



SOHO clarion

FREE

spring
2023

The Soho Society's Free and yet
Priceless Magazine





NOTICE OF THE SOHO SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Soho Society will be held in St. Anne's Community Hall, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF
on **Friday, 12 May 2023 at 6.00pm**

The AGM provides you with an opportunity to voice your thoughts and ideas, your hopes and fears for the future of Soho and to speak to those who are seeking to make Soho a great place to live, work and visit. Papers for the AGM will be on the Society website in advance (www.thesohosociety.org.uk). At the meeting we will report on the Society's ongoing activities:

Planning
Licensing
Production of the Clarion
Soho Village Fete and Waiters' Race
Soho Society hour of Soho Radio

We will also elect one third of our executive team for next year. All members of the Society are invited. We hope that the evening will be enjoyable and interesting for all; there will also be drinks afterwards.

PLEASE DO COME

MAKING SOHO A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT SINCE 1972

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THE SOHO SOCIETY

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FROM THE TOWER



It's now just over 10 months since the local elections in May 2022 which saw the change in control at Westminster City Council from Conservative to Labour for the first time in its history and the election of three new Labour councillors for the West End Ward in which Soho is located.

What has changed under the new administration and, specifically, how has it impacted Soho?

The most significant change was the abandonment of the previous council's Vision for Soho plan which contained a large number of proposals for changes to the public realm - key amongst them being the "pedestrianisation" of a number of Soho's streets. Despite months of repeated questions put to the former administration as to whether the "pedestrianisation" would mean permanent outdoor drinking and dining at night, it refused to answer. Over time it became clear that that is exactly what was intended - making the temporary al fresco scheme, which had been put in place during the COVID

restrictions, permanent. This was a breach of the repeated promises made by the leader of the council, Rachael Robathan (set out in writing in letters to the Society) that the al fresco scheme was to be a temporary intervention. The issue was raised at the hustings run by the Society and became an important issue for Soho residents. Thankfully, the new administration has fully delivered on its promise to abandon the scheme which would have fundamentally changed Soho and undermined it as a place to live for the long term. Without that change of course many of us at

the Soho Society had thought Soho would no longer have been a healthy place to live.

Delivering on this initial promise was important. Further improvements in the management of Soho's busy streets will take changes to planning and licensing policy and that will require a bit of patience for the simple reason that the legal process for those changes takes time (of the order of two years) and the new administration has had to make a running start. Small changes to planning policy have been suggested, none of which will make a big difference

to Soho. The debate on licensing policy and the issue of cumulative impact of alcohol licences is beginning and will be very important for Soho's future - especially given the fact that crime related to the sale of alcohol in Soho at night is already reaching pre-pandemic levels.

On the issue of public toilets we have seen some progress with the council deciding to keep and refurbish the underground toilets in Carnaby Street which had been due to be closed. While this is welcome it does remain confusing as to why the underground toilets in Broadwick

Street remain closed and may even be sold off for another use - thus permanently losing that facility. We suspect this decision predates the new administration - we continue to investigate. The public toilet issue has been taken up enthusiastically by one of the new ward councillors, Cllr Lilley, which is to be welcomed. Interventions, such as posters and special paint to stop public urination, are a start. Questions do however remain as to the longer term plan for public toilet provision in Soho as few of us believe that the large blue temporary toilets and plastic urinals



that arrive every Thursday are an appropriate sustainable solution for the Soho Conservation Area. They are an embarrassment for the centre of a global city which is intended to be attractive and appealing for visitors.

It was disappointing to see that the carriageway restrictions on Regent Street (also a promised temporary intervention from the pandemic) has been made permanent for now, despite concerns from Soho and Marylebone residents that it causes increased congestion, journey times and slows down emergency vehicles. A consultation is promised for this spring. "Consultation" and "temporary" became meaningless words under the previous administration, so this issue is likely to be watched very closely as we go forward. It is an opportunity for the new administration to show how these things should be done.

By far the biggest change experienced by the Society in its varied interactions with the council has to be that there is more evidence that the council is listening to residents' concerns and starting to meaningfully address them. In particular this is the case with our three new ward councillors who are consistently supportive of residents and are starting to change long held views at the council as to Soho being a place where residents' concerns should come second to commercial and property company interests - a more reasonable balance is emerging. There are, as a result, a number of ongoing re-thinks that will be

very important to Soho - a review of the supplementary planning policy on the public realm, a review of the council's 'Report-It' process for noise and other complaints, a review of planning enforcement processes and, most importantly, proposals for the electronic monitoring of noise, traffic and air quality in Soho. For many years it has been a matter of frustration at the Society that none of the decision makers at the council have direct recent knowledge of what Soho is actually like through the 24 hour day - none of the officers live here and they appear to very rarely visit. The monitoring data, once available, will help inform decisions in future and we hope it makes for better decision making as a result.

At the time of writing and just as we go to press we have heard the very sad news of the passing of our Honorary President and much loved friend, Leslie Hardcastle OBE. Leslie did so much for our community, and his intelligence, kindness and persistence will forever be part of the Soho Society. We will have more memories of Leslie in the next edition of the Clarion.

Tim Lord



Are you a Soho Resident, Business, Worker or Visitor?

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Join the Soho Society today

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3. Payment via your bank
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Sort code: 20-10-53
(Use surname and postcode as reference)



PLANNING



We're watching...

It is good to be able to report some success on the planning front. In January Royal London withdrew their application to part-demolish, part-refurbish and extend Twentieth Century House in Soho Square. This followed a considerable campaign by the Soho Society and others over more than three years, and all involved should be congratulated for their efforts. The hope is that any further plans that come forward for the building will be more responsive to concerns raised about heritage, sustainability, scale and impact on neighbours.

The next big battle is likely to be over the Hines development planned for 2-4 Dean Street and 7 Soho Square. The whole concept of a new 'Soho Bazaar' on the ground floor is, to quote more than one person, bizarre, and the potential loss of Tesco has been seen as a real blow to the local residential community, as well as Soho's many workers and visitors. Consultation with the developer has focused mainly on issues around uses, sustainability, design, heritage and potential impact on Soho Square but, as with Royal London, the response has not been satisfactory. We are preparing an objection.

Looking ahead, we expect a revised application for a Muslim Prayer and Cultural Centre in the Trocadero. A previous application was the victim of an objectionably hostile campaign. However, on purely planning grounds the Society was concerned about the scale of the application and how the number of visitors would be managed. We expect that the revised application will make a considerable reduction in proposed numbers from the original 1,000. We will wait to see the details when they are submitted to the council before deciding on our response.

There are two ongoing and inter-related issues in the public realm. One is accessibility, with pavement space at a premium as more visitors come into the area. Traditional problems with A-boards and inappropriate or poorly managed tables and chairs have been compounded by

the arrival of e-bikes. Cllr Patrick Lilley has been working with council officers to engage with Lime, the worst e-bike offender, and at the time of writing it looks as if some very positive changes have been agreed. Time will tell.

E-bikes are also part of the traffic conundrum in Soho. Lime bikes and others may well need some space allocation on the carriageway, and as readers will know there are some very different views about whether there should be more restriction on vehicles within Soho. Cllr Lilley has said that Westminster will soon be carrying out 'a major study of air quality, noise and traffic (all types)'. It will be frustrating for some but the Planning Group thinks that any changes should wait so that the data collected can help to inform future decisions.



As regards tables and chairs, we were encouraged by the recent decision of the planning inspector to refuse an appeal for a premises at the corner of Old Compton Street and Wardour Street. The decision showed a proper understanding of the need to protect space for pedestrians in a very busy location. This may help us in dealing with future applications elsewhere.

In Chinatown, Shaftesbury have withdrawn their applications for a very significant allocation of street space for tables and chairs. This seems like good news, as we felt that too much pedestrian space would have been lost in a heavily congested area. We wait to see what will develop here.

All this underlines the need for Westminster Council to put the emphasis on accessibility when they replace the Westminster Way (2011) with a new public realm planning document this year. And we believe that, given the intensity of uses in the West End, there should also be a commitment to much more proactive planning enforcement to support residents. Councillors, please note!

Andrew Murray

CARRY ON CAMISA

December 2022 was an awfully long month! Long, uncertain, upsetting! But come Christmas we had extremely good news! We got a reprise, we were not disappearing. Between articles in magazines and newspapers, radio, television, the amazing support from the Soho community and the general public, we have managed to remain open.

I moved to London in January 1999 and Camisa was one of my first jobs. My bosses weren't the original Camisa, but two outstanding people, one from Lucca - Gabrielle Pierotti and one from Borgotaro - Claudio Mussi. Claudio owned a restaurant near Piccadilly Circus and his presence in Camisa was mostly at the weekends, but Gaby almost lived in Camisa. With him I've acquired the food knowledge that I possess today and gained a second family. In the early 2000s Camisa had about ten members of staff, mostly girls, as the business was thriving - the supermarkets didn't stock many Italian products then. We were a large dysfunctional family, with members from contrasting social and cultural backgrounds, with an emotional baggage that was hard not to display, a family that became functional once the Camisa's shutter was up. Customers would come in waves, the mornings were more about the Italian community, locals, fresh bread and cheeses; the lunch time was, and still is, sandwich time, and later in the afternoon we had the regulars, customers that would make a special trip and travel to come to Camisa. It was never only about serving the customers, we strike up conversations with our customers, exchange recipes, holiday ideas, political changes, etc. Gaby would



Photo: Richard Piercy

talk about his favourite football team – Chelsea, and his wild time at football matches in London or Rome. And also wine, he was a great wine connoisseur with a refined taste for heavy full bodied red wines, and a lover of Pinot Grigio and Santa Margherita. Claudio was a great cook and he was always eager to provide a recipe along with the

necessary ingredients. Every August, along with placing the order for the panettone in Italy, he would start gathering recipes and photos for the famous Camisa Calendars. Sadly Gaby passed away in 2013, followed by Claudio in 2017, but their legacy at Camisa will go on.

