicentre is constantly moving; in the last ten years from Cork Street, to the East End, to Fitzrovia and now back to Mayfair. Plucky little Soho has also seen several galleries come and go. On 14 November, a new gallery, UPSTONE, opened at 40 Frith Street. The venture is a collaboration between the eponymous Robert Upstone, formerly the Head of Modern British Art at the Tate, and the artist Graham Snow. Upstone explains the gallery's ethos: "As a gallery, we're interested in old and new art, and believe that to make sense of it you have to let it sing together."

The inaugural exhibition, which continues to 14 December, is *The Old Comedy: Collages by Keith Coventry*. Coventry exhibited in the seminal exhibition *Sensation* at the Royal Academy in 1997, which gave credibility to the loosely associated group of artists known as the YBAs, and was a recent winner of the prestigious John Moores Painting Prize. Coventry has no 'signature style', a bold and attractive attribute when so many artists keep ploughing the same old furrow. His work often obliquely references the history of art, working on both a cerebral and visual level.

Collage is a new medium in Coventry's oeuvre. His contemplative way of working can be seen in the 20 or so new works. The different elements were accumulated over 40 years

- some of the paper used is 100 years old, the inherent discolouration and foxing creating tonality. Geometric cut out shapes are juxtaposed with lollipop-like sticks, but instead of corny childrens' jokes, they are printed with the bon mots of the Greek playwright Aristophanes, known as 'The Father of Comedy', which, though probably very witty and satirical in 450BC, when he was playing to 10,000 seat stadia, are now largely bizarre non sequiturs. The overall effect is of a Bauhaus design from the 1920s, cleverly echoing his earlier paintings of plans of London housing estates that resembled the Russian Suprematist paintings of Kazimir Malevitch.

www.robertupstone.com

Clive Jennings





LADY JANE

CARNABY STREET

A chance encounter with the Museum of Soho's Tony Shrimplin led to photographer and writer Clancy Gebler Davies joining him at the unveiling of a Westminster City Council plaque celebrating 'Lady Jane', Carnaby Street's first ever women's fashion boutique, opened at the height of the swinging 60s.

Sharon Fox, daughter of the shop's co-founder Harry Fox and his wife Sonia, grew up around and helped in the shop and sheds light on the riotous and headline-grabbing tales of roadblocks caused by near-naked models "changing clothes" in the shop windows, her dad's many arrests after a string of further promotional stunts - and why a key member of staff was a dog called Rex.

In 1966 Time magazine famously declared London as "The Swinging City". Harry Fox and his then business partner Henry Moss were spurred on by this and quickly signed the lease on a former dairy to open 'Lady Jane', the first ever fashion boutique for women in Carnaby Street.

Calling the shop 'Lady Jane' was a cheeky nod to the hip men's outfitters of the time 'Lord John'. 'Lady Jane' thrived on cheek and when PR and journalist Michael Freedland was stuck in traffic and noticed people stopping to watch mannequins being changed in a shop window he had a brainwave.

Freedland's idea was to use real models with assistants changing their clothes live in the shop windows.

"Dad and Henry jumped on the idea," says Sharon.

"The girls had barely anything on - let's say they were 'strategically posed' with a hat and a feather and there was a window dresser draping things over them."

Crowds blocked the street - and the police arrested Sharon's dad for obstruction so many times for this and future stunts that he became a regular at West End Central police station - and in court.

"I think dad loved getting arrested - one time he rang the police to tell them he was causing a disturbance as they hadn't turned up. He always defended himself in court. I think the judges got a kick out of it too."

"Mum held the family together - she had me and my brothers Gary and Robert to look after - but she backed dad 100%."

Fox, who died aged 85 in 2007, was quoted in the newspapers as saying the window stunt was, "Good for London, good for Carnaby Street and good for Lady Jane." from the dock. It was: people came from all around the world and everyone from Nancy Sinatra, the Small Faces and Joan Collins to Robert Mitchum came through the door.

Sharon says Harry only recognised a middle-aged woman a little older than their usual demographic when she appeared in front of the till brandishing a feather boa. It was Judy Garland.

Business partner Henry Moss moved on to other ventures in 1967 but Fox kept the stunts coming. At the opening of his second shop 'Lady Jane Again' he suspended another model in a gilded birdcage above the crowds and provided the services of a body painter when the fashion for see-through clothes became a hit.