It is a long and tedious journey to grasp the inside of Italian cooking, with all the regional differences and with all the new products entering the British Market - who knew about Guanciale, or 'Nduja five years ago! It is remarkable to notice and appreciate people's curiosity about culinary habits and cuisine history.

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.” At Camisa we take Virginia Woolf's words seriously and make sure we offer products of excellent quality. I think of myself as being extremely lucky to be embellished in the culinary world, while continuously learning, and to belong to a diverse and perpetually changing community.

Cristina Onuta



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LICENSING

As readers will know, the Licensing Committee examines applications for, primarily, new licences for premises that have not previously had a licence, and extensions of existing licences.

Every new alcohol licence granted, or granting of extended hours (up to 3am and sometimes later), adds to the number of people drinking alcohol and brings ever more people to crowd the already saturated streets of Soho. The cumulative impact of this is yet more crime (sometimes violent), noise disturbance and general unpleasantness on our streets.

The crime statistics continue to rise and in December showed Soho as having the highest number of robberies, overall knife crime and violence against the person compared to other areas in the West End Cumulative Impact Zone.

It is no longer pleasant to be in certain parts of Soho in the evening and into the early hours. It is not only residents who say this but more and more people say that they no longer come to Soho in the evenings to go to its restaurants, pubs and bars for this reason.

The wave of new and extended hours licences that have been awarded has led to local people beginning to sit up and go beyond moaning, and they are now saying “Enough is enough”. Soho is not Magaluf although it is often now compared to it.

So for some details: in January and February there were five applications for new alcohol licences, seven for extensions of hours. Three of the applications for extended hours were withdrawn following submissions by local people and the Soho Society, thus demonstrating that it is worthwhile for people who believe they will be affected to put in objections.

It is worth noting that we do not object to straightforward renewals of licences, such as sex entertainment licences for established venues, where there is no history of issues or where the application will not materially affect an existing licence. For example one recent application was to create a disabled toilet, which we welcome.

If the Council receives objections to licensing applications from the Police, Environmental Health Officer, the Licensing Authority, Soho Society or from local residents or businesses who consider they will be adversely affected by potentially increased noise, antisocial behaviour or crime, the application

goes to a panel of three Councillors (two from the majority party and one from the minority party) to make a decision on whether or not to award the licence or extension.

Soho has been identified by Westminster City Council as under stress. The Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy 2021 Cumulative Impact Policy CIP1 states: *‘The West End Cumulative Impact Zone has been identified because the cumulative effect of the concentration of late night and drink led premises and/or night cafés has led to serious problems of disorder and/or public nuisance affecting residents, visitors and other businesses, [the extent of which] arises from the number of people there late at night, a considerable number of them being intoxicated. Public services, including police, health and emergency, transport, environmental services (cleansing and refuse services) are placed under chronic strain by existing levels of activity, as are civic amenities and the quality of residential life. The urban infrastructure cannot sustain any further growth in licensed premises that provide a significant risk of a variety of harmful outcomes.’*



It is important that anyone who believes that they will be adversely affected by a new or extended alcohol licence should email the Council’s Licensing Department or comment on the licensing website, stating their objections in relation to the Licensing Objectives which the council has a duty to promote, these being: the prevention of crime and disorder;

public safety; prevention of public nuisance; protection of children from harm. New applications can be seen by subscribing to the Council’s Licensing News: licensing@westminster.gov.uk. Notices are also usually placed in the window of the establishment making the application.

We are lobbying hard to make our voices heard at the council and with Councillors to raise awareness of the impact of licensed premises on residents and will continue to do so.

As always, we are indebted to Richard Brown of Citizens Advice for the technical advice and support he gives to both the Society and residents. He is always happy to be contacted at licensing@westminstercab.org.uk. His post, which covers licensing advice to individuals and community groups for the whole of Westminster, is funded by the Council.

The Licensing Committee

WARD PANEL UPDATE

AND OTHER NEWS

It seems no time at all since the last issue of the Clarion and here we are in March! We finally held a ward panel in January which was attended by Sergeant Mark Pettit (our new sergeant), our existing ward officer, Matt Carr, and our new ward officer, Andy de Santis, and Andrew Turner, the PCSO for the area. Two of our councillors, Paul Fisher and Patrick Lilley were in attendance, alongside Mary O'Connor, our neighbourhood problem solving co-ordinator, residents, and businesses. Steve Muldoon and PC Tom Stewart also attended to talk a bit about licensing, having done two reviews, which highlighted a number of incidents - the Manette Street Café and Vanity Strip Bar Club, both of which were referred to in recent newsletters.

There was a wide ranging discussion on the crime figures, which make sorry reading. The robbery figures are very high, the majority taking place late at night after the venues have closed (often in quieter areas such as Soho Square). Also, Soho has the highest numbers of theft from person in Westminster, which is very often opportunistic theft, such as mobile phones/laptops.

At every ward panel meeting, three priorities are set, one by the police and two by attendees. The priorities were set as (1) robbery on Greek Street, Old Compton Street and Wardour Street (set by the police), (2) theft from the person, and (3) ASB associated with drug abuse. Whilst cycling is not a ward priority it will still be tackled when seen.

Another ward panel meeting will be arranged shortly, probably April, and we will notify businesses and residents of when this will be. In the meantime there will be 'community engagement' on Carnaby Street (probably at the top end) between 2 and 4 pm on 22 March.

Pedicab operations will continue and, in fact, there was an operation between the Council and the Police over the last weekend, during which four riders were stopped for playing too loud music, and case papers are being

prepared for prosecution. In addition, City Inspectors and Police approached a number of pedicabs that were stationary (and not playing music), which gave City Inspectors an opportunity to hand out some Pedicab Riders Beware leaflets, and also gave the Police the opportunity to educate the Pedicab Riders of the new Community Protection Notice that the Police now have which is being used under the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 Section 54(6) - Prohibition of nuisances by persons in the thoroughfares. We understand these operations will continue, but they seem to be having the desired effect as the noise from pedicabs has vastly improved after 9 pm (which is when the legislation used kicks in). Nickie Aiken MP is still intent on getting pedicabs regulated, so fingers crossed, as, despite the improvements, they're still a menace and dangerous, as currently they require no safety checks.

For some other news, The French House is holding their annual Pints Day on 31 March 2023, at which pints are auctioned, with all profits going to charity. Various people have been confirmed to attend and pull pints, amongst them Suggs, Lorraine Chaise and Andy McKay. There will also be pictures and other items auctioned.

The Soho Food Feast returns on 10 and 11 June 2023. This is a ticketed event, tickets can be purchased in advance online, with prices starting from £15. Once inside the venue, visitors can buy food tokens and explore the many different restaurant stalls. In exchange for a token you can try a small signature dish that the restaurants offer. There is also live music, a raffle, children's activities, live cooking demonstrations, great wine and cocktail bar options. All profits go to the Soho Parish Primary School.

Jane Doyle



Illustration by Bob Murdoch

COVER ARTIST

BOB MURDOCH

We're grateful to Bob Murdoch for his permission to use his artwork for the cover of this edition of the Clarion. Bob was born in 1944 in Brixton, at a time when Hitler was raining V2 rockets down on London. Bob first started drawing at the age of three, mostly horses and rockets, the latter probably because of the V2s.

Years later Bob studied at Camberwell Arts School, after which he went into advertising. He found a small studio space in Lexington Street, Soho, which he shared with two other artists, doing illustration, design and art directing.

Back then, Soho was a dangerous place to work - too many drunken lunches at the French House, the Coach & Horses, Kettners, Groucho's and the occasional visit to the Colony Room, drinking with Francis Bacon (total decadence!!)

Bob gave up advertising and for the last ten years has been painting contemporary art.

You can purchase a print of the cover image and more of Bob's work at:

www.sohogiftstore.com/product/camisa-son-fine-art-print/



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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	休息		
星期日	休息		

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

A NEW TREE FOR MOOR STREET

Deputy Lord Mayor and Honorary Alderwoman Angela Harvey joined local school children from Soho Parish School, along with Soho community leaders on Tuesday, 28 February to celebrate the planting of a tree on Moor Street, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

The local initiative to mobilise community groups for an environmental outcome was organised by Soho-based communications firm, Integra in partnership with Westminster Council. The tree planted on Moor Street is a flowering cherry tree, chosen for its beautiful springtime blossoms. Its planting was sponsored by OakNorth Bank, headquartered in Soho, and is part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. The ceremony was attended by local officials, members of the Soho community, and a representative from the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC).

The QGC is a nationwide initiative which encourages individuals, communities, and organizations to plant trees and create new green spaces. Initially created to mark last year's Platinum Jubilee in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years of service, it has been extended at the wishes of His Majesty The King to the end of March this year to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memory of Her Majesty.

The Queen's Green Canopy is creating a living legacy with over a million trees planted in Her Majesty's name across the nation during the first planting season, October 2021 to March 2022. The trees planted as part of this initiative will serve as a lasting tribute to Her Majesty's extraordinary service to her country and her people.

The Moor Street tree planting is one of many taking place across the UK and marks an important step towards creating a more sustainable and resilient environment for future generations to enjoy.

Deputy Lord Mayor and Honorary Alderwoman Angela Harvey said:

"In her life, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II brightened the lives of so many people so it is extremely fitting this

cherry tree, planted here in Westminster, will continue to bring joy to the hearts of future generations. The Queen's Green Canopy initiative is not only creating a living legacy in her memory, but also fostering a cleaner, greener future for Westminster."

Louise Scott, Teacher at Soho Parish School, said:

"Year 5 from Soho Parish Primary are delighted to have been asked to take part in planting this cherry tree on Moor Street as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. Soho Parish Primary is very much part of the local community and we not only care about enriching our environment with this cherry tree, but we also feel honoured to be part of this legacy which was so important to Her Majesty, The Queen."



Zaki Cooper and Nick Loughran, Co-Founders of Integra, said:

"As a firm based in the Soho area, we were delighted to bring this project together involving a number of partners. Whilst it's only one tree, we feel it has huge symbolic value. Trees are an investment in our future and we look forward to seeing it blossom over the coming years."

THE SOHO SOCIETY HOUR



Spring is on the way and the Soho Society Hour is finally starting to see a little light in the mornings, having started 2023 by moving to an earlier slot of 8am every Thursday. If that's too early for you to listen live, then do remember that you can catch up on either the Soho Radio or Soho Society websites (although we do like to think of it as the perfect show to listen to alongside your breakfast, as you get ready for work, or on your commute.)

The winter months were as varied as ever as ever on Broadwick Street. We have interviewed all the creative sorts that Soho is best known for, including authors (Gordon Lewis and Robert Sellers) and artists (Gideon Mendel and Persona Collective), but we also never forget the politicians, housing associations and charity workers who work so hard to keep everything running behind the scenes. Some of our conversations will always be about the best way to make a martini (with Alex Robson of the King of Soho Gin) and others will always be with our local councillors about pedicabs and public loos, and we would have it no other way.

A few highlights since the last Clarion came out: we were very pleased to be able to speak to Cristina from I Camisa

in the midst of the successful campaign to save the much-loved Italian deli, and architect Paul Velluet following Royal London's withdrawal of its application to demolish Century House on Soho Square; and we hope that we will look back on our fascinating chat with Alan Powers from Pollock's Toy Museum with similarly positive feelings as they search for a new home for the Toy Museum's truly unique collection.

Our thanks as always to Soho Radio (especially our producers Esmeralda and Rachael) for their continued support of the show and to Jim Cooke for making sure we always have our fingers on the cultural pulse.

Don't miss out on all of the above. We're broadcasting live every week, 8-9am Thursday morning, on sohoradiolondon.com

Cat Úna O'Shea

A HARD MAN IS GOOD TO FIND



60 years of
queer photography
of the male physique

A Hard Man is Good to Find! is a bold new exhibition charting over 60 years of queer photography of the male physique.

While the 1955 Wolfenden Report and the 1967 Sexual Offences Act marked the partial decriminalisation of gay sexual activity, prompting gay liberation and the fight for social equality; any depiction of male nudity which suggested homosexuality remained subject to the 1857 Obscene Publications Act, which made making or distributing such images a criminal offence.

A clandestine visual culture emerged, regulated by laws which enforced homosexuality as invisible. In turn, it directly fed the defiant, overt visuality of gay men's bodies that emerged in the post-war period.

Taking a novel approach, the exhibition highlights key areas of London which were a focus for men seeking out men to photograph. It maps out a territory of risk and possibility across Highgate, between Chelsea and Wellington Barracks, in Soho, Brixton, Portobello and Euston. Catalogues, print ordering sheets, personal albums, magazines and publications are also included in the exhibition to explore how these photographs were circulated, exchanged and shared.

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CENTRAL LONDON SAMARITANS 70 YEARS ON

In the early days of Samaritans, founder Chad Varah fed a telephone wire up a church tower – where he had a bed – so he could answer calls from people in the middle of the night.

Around 23,000 Samaritans now offer support over the phone 24 hours a day. They also write letters and emails and even engage in webchat, but the fundamental aim of Samaritans remains the same – to be there for people when they are struggling to cope.

Samaritans listen, which sounds simple enough, but doing it in a way that allows someone to fully explore what is affecting them is a learned skill. And despite the extensive training and mentoring Samaritans go through, there's nothing prescriptive about it. Volunteers arrive with compassion, and they are committed to being present for people they have never met.

This year, Samaritans turns 70 and – unsurprisingly – what we have learnt in all that time is that there are issues that never cease to affect people: money stress, relationship breakdown, bereavement, abuse, illness, loneliness, mental health issues and more. The pandemic, the Ukraine-Russia war and current cost of living crisis just add more burden to what is already there.

When you feel heavy, looking for help can be difficult, which is why Central London Samaritans reaches out; we visit the homeless community, custody suites and veterans, and run Prison Listener schemes. We are also big advocates for promoting the idea that anyone can be there for someone else, so we deliver tailored talks and workshops in a variety of settings.

Our Facing the Future team facilitates support groups for people who have lost someone to suicide. We also offer support following a sudden death or suspected suicide in a school or workplace, and in the aftermath of a significant public incident, Samaritans are often found nearby.

If you, or someone you know, wants to speak to a Samaritan in person, you can find us just behind Carnaby Street. No appointment or referral is needed and there is no cost, just a friendly ear.

We are open from 9am to 9pm, 7 days a week: 46 Marshall St, London, W1F 9BF. Call: 116 123 to speak to a Samaritan now (free from any phone) or email jo@samaritans.org

Amber Murray


External Relations Lead for Central London Samaritans

Whatever you're facing We're here to listen

Call free day or night on
116 123

Email
jo@samaritans.org

A registered charity



[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)



In honour of Andrew Edmunds (1943-2022), one of the founding exhibitors at The London Original Print Fair, Andrew Edmunds Prints are privileged to display a memorial exhibition of part of his personal collection of works by James Gillray (1756-1815). With a focus on the unseen

colours and states of his art it will include works never before exhibited to the public from one of the finest collections of Gillray in the world. For details about acquiring a free ticket please visit our website. These works will be displayed for exhibition purposes only and will not be for sale.






The King of SOHO

The Spirit of Soho has been captured and bottled...

Encapsulating the rich creativity and unique lifestyle of the effervescent London district, The King of Soho Copacetic Vodka, a mighty fine spirit, lovingly crafted in small batches in the heart of England using copacetic English wheat.

Find out more at www.SpiritOfSoho.com

   @TheKingofSoho

Our Featured Cocktail:

Copacetic Watermelon Crush

- 35ml King of Soho Copacetic Vodka
- 15ml Manzana Verde (Green Apple Liqueur)
- 30ml Watermelon Juice
- 5ml Lime Juice
- Few grains salt

Shake and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a slice of watermelon.



NICKIE AIKEN

CONSERVATIVE MP FOR CITIES OF LONDON & WESTMINSTER



Working to make Soho an even better place to live, work and visit.

Like many Soho Clarion readers, I was surprised to read reports that the Government is no longer committed to our pedicabs licensing scheme. From the conversations I've had with the Transport Secretary and officials in Downing Street, that is not the case.

This Conservative Government remains committed to our pedicabs licensing scheme.

I know from speaking to the Soho Society and to many local people across Soho the issues that a minority of pedicab drivers cause; the excessive noise from boombox speakers; the blocking of pavements; the extortionate prices, and the anti-social behaviour.

I understand the issues you face. That's why throughout my time in Westminster City Council, or as your Member of Parliament, I've worked day in, day out to crack down on the minority of pedicab drivers who cause so many issues, whether it be bringing the council and Metropolitan Police together in joint operations to take dangerous drivers off of our roads or raising this local issue at the very highest level of Government. I am determined to bring in pedicabs licensing and am working with Ministers and colleagues to find the correct legislative lever.

Claiming the Government is no longer committed is playing political games and does nothing but cause unnecessary harm, hardship and anxiety to our friends and neighbours who face those sleepless nights.

Thousands of local people across Soho and the Two Cities have already shown their support for the licensing scheme. If you haven't yet, make your voice heard at nickie.news/Pedicabs



Another local issue that I know many Soho Clarion readers have major concerns over is pavement licensing, or al fresco dining.

During the pandemic, we saw tables and chairs pop up, often overnight, on our pavements and roadways as restaurants and cafés implemented 'COVID secure' dining options. But it's clear from listening to you, the noise impact and loss of pavements and roadways caused by outdoor dining is unbearable, and can make it hard to get around.

I've been working with the Soho Society and other residents' associations and amenity societies, to lobby the Secretary of

State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove MP, to update the guidance on pavement licensing in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, and force local authorities to take local factors into account. This would empower local authorities such as Westminster City Council to take a bespoke approach for each neighbourhood and genuinely take on board the views and concerns of local people.

The Secretary of State is receptive to our calls, and I look forward to continuing working with him as the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill progresses through Parliament.

If you have a local, national, or international issue which you think I can help with, please get in touch, and send me an email to nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk. Keep up to date with how I'm continuing to work for you on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube @TwoCitiesNickie.

PAUL FISHER



It has been a busy start to 2023 and your West End Councillors have a great deal of really positive news to report.

The year started with the great news that the efforts of residents, the Soho Society, Westminster City Council and Shaftesbury had managed to save I Camisa for another two years. The news of impending closure concerned everyone who has a stake in the community here in Soho and we as councillors were pleased to play our part in the process of saving this Soho icon.

We have also had successes on the licensing front (a key battleground for preserving Soho has a community): in January, I attended a review hearing for the Vanity Bar and Nightclub in which it was alleged that men who had attended the club had their drinks spiked and were in any event plied with excessive amounts of alcohol. The club had its licence suspended and was forced to shut for three months whilst it changed key personnel to ensure that these sorts of incidents don't happen in the future. More recently Cllrs Lilley, Toale and I added our individual

objections to the proposal to grant four alcohol licenses to Simmons bars in Soho, which have since been withdrawn which is a victory for the village.

Looking ahead, 2023 will be an important year for the West End as Westminster City Council undertakes what's called a Cumulative Impact Assessment. The Council is entitled to gather data on issues like crime, noise etc. in order to arrive at a defined Cumulative Impact Area. At present Soho sits in the CIA. That is highly unlikely to change in my opinion due to what we all know anecdotally about present levels of noise and disruption here. But it will then help determine licensing policy review going forward. I have always said there are no quick fixes here. As your local councillors, we will continue to oppose licences that we consider don't meet the Licensing Act objectives in Soho. But longer-term we all want to make sure that Soho can develop again as a village that serves both local residents and revellers who want all that Soho has to offer but

are also prepared to respect Soho's local community.

We've also recently undertaken a walkabout with the Soho Society, council officers and Lime to understand how we might tackle the increasing problem of e-bikes blocking our pavements across the West End. We are demanding that Lime Bikes in particular increase their fines for offending consumers and are working with officers and Lime to geofence parts of Soho altogether to stop hotspots (like Meard Street earlier this month) from becoming used as a parking space for private hire bikes. In the near term we hope to build the infrastructure (bike docking stations) that will help get these bikes off the pavements.