Sharon spent a lot of time at 'Lady Jane' from aged 11 to her late 20s when the shop finally closed around 1982.

But her most memorable encounter was with Jayne Mansfield, who visited in 1967. Harry had brought his young daughter in to meet the Hollywood legend.

Sharon was sat next to Jayne and found her view restricted by the star's spectacular bust. "I was a bit overwhelmed," says Sharon, "I was only about 10 and I just blurted out 'How did you get such big boobies?' I remember her smiling down at me, she was so pretty. 'It's all in the brassiere, darling,' she said. 'You'll find out.' And I did. She was so right."

With all this frenetic activity Sharon tells me there was one key member of staff who was particularly adept at keeping order. Rex was a large and handsome Alsatian dog hired from an agency to whom he was returned each evening.

"Rex was gorgeous," says Sharon. "He sat behind the counter and nobody got anywhere near that till unless they were supposed to."

"We don't have many things left over from the shop," says Sharon. "We have a book of newspaper cuttings, a few carrier bags and we have picked up a few Lady Jane clothes on eBay. I have set up a Facebook page for staff and customers to get in touch, but I will always have my memories. They were the happiest days of my life."

Clancy Gebler Davies



CHRISTMAS AT ST ANNE'S

REV'D SIMON BUCKLEY

Looking forward to your busy time of year vicar?" I was asked recently. I smiled politely and said "yes, I love my busiest time of year" with an internal scowl at the suggestion that the rest of the year I'm sat with a packet of chocolate hob-nobs reading the Church Times for half the day with nothing more urgent to do than iron my surplice. Oh, if only they knew.

But I do love Christmas, though the busyness even at a small church like St Anne's takes quite some organising and every year we seem to add something else to the schedule of events just to make it even busier. As I write this, I've just reviewed the second proof of artwork for a Christmas card which we plan to deliver to every residential address in Soho - the bright idea of a member of the congregation. The artwork for the Christmas Services poster, though, was done in August when my Jack Russell, Betty, looked at me quizzically as I photographed some of the crib figures for the poster on my dining table, fake snow glinting in the summer sun.

This year we're switching the Christmas Tree lights on in St Anne's Gardens (Thursday 5th December) at the earlier time of 4pm, so that more children and their parents picking them up from school can join them as they sing carols, drink hot chocolate and mulled wine (the parents that is) though, as always, anyone passing by is welcome to join us. Again PMB Holdings are covering the cost of refreshments and this year Shaftesbury PLC have kindly paid for the tree. Then on Friday, being the only Church with its name in neon lights and its very own drag queen, Lady Lambrini will be enthralling / holding hostage a packed hall of punters for a quiz night which will raise several hundred pounds to help people who turn to St Anne's during the year when they've no-one else to turn to.

The following week our Thursday Pensioners' Christmas Lunch has had to be moved to a Friday so we can become a Polling Station (thanks Boris) but thankfully that works with Magda our cook, the International Rotarians who provide the food for over sixty people, and everyone else here. I must check that Santa can still make it. No doubt the Night Hub will be extra busy as our usually packed streets of a Friday night become even busier with revellers who will need the help of St John's Ambulance or the Street Angels working from our Community Hall until 5am on Friday and Saturday Nights.

Then it's the big push, with Soho Parish School carol service to write and lead at St James's Piccadilly, next a Christmas Celebration at St Anne's on the 17th with Opening Doors London which supports older LGBT+ people. On Wednesday 18th we're holding a short carol service in the beautiful chapel at the House of St Barnabas (for the first time) before St Anne's own Carol service the following night with a choir of professional singers, followed by mulled wine and mince pies aplenty (thankyou Ken at the Phoenix Arts Club). Hopefully the congregation will be generous as the collection will be going to Centrepoint, the charity working with homeless young people, which was started by one of my predecessors fifty years ago.

After the Carol Service it all goes quiet in church (Sunday aside!) until Christmas proper.

That's when the streets of Soho begin to empty, though we get a good crowd to our family friendly service on Christmas Eve when I will be performing my puppet nativity 'Birthday in Bethlehem' again at 5pm. But afterwards the streets will really have begun to clear and, after all the busyness, as Silent a Night as you will find in the West End will begin to fall across Dean

St. It'll be so quiet that even The French will have room for a tired looking couple and their donkey to come in.