On top of all of the work being done in the ward, the new Labour administration steers its first budget through the council, with a number of headline items that we are really proud of, including free school dinners for primary school children, saving families up to £500 a year. At the centre of attention throughout Westminster, but particularly relevant to residents in Soho, the Oxford Street

District Programme is under new scrutiny. The old plans for pedestrianisation and piazzas have been scrapped and the new scope of works will be decided in consultation with stakeholders in the coming months.

This is just a summary of some of the work we've been doing in Soho to preserve our communities and improve quality of life for residents. But it represents a significant body of work in just under ten months (on top of all the individual case work that we address on a daily basis). We remain incredibly proud to represent the West End Ward (including the distinctive Soho).

But there's a lot more to do ... and we're looking forward to the challenge.

PAUL DIMOLDENBERG



Nearly one year on from the historic Labour victory and my planned retirement. So how has it been? The simple answer is “So much done. So much more to do.”

City Management and Air Quality is a massive portfolio – roads, pavements, parking, cycling, walking, waste collection and recycling, trees, parks, public toilets, street lighting, bridges...and the mortuary. And apologies for any services I have missed out. So here are a few highlights.

Our Waste Action Squad is tackling waste and rubbish dumping throughout the City

We have undertaken nearly 2,000 enforcement actions against residential waste, with an expected total of around 3,200 enforcement actions for the full year.

We have spoken to over 700 people on our streets. For the first time we are working directly with the community on waste and recycling issues, including in Soho where we are appointing an additional City Inspector focusing on commercial waste.

We have collected over 1,000 tonnes of food waste since we rolled out the recycling service.

On Active travel, we are developing more cycle routes throughout the city, such as the Cleveland Street cycle route where we are working closely with Camden

We will be installing 60 more secure bike hangers, providing safe parking for 360 bikes, and 250 cycle stands giving 500 extra parking places. In all, over 850 additional cycle parking places will be provided across Westminster.

We are working with e-bike operators to get the e-bikes off the pavement and into dedicated bays. We are also urging the operators to raise the fines for those who continue to dump the e-bikes and cause obstruction to pedestrians.

We are working closely with the Mayor, both on delivering improved cycle routes and in expanding the Santander Cycle docking station network in north Paddington.

On school streets, we have installed CCTV where necessary so we can reduce vehicle use and improve air quality around our schools.

We are working with the hospitality industry and property and

landowners to reduce PM 2.5 emissions.

We are encouraging the installation of electric cooking hobs in Westminster’s restaurants, bars, cafes and hotels.

And there is more:

- Westminster’s high streets are now jet washed 4 times a year - up from just once a year under the previous regime

- 800 more Electric Vehicle charging points will be installed by the end of the financial year, with a further 200 to follow

- The introduction of smart charging means the EV owners are saving £4 each time they charge their cars. A user charging their EV car twice a week saves £32 a month.

- A micro-logistics hub is open at the Cambridge Street car park in Pimlico from where 2,000 parcels a day will be delivered by cargo bikes, reducing the number of vehicles on the road

- Three CCTV cameras have been located at dumping hotspots in Fitzrovia, Pimlico and Paddington, taking pictures of the dumpers so that we can follow up with enforcement action

- We have reopened the Carnaby Street and Maida Hill public toilets, closed by the previous regime.

I am certainly enjoying retirement. You know why? We are getting things done!

Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg

Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality



BEAUTIFUL SHOPS

Soho's treasure trove of shops is under threat: from planning changes enabling conversion from retail to restaurant without a planning application, to rates and standing charge rises, the pressure on physical retail is at unprecedented levels. Soho needs its independent retail to maintain the mix and balance. Retailer Lucy Haine reviews two Soho stores in our regular feature, "Beautiful shops".

MacCulloch & Wallis Ltd, Poland Street

Ownership: Co-owner Victoria heads up the business, UK Registered

The Store has been trading since 1902 first in Dering Street, Mayfair. They moved to Soho in 2015 spookily to the same footprint as their original store. Loved and frequented by designers and creatives, including Alexander McQueen and Vivienne Westwood. The Netflix and streaming boom has seen a big upside in costumes for theatre and film, and bespoke bridal and knitting also driving sales, although they keenly feel the loss of their fabric store neighbours.

Store layout: Haberdashery heaven! Stand back and sigh! Once you step through the stylish black and gold entrance the interior is bright, with white walls which are perfect for showcasing rich colourful fabrics, wool, buttons, thread, zips and much more,

Meet the team: Florence is longest serving, 35 years, and with Mitzi, Emma and Florence, there is a team of 14 with an encyclopaedic knowledge of their stock and fashion related degrees and there is a vacancy: tall, strong and numerate please.



Soho Best sellers: Interlining for tailoring – people love the colours but buy black & white!

Busiest time: Saturdays 2pm and 5pm just before closing.

Events: None, too busy keeping up with customers ,

What you like most about Soho: The vibrancy, they love

the footfall of the new Elizabeth line but are not so keen on their door being broken by drunks, plus the M&S ads need changing more regularly.



Soho discounts: Stock is keenly priced against competitors with a range that out-classes their online rivals.

Did you know? The sheep guarding the entrance are named after the UPS delivery guys Wayne, Kye, Bradley and Taylor

Did I buy? I had to dash, but have my eye on some black and white trim and will be back!

Monday to Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturdays to 5.30pm, Sundays Closed

www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk @maccullochw

William Curley, Smiths Court off Brewer Street

Ownership: Owned by William Curley, UK Registered

William Curley himself a master chocolatier, started the business in 2004 with a small shop in Richmond. Originally a patisserie, the Brits love of chocolate led them in a new direction. Sadly the shop in Richmond is no longer there but business has evolved to the flagship boutique in Soho and a Harrods concession.

William trained in the 1980's at some of the best restaurants and hotels in the country, including Gleneagles, The Savoy,



Le Manoir aux Quat' Saison's and La Tante Claire and this heritage resonates throughout the chocolate range.

Store Layout: Framed in sumptuous orange walls with delicate gold foliage, the café frontage leads you to a counter of chocolate delights with side display of shelved goods, including single chocolate bars and Easter eggs.

Meet the team: Ben and Moneth in Soho, the business is essentially run by William and wife Melissa, with a small team of chefs making chocolates by the Thames in West London and retail manager Houda.

Busiest time: Christmas! followed by Easter, and, although new, the café and courtyard and location attracts people throughout the year.

Soho Bestsellers: The classic hot chocolate, sitting in Smith's Court with a warm cup of hot chocolate watching the world go by!

Soho go-to snacks are the 'Nostalgia' range, grown up versions of childhood favourites such as Snickers, Bounty, Millionaire's Shortbread and William's favourite – Jaffa Cakes!

Best thing about Soho: It's the heart of London and represents so much of why we love being in this city. There are so many independent restaurants and boutiques in Soho, which are able to thrive. The area is a hive of creativity and just exploring always inspires and shows something different.

Soho discounts: They have a few collaborations planned, so some exclusive offers hopefully coming up in the not-too-distant future!

Events coming up: Later in the Spring there are plans for exclusive days selling patisserie or afternoon tea. No dates set but watch this space!



Did you know? The shop was opened using crowdfunding with £80k raised exchanging courses, events and chocolates for pledges.

The Soho branding colour is all about tangerine... It's a great colour - fun, warm and welcoming and William's love of this colour stems from his football team Dundee Utd! You can even find signed photos in the back of the shop of two football heroes.



Did I buy? Yes! A mixed nine piece box for a friend £16.50.

Tuesday to Saturday 10.30 – 6pm, Sunday/Monday closed

www.williamcurley.co.uk @williamcurley

Soho shops – use them or lose them #ShopLocalShopSoho

If you would like us to feature your shop, please contact lucy.haine@thesohosociety.org.uk

Lucy Haine

THE UNIQUENESS OF CREATIVE WELLBEING

Exploring a world of sacred creativity and how a few simple pursuits can transform our everyday lives. By Nik Parmar



The most sacred of all spaces is the place of intuition within the human soul. Long ago, our ancestors expressed their intuitive sparks of creativity using the natural world around them, both as a canvas and as a source of inspiration.

Creative wellness is booming. Individuals are searching more for a holistic lifestyle community of sacred living. This will mean different things to different people, there are many layers to creating a sacred life. Those layers include but are not limited to; home, beauty, freedom, time, nature, the mystical, wild, family, friends, yoga, mystery, learning, exploration, connecting to the spirit world.

Artistic ability or special talent is not necessary to participate in creativity; it is about focusing on one's inside world of expression, own perceptions, imagination and feelings.

Creative workshops explore our own intuitive artistic expressions through various offerings:

Sound has been used for healing and exploring our inner landscape since time immemorial, it has the ability to align our energy field with the vibration of Mother Earth and the Cosmos. When our energy is coherent and flowing smoothly, we are guided along our Soul's path with ease and grace. Sacred Sound Ceremonies are created using breathwork, crystals, sound baths, kirtan songs and mantras which journey into a state of deep relaxation and inner peace.

Ancient Festivals are immersing into beautiful, intimate gatherings that incorporate creative ritual circles designed for deep and lasting connection and understanding. It becomes a mystical playground of exploration revealing expressions of our true self through celebration.

Art Journaling Visualising life goals and aspirations can be explored on a path of Art Journaling by creating mood boards with fabrics, images and crafts, representing our personal development, uniqueness and individual beauty. Crafting our own personal Tree of Life with visuals of appreciative thought branches (an elephant for strength, a heart for self-love, Om for eternal peace) is a creative approach in strengthening and growing our emotional mapping.

Yoga flows are a form of moving meditation where the breath becomes a musical rhythm and the postures manifest in to a dance flow which evokes emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration. Participating in dance takes focus and activates the brains hippocampus – the part of the brain that's responsible for emotions and memory. Breathing through challenges and discomfort on a yoga mat is a life lesson reminder to breathe through challenges and discomfort in daily life with grace and perseverance.