The Christmas Day Communion service is both a high point and slightly low-key as most of the regular congregation have gone away or can't get into Soho. But without the soaring gothic arches of Westminster Abbey, where I will have assisted at the Midnight Mass, the simple homeliness of St Anne's offers a warm welcome that feels appropriate to mark the day in which Christians celebrate God's unexpected appearance in the unlikely form of a baby in the most modest of surroundings.

A busy time yes, the busiest time But it's only once a year and I love it.

Have a Happy Christmas Soho.

Celebrate Christmas at St. Annes Church, Soho

Christmas Tree Switch-On

Thursday 5th December 4pm
In St Anne's Gardens with Soho Parish School
& mulled wine and sweet treats.

Christmas Celebration

Tuesday 17th December 7pm
with Opening Doors London.
For older members of the LGBT+ community & their friends.

Traditional Carol Service

Thursday 19th December 7pm
with professional choir, followed by refreshments.

Gathered at the Manger

Christmas Eve 5pm
A service for all the family with carols,
puppets and the blessing of the crib.

Eucharist to celebrate the Birth of Christ

Christmas Day 11am

All welcome!

www.stannes-soho.org.uk



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FLEET LONDON

Swimming into the future, Fleet London Menswear launches in Soho.

Hollen Street resident Richard Bayley took swift action when he couldn't find the perfect shirt, designing his own and creating Fleet London Limited, from his flat on the site of former Henry Heath Hat Factory.

"I realised I couldn't find quality cotton shirts that had both a pocket and button collar. Brands seem to split their ranges between cotton poplin for office wear and thicker material like Oxford for casual, I wanted to bridge that gap. Equally, traditional boxer shorts have morphed into a loose baggy fit, I saw an opportunity to create a slimmer alternative."

With no previous retail experience, it's been a steep learning curve for Soho's newest entrepreneur....

Why Fleet London?

"Fleet's Soho base is close to the Fleet river, which flows from the ponds of Hampstead and Highgate to the Thames at Blackfriars."

It's the capital's hidden gem. Our logo is an Atlantic salmon, which re-appeared in the Thames this decade for the first time since the 1830s, a reward for years of conservation work."

British retail is having a tough time, what inspired you to start a business in this sector?

"By launching online, with occasional pop-ups, we aim to beat the retail blues, keeping prices keen in uncertain times."

Sustainability in fashion is today's buzzword, is this an important factor for you?

"The environment has rightly risen to the top of the political agenda, Fleet has plastic-free packaging and our shirt despatch boxes are made from fibres that are 75% recycled and 100% recyclable. Our cotton fabric is Better Cotton Initiative compliant."

Do you have a favourite piece?

"A tough one! I often find myself wearing our blue gingham shirt with a contrasting blue logo, it's also a bestseller."

Fleet London is positioned as very much a Soho brand, what makes Soho special for you?

"So many things: sense of community in the city maelstrom, the variety and individuality of so many one-off restaurants, clubs and stores; and my favourite cinema, the Curzon. Soho is also a maze of small businesses. For a start-up like Fleet having a bespoke embroiderer, printer, graphic designer and storage on our doorstep has been a real boon."

You're a member of the Soho Society?

"Absolutely, it's been really important over the past four decades to have this voluntary organisation acting as guardian for our community interests. Soho would have become a very different place without it, and its role today is just as vital as it's ever been."

Do you have a favourite Soho haunt?

"The House of St Barnabas, a members' club with real community purpose (aiding the homeless), beautiful architectural heritage and the best garden terrace in Soho. We shot our inaugural photoshoot here, in the Dickens Room, with actor David Michaels."

Is there a type of man you had in mind when creating this collection?

"We've focused on guys who switch seamlessly between work and leisure, who wear shirts that blur this distinction, and who are prepared to spend a little on their appearance (without being extravagant), for better quality and sustainably sourced material."

What are your future plans for the brand?

"I think many brands deeply frustrate the male customer by retiring or altering their favourite products. We aim to retain our initial designs and styles and also offer an increasingly broad range of colours and patterns over time"

We wish Richard and Fleet London well in their first month of trading. Fleet London is online www.fleetlondon.co.uk, worldwide delivery or click and collect from Hollen Street, Soho.

Lucy Haine



Richard Bayley
of Fleet London



MILROY'S OF SOHO

3 Greek Street, Soho, London W1D 4NX
020 7734 2277
shop.milroys.co.uk

In its heyday, Milroy's of Soho was 'the' whisky shop for aficionados. Run by brothers Jack and Wallace Milroy, it was a pioneer of single malt whisky, and numbered film stars (Michael Caine), prime ministers (Harold Wilson) and kings (of an unnamed Middle Eastern country) amongst its many customers.

Milroy's was founded at 3 Greek Street in 1964 by John 'Jack' Milroy, who had begun his spiritous career at Kettner's Wine Shop (on the site of what is now Café Bohème). His brother Wallace – at the time a mining engineer and minerals prospector in South Africa – provided most of the funds. John took advantage of the removal of price controls to sell wine and spirits at much better value than his competitors, making him the go-to man for affordable high-quality booze. Milroy's Soho Wine Market (as it was then) at first sold wine, sherry and Champagne, with a limited selection of blended whiskies, and a mere four single malts. When whisky-lover Wallace returned from South Africa in 1967, he was hugely instrumental in expanding and opening up the single malt market. The brothers would fill their van with bottles in Scotland, and drive them down to the shop...

Before long Milroy's was famous for selling the largest selection of whiskies in the UK. By 1993, when Jack sold the business, Milroy's was stocking nearly 600 single malts, and the shop's fame was truly global. Between them, the brothers had established Milroy's as a whisky institution, which it remains to this day. John went on to bottle many whiskies under his own name, and Wallace wrote the still revered Malt Whisky Almanac.

The company would later be run by La Reserve under the stewardship of Mark Reynier (who would go on to successfully re-open the Bruichladdich distillery on Islay). In 2014 Milroy's of Soho became independent once again when it was acquired by Martyn Simpson, known to all as Simo.

I caught up with Simo and Chester in November to find out a bit more. Chester (a Jack Russell) is a true Soho dog, having been acquired at 4am outside the London Palladium 11 years ago, aged approximately five weeks (his litter brother was bought by a friend of Simo). Simo has been in London for about 15 years, the majority of that time in Soho (whether for business or pleasure). He has a huge affection and knowledge of the area and says it 'feels like home'.

Milroy's, under Simo's stewardship, still specialises in malts, but they are from all over the world, from Scotland, America, Japan and Taiwan. For those who don't know Milroy's, it is a shop with a difference, in that the shop is on the ground floor and doubles as a bar. Through the bookcase door and down some stairs is an underground cocktail bar called The Vault. Whilst whisky is available, the cocktails are not all whisky based.

The ground-floor bar caters for all-comers. Simo's dream was that 'everyone from 20 to 80, male and female, from whatever religion, background, whatever' could come in, have a drink, sit, chat and be comfortable. Every Monday night there is a ticketed tasting event – book online – and the rest of the time it's an open bar. Milroy's also does a women-only whisky night on the first Tuesday of every month. Tickets are £20, for tastings of perhaps five or six different whiskies. Sometimes, a single producer is involved: recently someone from Craigellachie gave a talk.

Milroy's have their own-label whisky and next year they're launching a new brand – 'Chester of Soho' - so watch out for the Life of Chester in bottles!

They have recently opened a new site (a four-storey town house) in Spitalfields at 76 Commercial Road. It has a members' club at the top, a cigar terrace, a ground-floor whisky bar with 1,000 whiskies, and a cocktail bar in the basement. We wish them well.

Simo thinks Brexit will have a marked effect on the hospitality business, as it is mostly staffed by Europeans, who make it a career rather than a 'stop-gap'. He doesn't feel that Brexit will impact Milroy's much. But if Scotland breaks away, that would be an entirely different matter...

If you're looking for a present for someone who likes whisky but you don't know what, you could buy a Milroy's gift card (from £25 to £200, see their website for more details). Alternatively, you could book a tasting or take a group of girlfriends to a women's night. Or just go for a drink and a chat...

Jane Doyle

Photograph: Jessica Wang



Beak Street Proposals - Survey Results

In July of this year we discovered that Westminster City Council and Shaftesbury plc were working in partnership and considering a proposal to remove traffic from Beak Street from 11am to the following day at 7am between Upper James Street and Warwick Street.

The stated purpose was to reduce traffic in an area which is now congested with vehicles and pedestrians. The suggestion was that much of the traffic in Beak Street was transiting Soho but not actually stopping here - thus avoiding the junction at Piccadilly Circus and Shaftesbury Avenue.

The council plans to run an informal consultation on the proposals in due course.