Nik Parmar from Spiritual Gypsy is a Wellness Curator bringing a Sacred Community based on ancient Eastern concepts of wellbeing wrapped in modern relevance.

He shares his love for Sacred Wellbeing by creating unique and magical experiences of ceremony and ritual, drumming-meditation, journeying, sacred sound and dance, crystal healing, arts and crafts that uplift individuals and reminds them of their inner beauty and wellness.

Why not give it a try? Step away from your routine, indulge yourself in a journey of playful fun experiences sacred creativity. Creating art, singing, dancing and playing will not only make you feel good, it will renew and vitalise you.

For further information on events and retreats visit www.kleem.co.uk, [@spiritual_gypsy_ltd](https://www.instagram.com/spiritual_gypsy_ltd)

ST THOMAS, KINGLY STREET

AND THE LOST CHURCHES OF SOHO

Readers will be familiar with St Anne's, the parish church of Soho. The foundation stone was laid in 1677 and it was consecrated by Bishop Henry Compton in 1686. But St Anne's would not be the only Anglican church to serve the people of Soho in the years that followed.

By 1877 there were six parishes in what is now the Parish of St Anne's with St Thomas and St Peter. The modern parish retains the names of two other churches: St Peter's, Great Windmill Street and St Thomas's, Kingly Street. Unlike St Anne's, both survived the Blitz but were pulled down after the war.

Three Victorian Churches were demolished in the 1930s as the residential population moved to the new suburbs: St Mary's, Crown Street (Charing Cross Road); St Luke's, Berwick Street; and St John the Baptist, Great Marlborough Street.

We can catch a glimpse of the era of these six churches in a newspaper cutting from 7 June 1926 which records a visit to St Thomas.

The church of St. Thomas, which is hidden in a narrow turning off Regent-street, on the right hand side, going north, might be hard to find if it had not a pugnacious bell to give effective notice of its existence. When I attended its morning service on Trinity Sunday, however, there were not quite fifty people in the congregation.

The service, described as a Solemn Eucharist, was just one more of the innumerable compromises between the Communion Service and the Mass, which, by their infinite variety, make attendance at High Church services such an adventurous business; one can never tell what queer contradiction will be found next.

St Thomas's had humble beginnings as a little timber on brick tabernacle, built in 1688 by Thomas Tenison,

twentieth Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields (1680-92) and the first Rector of St James's, Piccadilly (1686-92). The chapel was at what is now the corner of Kingly Street and Tenison Court. The only evidence of its existence is the redbrick and sandstone vicarage (1887) opposite at 12-13 Kingly Street which is now a restaurant.

Thomas Tenison was an educationalist. He had already founded a school at St Martin-in-the Fields and he founded a school at the new tabernacle. The schools eventually merged and relocated and is now Archbishop Tenison's School in Oval, Kennington.

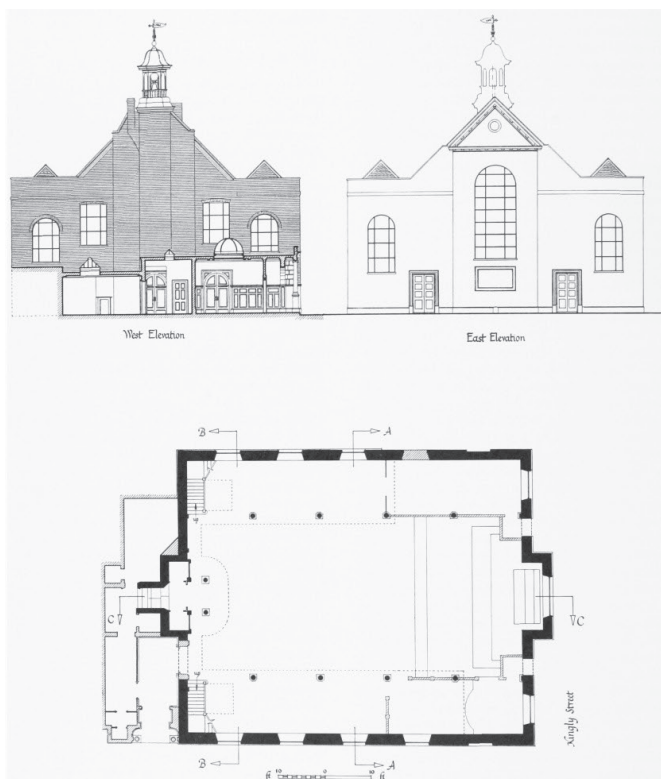
Indeed, Tenison became Archbishop of Canterbury and it was at this time he upgraded the tabernacle to a new chapel in 1702, which was eventually consecrated and dedicated to St Thomas in his memory in 1869.

As noted by the 1926 visitor, St Thomas's was Anglo-Catholic in tradition. In 1884 the congregation and parishioners made a gift to

the church of a thurible of gold and silver, made by Keith & Co of Soho, and is still used at St Anne's on major feast days. By 1886 outdoor processions and Stations of the Cross had become usual in Holy Week. In the twentieth century a highly ornate confessional box probably of Italian origin was installed.

St Thomas's suffered only minor damage in the Blitz, but was closed after the war then demolished in 1973, the last of the six church buildings. The parish of St Anne's with St Thomas and St Peter continued to meet and worship at the St Anne's site in what is now the Allen Room. It is a testament to the community spirit of Soho that a new church was eventually rebuilt and flourishes today.

Paul Gurnham



SECRET SOHO ROOF GARDENS

We caught up with Elizabeth and Sheila from @sohoroofgarden, a garden situated on the roof of the Island Block of St James Residences, one of the largest schemes run by the Soho Housing Association (SHA) in Central London.

Elizabeth has been a resident of Soho for over 40 years. She is a market trader, dealing in vintage and antique furniture and decorative items. Sheila is an actress, who started out with the National Youth Theatre and has worked ever since. She is also a florist, having received training from Jane Packer, and has worked with several leading florists over time.

Tell us a bit about your garden...

Elizabeth: There are various communal outside areas on the roof of the Island Block, such as the courtyard and the round garden, and some flats have balconies or an outside space. For years the roof was a large space with a few washing lines, a bench, but most crucially, a tap!

Sheila: I moved to St James Residences in early 2013, bringing with me armfuls of pots of Hostas and blooming Tête-à-tête daffodils to the roof garden, which had already been started by Elizabeth and Pete. I also brought a large parasol for the table, anticipating the summer.

How did Soho Roof Garden come about?

Elizabeth: I have always loved plants, and wherever I have lived I have had window boxes and indoor plants. I am also concerned about the environment and nature, and here was a space which could make a difference. I initially contacted a charity who specialised in this kind of project, but they were going to charge a lot of money just for a consultation. I then spoke to Matthew Bennett, a local with

an interest in sustainability, the Council regarding health and safety, and SHA. SHA have a 'Community Fund' to which residents can apply for funding for projects. In 2010, I applied for funding for large, ready-to-assemble timber raised beds, soil, plants, compost, and an irrigation system. Residents did all the labouring.

A couple of years later, Sheila came to St James Residences from Royalty Mansions, bringing her know-how, artistic flair and pots of Hostas! Since then, the garden has grown from strength to strength – the original plan now seems rather timid compared to what it is now. We have height, with trees and climbers, as well as many pots filling the lower levels, which can be moved up to fill in gaps as the garden grows.



Soho roof garden with Sheila's roses



Elizabeth's favourite – Geranium Rozanne

Which is your favourite plant in your garden?

Elizabeth: It is difficult to choose a favourite plant. I love our Hostas, but the most amazing plant for long lasting colour, vigour, longevity, and form is Geranium Rozanne.

Sheila: Can't bear to offend the plants I don't choose! I have two seasonal choices: those early daffodils which bring such brightness and hope for the year ahead, and then later it is the roses. Without Elizabeth's confidence I would not have embarked on a rose collection, but I couldn't be without them now.

What gardening tool do you use the most?

Elizabeth: Secateurs is the most used tool – there's always a lot of cutting back to do!

Sheila: I use steel Florist's scissors with orange handles that I eventually find when lost amongst the green. Marvellous, but watch your fingers – they are lethal!

Secret gardeners

What does gardening mean to you?

Elizabeth: The garden provides a restful and beautiful space for the residents of the Island Block, and it is also appreciated by those in the block opposite who can see it. The abundance of nature is incredible – if you build it, they will come!

Sheila: The garden gives such wonderful joy to us who work in it, and our neighbours who share it with us. The bird and insect life that comes to us is as astonishing as it is varied. It is endlessly diverting, challenging, fun, and ever-changing.

What's next for your garden space?

Elizabeth: What next? When Winter comes there will be much cutting back and clearing. We have recycled tulip bulbs which are now waning in vigour. It's probably time to get new ones! We would also like to renew the irrigation system, and this time extend it to the pots (which we currently have to manually water). It's so much more efficient in terms of water use, and labour saving too!

Sheila: What's next? Damson jam! We have a new raised bed this year and will have a good harvest from a tree so happy to be out of a pot. After that, nematodes to control the dreaded Vine weevil, followed by a good tidy up... again!



Soho Roof Garden, featuring the Hostas

If you would like to tell your gardening story, we would love to hear from you. Get in touch at florist [@stormflowerslondon.com](https://www.stormflowerslondon.com)

With thanks to Elizabeth and Sheila for their words and time. You can follow their garden progress on Instagram [@sohoroofgarden](https://www.instagram.com/sohoroofgarden)

Nikitah Patel

About Storm Flowers Garden

Storm Flowers Garden is an independent, sustainable online gardening store based out of the Clocktower of St Anne's Church in Soho.

Our product range is made up of both our own designs, and beautiful tools and accessories made by small producers and crafts people that we have found around the UK and commissioned to produce for us. Our founder, Joao, is Brazilian, so we also stock hammocks and handmade sandals sourced from Brazil.