Anticipating that the Society would itself soon be asked to comment on the proposal it was discussed at the July meeting of the Society's trustees who were concerned that the proposal would:-

1. re-route traffic into other parts of Soho and in particular down residential streets such as Great Pulteney and Bridle Lane;
2. that the estimate of rat-running traffic needed to be checked - our experience being that the traffic in Soho is excessive but it does have a reason to be here
3. pedestrianisation causes many problems as evidenced by the failed scheme in Old Compton Street in 2000
4. concerns that the pedestrian space would be used by frontages for tables and chairs and that this would cause additional problems for residents

To check whether the trustees' concerns represented residents' views more widely we added a short survey to our website that asked:

1. what connection the respondent has with Soho
2. whether they were in favour of pedestrianisation in general
3. whether they were in favour of pedestrianisation of Beak Street specifically
4. whether they approved of the Council working closely with property developers
5. whether such partnerships damaged the council's reputation
6. whether they preferred the pedestrianised Carnaby Street to the as yet un-pedestrianised Berwick Street
7. whether they wanted to take back Carnaby Street and put vehicles on it again
8. whether they would support a Soho wide scheme to restrict vehicles entering Soho to certain categories using number plate recognition.

Ninety seven people responded of which 63 said they were residents, 10 workers, 9 visitors, 7 business owners, 3 who felt emotionally connected to Soho, 1 Beak Street resident, 1

resident and worker in Soho, 1 taxi driver and 1 employee of Shaftesbury.

On the main issue of the pedestrianisation of Beak Street 56 were strongly against, 7 against, 5 in favour and 28 strongly in favour. Looking just at residents 45 were strongly against, 3 against, 3 in favour and 12 strongly in favour.

Other interesting results were that 54 respondents thought that working closely with property companies damaged the reputation of the council and 53 people support the Society's (emerging) proposal to have a Soho wide traffic reduction scheme by controlling traffic at the points of entry into Soho.

Many of the respondents included detailed written comments one of which we have provided below.

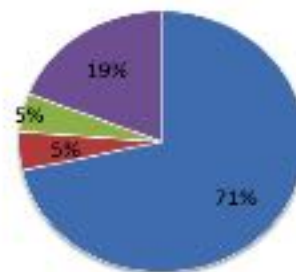
While we await the Council's informal consultation the Society is starting to work up its own proposals for traffic reduction in Soho. If you want to have your voice heard please contact the Society - admin@thesohosociety.org.uk. Given what the survey has revealed we think the council should now work more closely with the community on something that works for everyone.

Tim Lord

One respondent commented as follows:-

The council working hand in glove with large property companies serves the benefit of large property companies and not much else. Closing Beak street will cause even more traffic in the surrounding areas. Traffic is already severe, thanks partially to the vast number of 'redevelopment' projects. These projects are often undertaken by the same large property companies that purport to wish to reduce traffic. Many small businesses including those on Berwick Street Market already have to contend with high levels of congestion, inadequate parking facilities and a lack of infrastructure with regard to electric vehicles. Closing Beak Street will only exacerbate this problem and benefit large businesses to the detriment of smaller firms. If Westminster is genuinely concerned with lowering emissions then building proper infrastructure for green vehicles should be a priority and planned works should be properly coordinated so as to cause less traffic for motorists. Closing Beak Street will not reduce the number of cars on the road, only shift them from one street on to others and thus cause greater amounts of congestion and pollution.

● Strongly Against ● Against ● Support
● Strongly Support



Residents' views on the pedestrianisation of Beak street



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Lovingly crafted in the heart of London the King of Soho Variorum Gin is a pink berry spirit inspired by the creativity and literature of London's iconic district; a celebration of the colour and style of Soho. Notes of strawberry complement the classic juniper and citrus flavours of the original London Dry recipe.

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Our Featured Cocktail: Variorum Picante

40ml King of Soho Variorum Gin • 10ml Triple Sec
25ml Lemon Juice • 15ml Honey • 1/4 Birdseye Chilli •
Optional dash of Dark chocolate bitters

Muddle the chilli with the honey in the bottom of a shaker, add the other ingredients and stir until the honey is well mixed.

Add ice and shake well. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass and garnish with a zest of orange.