So far, we have developed a collection of hand-fired Mini Plant Pots (Wimbledon), florist and creatives' Makers Aprons and Christmas Tree Skirts (Glasgow), Christmas Tree Ornaments (Devon), and a new beauty line of moisturising Soap Bars to nourish hardworking hands (East Sussex).

www.stormflowersgarden.com

MARQUEE

THE STORY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSIC VENUE

by Robert Sellers with Nick Pendleton

The Marquee was a famous and iconic music club in Soho, fondly remembered by the thousands of fans who attended gigs there over a thirty year period. Melody Maker called it, 'The most important venue in the history of pop music'. The story of the Marquee is the story of popular music in Britain. This new book from Paradise Road is the first to document the story of the Marquee club, told through the words of the musicians, management, staff and fans who were there to witness music history being made. As Lemmy from Motorhead opined: 'The reason I liked the Marquee was because it was scruffy and a hellhole, and your feet stuck to the floor, and that's exactly what a rock and roll club should be like.'

Written by Robert Sellers, with Nick Pendleton, son of the couple, who founded the club in 1958, this new book from Paradise Road evokes the hot, sweaty and exciting life and times of the club. The Marquee started life as a jazz club in the basement of the Academy Cinema at 165 Oxford Street, founded by Harold Pendleton, a veteran of the London jazz scene, assisted by his wife Barbara, moving to 90 Wardour Street (for many years afterwards Floridita Restaurant) in 1964.

Many cities have iconic music venues - CBGBs in New York City, for example - but the Marquee was probably the most famous and long lived, embracing every musical genre, as tastes changed, from jazz to blues to rock to punk to New Wave to Heavy Metal to Indie. The roster of musicians that played there is incredibly impressive. The Marquee moved through the trends of the times, starting with the jazz of Johnny Dankworth and Humphrey Lyttelton; embracing rhythm and blues (the original r'n'b, not the modern version!) with Alexis Korner, the Rolling Stones (who played their first ever gig there in 1962) and the Yardbirds; transitioning to rock with the Who (who played a 23-week residency that launched the band into the big time), Cream, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd.

In 1966, David Bowie had the Sunday afternoon slot for several months, billed as 'The Bowie Showboat'. It was after a gig at the Marquee, in La Chasse, that David met Mick Ronson, his future guitarist and collaborator on the early 70s albums that made his name. The book is loaded with wonderful stories of how various major rock names got together with other musicians to form bands, either at the Marquee or the members-only drinking club, La Chasse. Almost next door at 100 Wardour Street and no bigger than a front room, La Chasse could only hold

about 30 people, but it became the unofficial green room to the Marquee.

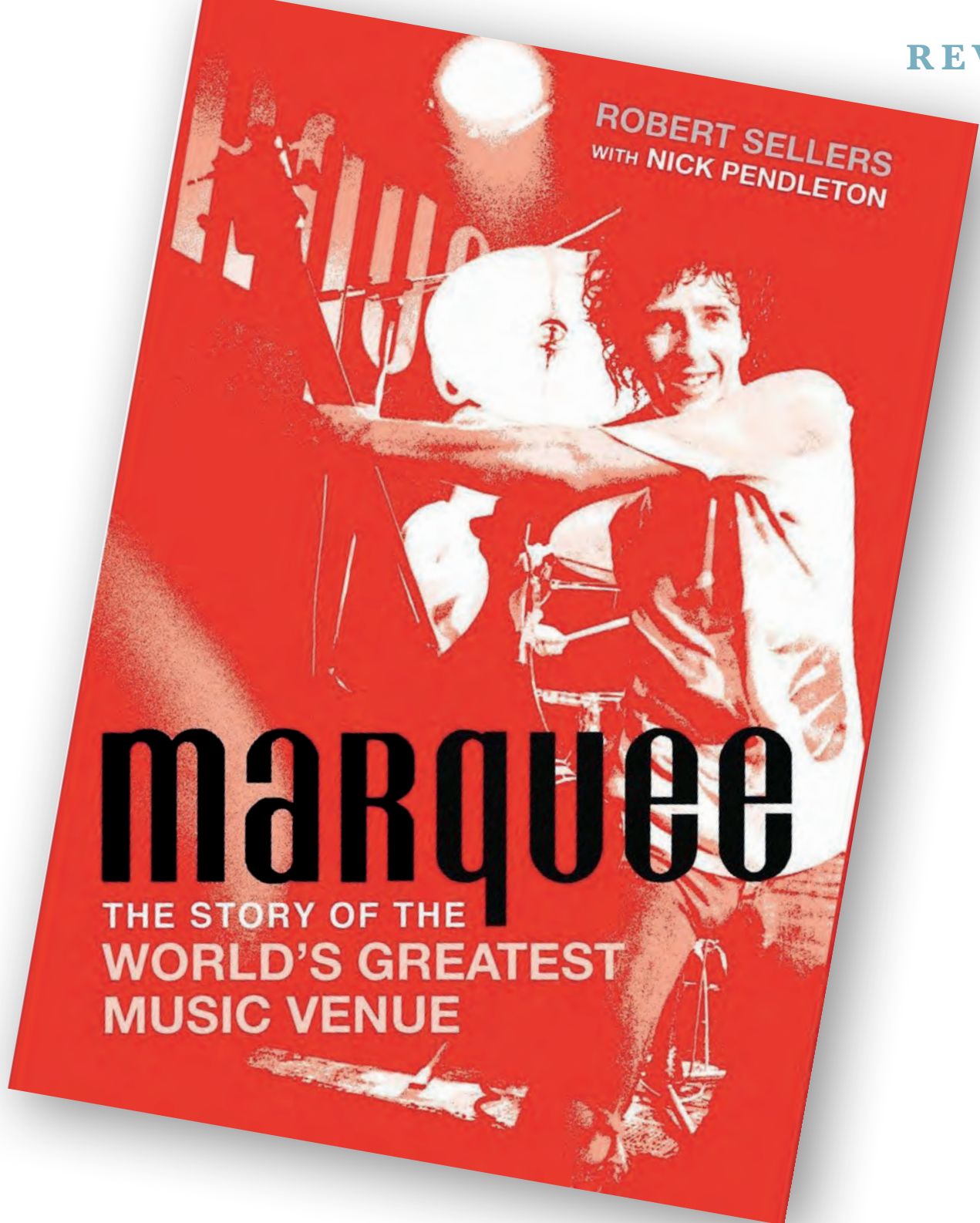
The club became a spiritual home to progressive rock, nurturing Jethro Tull, Yes and Genesis, before giving the stage to many of the bands that trashed them, including the Sex Pistols, the Stranglers, the Damned, Sham 69 and Generation X. The Marquee was home to New Wavers Adam and the Ants, the Jam, Ultravox, the Police, and to the New Wave of Heavy Metal, including Iron Maiden, Def Leppard and Girlschool. A worldwide reputation made it the must-play club for International artists including AC/DC, Bryan Adams, Guns'n'Roses, Metallica and REM.

This book chronicles this colourful history in almost forensic detail over 320 pages - lots of first hand accounts from the musicians that played there and information about the music business and the hundreds of bands that graced the Marquee stage. A Marquee timeline covering the period from the original Marquee on Oxford Street in 1958 to the closing of 90 Wardour Street in 1988 runs to 13 pages, lovingly documenting the highlights and frequent performers over a span of 30 years. Scattered throughout the text are the iconic Marquee printed text only ads, that barely changed over 30 years, listing the performers in a bold sans serif typeface. A criticism might be that the book could do with a few more photographs of the club and bands performing there, but more of that below.

There is also an appendix that lists around 80 performers and bands who made over 20 appearances at Wardour Street. It is topped by the wonderful Long John Baldry with 200, easily beating the runner up, Manfred Mann with 99. Also rans include John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with 47, closely followed by The Yardbirds with 24. It's fascinating to read of bands now largely forgotten including: Dumpy's Rusty Nuts, The Enid, Fumble and House of Lords; and great bands that you rarely hear played now: Jimmy James and the Vagabonds, Spirit of John Morgan, Medicine Head.

In addition to the club, the Marquee had its own recording studios, used by the Beatles, Elton John and Monty Python. The Marquee's annual open-air festival, first held in 1961, settled in Reading in 1971, where it remains the world's longest running festival.

In 1988, the favourable lease on 90 Wardour Street ran out, and founder Harold Pendleton, now 63, passed on the goodwill and the iconic Marquee name to Billy Gaff, who opened a larger, more luxurious Marquee venue with



a comfortable 800 capacity at 105 Charing Cross Road. Many regulars transferred to the new venue, including Chelsea, Girlschool and Johnny Thunders. Kiss played the opening night followed by many memorable bands including Lenny Kravitz, P J Harvey, Beastie Boys and the Cranberries, but for those who knew the old place, Charing Cross was lacking.

'It never had the same vibe', Fish, singer with Marillion opined. 'It lost all the intimacy and the magic. It just became a musical franchise, like a musical McDonald's.' Closing in 1995, and now home to the Montagu Pyke pub, there were several short lived later incarnations of

the club. It was briefly in Islington at what is now the O2 Academy. Backed by Dave Stewart, Mandy and Mark Fuller, owners of The Embassy Club were also involved, and performers included Jimmy Cliff and Prince.

The Marquee was astutely summed up by guitarist, Bernie Tormé as 'A big venue in a small club'. Did you go there, back in the day? The publishers are planning a pictorial history of the Marquee. If you have any interesting items relating to this iconic Soho venue, or photos or anecdotes, please contact info@paradiseroad.co.uk

Clive Jennings

HOW TO THINK LIKE A PHILOSOPHER:

SCHOLARS, DREAMERS AND SAGES WHO CAN TEACH US HOW TO LIVE

A book by Peter Cave

Interview and photo by Richard Piercy

‘Most people would rather die than think – and that is what they do!’ is a comment attributed to the great 20th century philosopher Bertrand Russell. ‘The unexamined life is not worth living’ was an observation of the Greek philosopher Socrates over two thousand years earlier. And what you may ask is the link between these two individuals and their musings? The answer is simply they are both included in Soho resident and philosopher Peter Cave’s latest book ‘How To Think Like A Philosopher’. Peter recently invited me to join him at The Athenaeum Club to find out more about the book and his own journey in the world of philosophy.

The book’s title was proposed by publisher Bloomsbury and the book discusses the thoughts of thirty distinct philosophers, each assigned an individual chapter, with the purpose of introducing the different styles of thought and living. Whilst the names of some included are well known in this context, the book also includes people such as Samuel Beckett, Iris Murdoch and Lewis Carroll; individuals not usually thought of as philosophers in the general sense. Peter infuses the text with his natural warmth and wit making for a leisurely read, whilst at the same time introducing some deep thinking about what it is to be human.

Originally from a humble working-class background in Northampton, Peter’s parents had hoped that his ability in mathematics would result in him becoming an accountant. However, their hopes were not to be realised. As a teenager Peter would listen to the BBC Third Programme, the predecessor of Radio 3, which introduced him to Jean-Paul Sartre, Beckett and Russell. Around this time, a local librarian recommended Sartre’s novel *Nausea*, drawing Peter into the world of existentialist angst – never grown out. He subsequently read philosophy at University College London in the early 1970’s, which coincidentally provided him with an introduction to Soho, although it was not until much later that he set up home in the area. Upon graduation he moved on to King’s College, Cambridge, to do what he very modestly describes as some unremarkable philosophy. I asked Peter what makes for a remarkable philosopher? ‘Experience has taught me that you don’t really need to know anything; you just need to be able to argue and think through – ideally with a glass of wine’ was his advice.

During our discussion Peter raises the issue of freedom of speech of which he is a staunch supporter, firmly believing all points of view should be up for debate to be either accepted

or rejected, and certainly not hidden away. As Russell once said, ‘In all affairs it’s a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.’ Or as Peter suggests, floating an idea starting with the words ‘I wonder’ would serve a similar purpose. Encouragement of reasoning, reflection and humility are some of the central themes of the book and the quote at the beginning of this article resonates strongly with Peter. Evaluation with a sense of humanity is another recommendation. As Peter explains ‘Rather than endless consumerism, more experiences, instant gratification – surely it’s more important to examine your life. Nietzsche deals with the concept of the eternal recurrence – how would you feel if you were to live your life over and over again for eternity in exactly the same way? – how well could you be disposed to your life for it to be lived again like this?’ The absurdity of life and expectations of entitlement also are discussed; as Peter wryly puts it, ‘The whole galaxy condensed into one book!’

Having taken up too much of Peter’s time I ask him for a philosophical thought about Soho before I leave. Putting to one side his constant battles against unnecessary alarms sounding off, he replies, ‘With Soho, maybe there is the idea of hope going forward’. He then offered two quotes, the first by Samuel Beckett ‘Do you believe in a life to come? – All my life has been a life to come’ and the second by John Cleese ‘It’s not the despair. I can take the despair. It’s the hope I can’t stand’. Read into that what you will.

‘How To Think Like A Philosopher: Scholars, Dreamers and Sages Who Can Teach Us How To Live’ is published by Bloomsbury on 13 April 2023.

Someone of Soho, is an ongoing portrait project by photographer Richard Piercy. It’s about the people who live, work and play in Soho and help define the soul and character of the neighbourhood. If you, or anyone you know connected to Soho, would like to take part in the project please get in touch. Contact details along with examples of Richard’s work are available on his website richardpiercyphotographer.co.uk



THEATRES, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

FROM LONDON LIVING LARGE

OKLAHOMA! ★★★★★

Wyndham's Theatre | Until September 2, 2023
 Mon - Sat: 7:30 pm, Wed & Sat: 2 pm



If you've never seen *Oklahoma!* before, you are in for a very special experience. If you know previous productions, put your preconceptions aside. This is a unique look at Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic that brings out the unexplored depth of the work. Without changing the original script, this *Oklahoma!* exposes all the complexity and darkness that underlies the two love triangles that form the narrative. The relationship of Curly, Laurey and Jud juxtaposes the convention of flirtation and sexual repression with the terror of sexual obsession, while the relationship of Will, Ado Annie and Ali Hakim comically presents the opposition of sexual promiscuity and the requirement for marriage. In the end, the outsiders, Jud and Ali Hakim, are both punished for their threat to social norms, and the two couples are able to reconcile their individual desires with the demands of society. However, while the cost of that compromise is comic in one case, it is quite horrific in the other. Director, Daniel Fish, has created a challenging and exciting musical for the 21st century and Daniel Kluger's orchestrations are brilliantly inventive. As Curly, Arthur Darvill displays an impressive vocal range, and he does a splendid job interpreting old chestnuts like "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'." Darvill is well matched by Anoushka Lucas whose a cappella "Out of My Dream" is a definite highlight, while Patrick Vaill is a wonderfully ominous Jud. Georgina Onuorah as Ado Annie and James Patrick Davis as Will show real chemistry and their comic turns are a treat. All the old jokes still draw a laugh. One quibble might be the lighting of the show which sometimes seems rather gimmicky, if not intrusive. Nevertheless, this reimagining of the acknowledged musical masterpiece is intelligent and rewarding theatre. Here's a revival that honours the original and finds fresh meaning in it.

Reviewed by J.C.
 Photo by Marc Brenner.

THE MOTIVE AND THE CUE

National Theatre: Apr 20 - Jul 15, 2023
 Collaboration, conflict and creativity! A peek behind the curtain when Richard Burton and John Gielgud stage an experimental Hamlet.

BEYOND THE STREETS ★★★★★

Saatchi Gallery | Feb 17 - May 9, 2023
 Mon - Sun: 10 am - 6 pm



From the streets to the gallery! This exhibition brings together an astonishing variety of art and artifacts that seeks to capture the spirit of underground culture. There is a nod to the history of graffiti art, including the famous WWII image "Kilroy Was Here," but the emphasis is on the post 1960s, examining the development of punk rock and hip-hop scenes. The exhibition is comprised of thirteen galleries spread over three floors. It begins with an installation that recreates a record store, featuring the vinyl that inspired the punk generation. In other rooms, it chronicles the development of the shops and clubs that nurtured that world in London. However, it also goes on to highlight the emergence of the same anti-authority, underground spirit in the USA, France and other parts of Europe. Indeed, if there is an issue with this show, it might be that it tries to cover too much and sometimes loses focus. Nevertheless, there is some wonderfully edgy and insightful work displayed. This is street art that captures both the rebellious and whimsical side of a questioning youth culture which is still alive and well. There are so many standout artists. We loved the work of Fred Brathwaite (Fab 5 Freddy), Chris Ellis (DAZE) and Stephen Powers (ESPO), but it almost seems wrong to single out any particular creators. Having said that, here's a final shout-out and piece of advice. Don't miss the work of the Danish artist, HuskMitNavn, and give yourself lots of time to savour this exhibition. With *Beyond The Streets*, curator, Roger Gastman, and the Saatchi Gallery have mounted a terrific show that is a dazzling display of talent and a counter-culture celebration.

Reviewed by J.C.
 Image: Kenny Scharf, *Closet #42 Bestest Ever*. Photo by Charles White of JW Pictures, 2022.

SOULS GROWN DEEP LIKE THE RIVERS

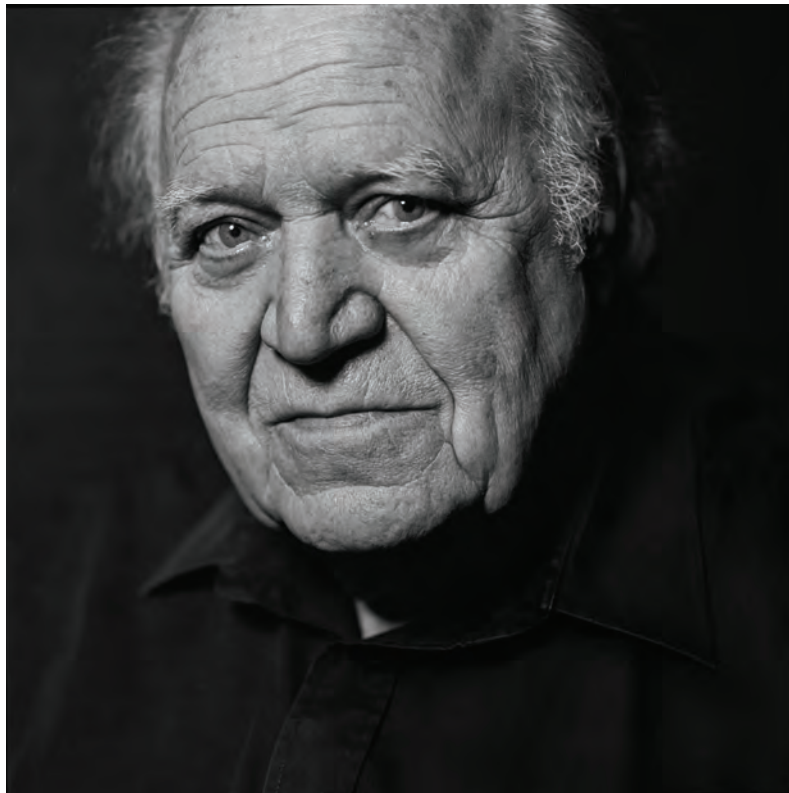
Royal Academy of Arts: Mar 17 - Jun 18, 2023
 Seventy masterpieces by Black artists from the American South chronicle a history of oppression and celebrate an under-recognised tradition.

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

LESLIE HARDCASTLE OBE

1926 - 2023

RIP Leslie Hardcastle OBE aged 96. He was a founder member and Honorary President of The Soho Society, founder of The Soho Housing Association, and Administrator of Programming for The BFI's London Film Festival for its first 23 years, following on from his coming-up with the basic concept of that said festival, as well as the premise for a National Film Theatre on London's Southbank, which opened as NFT 1 in 1957, alongside the later opening NFT 2 and the Thames-side restaurant. This all traced back to The Festival of Britain in the summer of 1951 on The Southbank, where Leslie administered the NFT's template as controller of The Telecinema, showing examples of international cinema, which he curated from across the globe, and Europe in particular. Groundbreaking in 1951.