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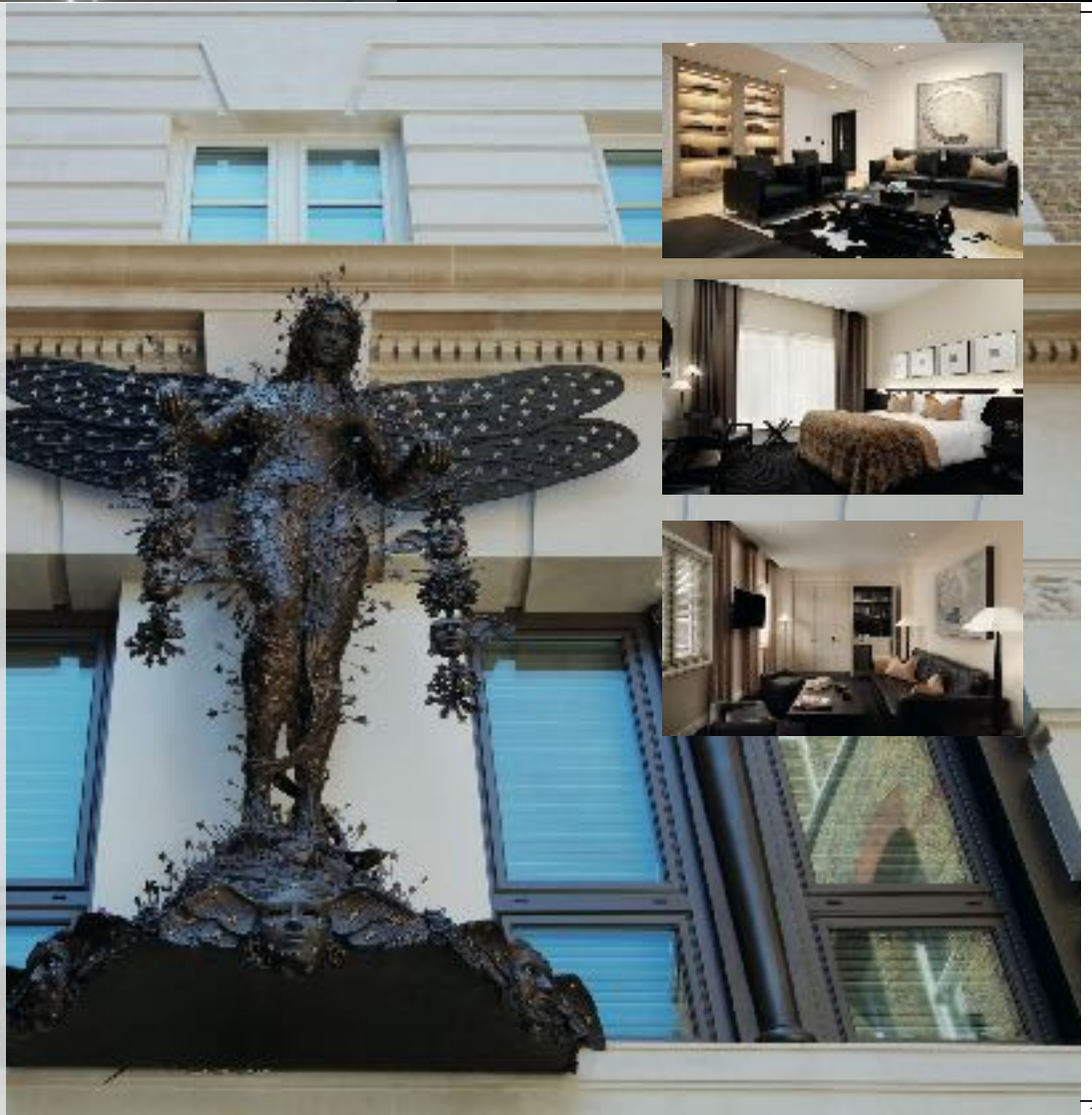
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Shot in Soho



Soho Neighbours' Private View

Fri 31 Jan 2019

17.00–18.00

Followed by music & drinks
until 21.00

Soho residents and workers are invited to a special view of our exhibition *Shot in Soho*, which celebrates the area's diverse culture, community and creative spirit through the eyes of seven photographers.

RSVP essential: rsvp@tpg.org.uk
with the subject header "SOHOLIVES"

The Photographers' Gallery
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tpg.org.uk

Corinne Day, 'George in Stilettos', from the feature 'Goths on Acid' for Ray Gun magazine, June–July 1995. Courtesy and © The Corinne Day Estate

With thanks to the Shot in Soho
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