In the 1980's, he was the deviser-founder-curator of The Museum of the Moving Image aka MOMI, working alongside The National Film Archive's David Francis. MOMI ran from 1988 till 1999 within what is now The BFI Southbank complex, which itself had rebranded its name from The BFI's The National Film Theatres in 2007. BAFTA gave Leslie a BAFTA special achievement award for his creation of MOMI. He had been the Controller of Programming at The BFI's NFT complex since its inception, until the mid 1980's, later becoming Honorary Chairman of The BFI through to his retirement in the mid 1990s. He also had a monthly radio show on Soho Radio up until last year.

Leslie passed on to the big film studio in the sky at his Soho home this morning. His family flat dates back to Queen Anne's time, in a building which he himself had saved along with many buildings in what is the oldest part of London's Soho. A Cordon Bleu Chef, he and his sons had worked at The Savoy. His legendary BFI lunches saw the likes of Bette Davis, Burt Lancaster and Federico Fellini, among numerous directors and stars, being entertained as his guests in his stylish flat with vermilion red walls in the dining room-cum-kitchen.

It was great to be in his company. A man who was always warm hearted, humble, cultured, and kind. He deserves a posthumous BAFTA Lifetime Achievement Award surely? It was a huge pleasure to make a radio

show with him, and to film some lengthy interviews with him recently too. Leslie Hardcastle will be greatly missed. My thoughts go out to his family and friends. Soho has lost its legendary forefather. May he rest in peace.

Henry Scott-Irvine

Tuesday March 14th 2023

Photo: Richard Piercy

LIZ CALLINGHAM 1939-2023

Liz Callingham was born on the 20 April 1939 in Bromley. Liz went to Bromley Grammar School (where she took an active part in the production of the school plays), and subsequently



on to Teacher Training College. Her early teaching years included a three year spell in Bermuda and was followed by becoming a Head of Department at Dick Shepherd School for girls - a state of the art comprehensive school in Brixton - and while there, wrote an iconoclastic 'text book' titled 'Your Style', unusually aimed at both boys and girls. After the

birth of our daughter, she took advantage of various night schools, both in being taught and in teaching. She had a wonderful period of many years in a painting class (in which she was a complete beginner) followed by a developing interest in writing poetry which increasingly became a love of her life. She worked as a supply teacher for many years (in conditions I thought were awful - but which she thought was fun!) - and simultaneously became an Oxford Examination Board Inspector which involved addressing the extraordinary things that

were going on in schools at that time. In this latter role she set the Oxford Ordinary Level papers for Home Economics and used, as source-material, the many calamities that had happened in our home!

All these experiences prepared her to speak out against the various 'silliness's' that regularly take place in Soho. Her frankness and passion brought her respect, helped in that she respected the people she was complaining to. Her quest, to make Soho a better place, was deeply felt and we are better off for her constant vigilance and intervention.

Liz also got quite worked up about proposals to cut down trees in Golden Square, an occasion when she was particularly forceful and adding that the then 'rose garden' part of the square occupied too much space and looked horrible for most of the year: in this case she helped to both avert a disaster and additionally got an improvement.

She also had managed to develop a mutually respectful relationships with our neighbours, Shaftesbury, being asked on a regular basis to attend meetings about their licence applications and reducing the chance of them becoming contentious (not that many initially were). In many cases this is what she did so well - preventing things ever becoming an issue. She also regularly attended the Soho Ward Panel, making worthwhile and relevant contributions.

Liz, we miss you.

MICHAEL TOOGOOD 1936-2023

Between 1982 and 2001, Michael Toogood played a significant part in the Soho community as far as many of his neighbours were concerned. Looking as if he had come across from Mayfair, smartly dressed, usually in jacket and tie, he was much more at home with the 'ordinary' residents of Soho, if there is such a thing as an ordinary resident of Soho. Many were real characters! He rubbed shoulders with council caretakers (Mac, Taffy, Ian), struggling immigrants, people with a past and victims of the 'care in the community' policy, as well as the great and good, while fitting carpets, moving furniture, cleaning windows, collecting prescriptions and shopping, chasing housing officers or social services, liaising with Dr Peltz, assisting neighbourhood police officers. And so on.

News of Michael's death took my mind back to a very different time. In the early 1980s, Soho was still the notorious red light district with a very visible sex industry. There was money around in advertising and related media businesses, but Soho's historic craft industries were on the way out, the residential population was ageing, the primary school had low numbers of local children, and the quality of much housing was pretty poor. With wife Pam and two of his four children, Michael moved into the basement of City of Westminster Dwellings, Marshall Street. The flat had no central heating and no bathroom. Other tenement blocks and many flats above small businesses had shared toilets too. Those were the days.

It was a brave move - few others would have considered it at the time - which sprang from Michael's Christian faith. He had left a promising career in graphic design to become a baptist minister in Bexleyheath, followed by New Cross and Thamesmead. He came to Soho to serve God ... and his neighbours. The goal was to establish an evangelical

church and services began in the Charles Norton Centre run by Age Concern. Regular leaflets with the Christian message were delivered to pretty much every local home and eventually a small church was established. (It's even smaller now, but continues as Hope Community Church, meeting on Sundays in Covent Garden.) But Michael practised what he preached, literally, and the message was lived out in the practical work described above.



Michael was well known to several generations of pupils and parents at Soho Parish School, bringing his art and craft skills to the Play Centre and setting up separate youth clubs for boys and girls. Having moved into St James Residences he was also involved with Soho Housing, chairing the residents group there. On his retirement he moved with Pam nearer to family and their roots in Kent, and after Pam died his last years were spent with one of his sons in Charlwood, Surrey

Michael left his mark in Soho. Speaking personally, my own commitment to the idea of community was shaped in large part by his example. Many others benefited from his contribution to their lives. While his evangelical Christian message did not prove very welcome in Soho, Michael himself received a warm welcome in a good number of local homes. It is a mark of his faith that he would have preferred it the other way round.

Andrew Murray

FETE-TASTIC

SUNDAY 16TH JULY 2023

Soho Diary Date! Marathon? Eurovision? Coronation? Much much more exciting, it's the Soho Fete!

Back on the 16th July, St Annes Gardens, Wardour Street 12-6pm, the Soho Fete is a traditional Village Fete, in central London complete with Morris Dancing, Tombola, Splat the Rat and Raffle plus a Drag Queen Finale. Not forgetting the spectacle of 50 running waiters with Champagne, tray and glass, taking to Soho's streets mid-afternoon, from outside the French House, for the World famous Waiters Race.

Very much a community event, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary year of the Soho Society which was formed by the late great Leslie Hardcastle, in Kettner's restaurant in December 1972, so we will be channelling Seventies Soho across our line-up.

We are on the hunt for racing waiters, stalwart stall holders, speedy

snails and lots and lots of volunteers please. Marvel at 6 hours of live entertainment, the Soho Dog Show, slurp a pint pulled at the French House Bar, or a cuppa tea at St Anne's More Tea Vicar stall. Do enter the Raffle with so many Soho prizes, roll up for Splat the Rat, get involved in the Human Fruit Machine and take a punt on the racing snails, the Soho Fete is a perfect family day out and it's free to attend!

Organised by the Soho Society and friends, see you on the 16th July for love, peace and snail racing at The Soho Fete.

Entry Free 12-6pm St Anne's Gardens, Wardour Street, Soho

To enter The Waiters Race, Dog Show, Volunteer or hire a stall please visit www.thesohosociety.org.uk

Lucy Haine



REFLECTION FROM THE CURATE OF ST ANNE'S



In the week I write, retired actor and Soho personality, Derek Hunt died peacefully at the age of 90. Residents of Soho may well remember seeing an elderly man on a mobility scooter reading his paper outside Caffè Nero or chatting with the market traders of Berwick Street. In the short time I've been at St Anne's I don't recall him attending a service more than once, yet he would usually appear as the service was ending and join us for coffee and biscuits. He was also a stalwart of our Thursday Soho Seniors lunch meeting at St Anne's.

For Derek, St Anne's was his church, even if he was seldom there on Sundays at 11 o'clock. Certainly I would encourage everyone to be here on Sundays at 11 o'clock, but even if you aren't, then St Anne's is still your church. This has been my biggest impression of ministering in Soho these last three years. Our Community Hall and Allen Room meetings bring numerous people into the church precincts. Many visitors will call into the chapel, make a prayer request in the intercessions book, maybe light a candle and sit awhile in peace.

Then there are the community events. Last year we had the tea party celebrating Her late Majesty the Queen's Platinum jubilee, to be followed later that year with a live screening of her funeral. There have been hustings and Soho Society-run events, including the Soho Village Fete.

I have had the additional pleasure of being fully involved with the life of Soho Parish Primary School and being chaplain to the House of St Barnabas. Both of these are places of fruitful connection and opportunities to serve a wide range of Soho people.

As I reflect on the deep running partnership of church and the wider community in Soho I see the ancient idea of 'the parish' alive and well. In a city where there is often little connection between neighbours, the parish of Soho is a place where we can buck this trend.

I am grateful to my mentor and Rector, Fr Simon, and the Soho Society and many others for enabling me to take my role in nurturing this unique community.

There will soon be another funeral at St Anne's for a dear parishioner of Soho, and also a wedding, a christening and an AA meeting, a choir practice, a grief café, a Tuesday tea and a party: another day in the parish of Soho.

Paul Gurnham



St. Anne's Church, Soho

HOLY WEEK & EASTER



PALM SUNDAY 2nd April
11am Eucharist with blessing of the palms
and dramatic reading of the passion



MON, TUE, WEDNESDAY
1:05pm Holy Communion



MAUNDY THURSDAY 6th April
6:30pm Eucharist of the Last Supper



GOOD FRIDAY 7th April
12 noon An Hour at the Cross
The Liturgy of Good Friday with
readings, address, hymns, veneration
and Communion

EASTER DAY 9th April
11am Festal Eucharist of the Resurrection
followed by prosecco and Easter eggs

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10AM - 5PM
First Saturday of the month

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6 MAY
3 JUNE
1 JULY**

2023