



NO. 185
THE CLARION CALL OF
THE SOHO SOCIETY

SOHO clarion

summer
2023

The Soho Society's **Free** and yet
Priceless Magazine

FREE





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

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Join the Soho Society today

WHY?

1. Get involved in the Soho community
2. Support the Society's work reviewing planning, licensing and lobbying on local issues
3. Invites to member-only events
4. The Soho Clarion delivered to your door

Membership Prices:

Individual

£25 per annum/Lifetime £250

Business per annum

Businesses fewer than 30 employees £50

Businesses 30 employees and above £200

There are three easy ways to join The Soho Society:

1. Scan the Code

2. Via Our Website where you can pay by card
or set up a direct debit

www.thesohosociety.org.uk

3. Payment via your bank

The Soho Society - Barclays Bank

Account No: 13609987

Sort code: 20-10-53

(Use surname and postcode as reference)



Soho Clarion Summer 2023

- 2 Editorial**
From Soho Society Chair Tim Lord
- 4 NEWS**
Our community updates including licensing, planning, housing, ward panel and other news
- 16 Nickie Aiken**
Member of Parliament
- 17 Patrick Lilley**
Councillor
- 18 FEATURES**
Going for a Hat Trick
Lucy Haine
- 20 Beautiful Shops**
Lucy Haine
- 22 Western Australia**
Margaret Bloomer
- 24 Secret Roof Gardens**
Nikitah Patel
- 26 INTERVIEW**
Eb-On-Knee
Richard Piercy
- 28 REVIEWS**
Love Leda
Clive Jennings
- 29 Strat!**
David Gleeson
- 30 Theatres, Museums and Galleries**
London Living Large
- 31 OBITUARIES**
Peter Brooke
Leslie Hardcastle OBE
- 34 RECIPE**
Savoury Quiche
Susan Fleming
- 35 DIARY**
Pride in London
Jane Doyle
- 36 From St Anne's**
Revd Simon Buckley

Cover image: Richard Piercy
The Dean Street Townhouse waiter Endri Bombai aims for his third win in this year's Soho Village Fete Waiters Race.

THE SOHO SOCIETY

St Anne's Tower, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF | Tel no: 0300 302 1301
admin@thesohosociety.org.uk • Twitter: @sohosocietyw1
Facebook: The Soho Society • www.thesohosociety.org.uk
Advertising - clarion@thesohosociety.org.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Tim Lord • Jane Doyle • Lucy Haine • Jason Fisher-Jones • Andrew Murray
Nickie Aiken • Patrick Lilley • Wendy Hardcastle • David Gleeson • David Bieda
Louise Ritchie • Margaret Bloomer • Clive Jennings • Richard Piercy • Jim Cooke • Susan Fleming

EDITOR Jane Doyle

FROM THE TOWER



It's Friday afternoon and Soho is buzzing in the heat in anticipation of a 30 degree heat wave. The much loved fund raiser for the Soho Parish Primary School, the Soho Food Feast will start at mid-day tomorrow.

I am glad to report that Soho appears very much recovered from pandemic woes.

We are expecting a number of significant new business openings in the next few months. A new bakery, Oree Boulangerie, in Old Compton Street in what was the old Ryness shop this summer, Manzi's Fish Restaurant in Bateman Buildings following a £10 million pound renovation with capacity for 280 guests at the end of June, the Broadwick Hotel on the corner of Broadwick and Berwick Streets with 57 rooms, a £95 million pound renovation, in October; and finally, Underbelly, is taking a lease of the Boulevard Theatre in Walkers Court and will offer theatre shows and burlesque.



62 Broadwick Street - the former Charles Norton Community Centre

Underbelly produced *Pride* from 2014 to 2017 and are responsible for the very successful *Cabaret* at the Kit Kat Club at the Playhouse Theatre. We wish all these new businesses good luck.

In June we welcomed the council planning committee's refusal of an application to turn 3 Bateman Street from a cafe into yet another bar for vertical drinking. Four councillors agreed with

local residents and the Soho Society that a bar on the intersection of Greek and Bateman Streets conflicted with planning policies in the Westminster City Plan and the Soho Neighbourhood Plan that protect residential amenity and diversity of offerings at night. There are already multiple bars in Greek Street. We are grateful for the support from our ward councillors on this.

Although not widely trailed by the council, we understand that there is to be a Soho monitoring study over the next 12 months with air quality, pedestrian and traffic flows and noise to be electronically monitored at some 40 points in Soho. The data will be used to inform a number of decisions about Soho going forward - including the renewal of the Council's cumulative impact assessment on the impact of alcohol licensing in the area. We await the data with interest. The council has committed to sharing the data with the public in order to increase the transparency of its decision making.

As Soho has re-awakened post pandemic, so has the level of crime. 52,388 recorded offences in a year (50% up) in the West End is a concern. Theft is the main offence but it also includes 250 assaults serious enough to cause grievous bodily harm all in one year in the West End. Despite the very considerable efforts of our local police it does not seem that the number of officers is ever going to

be sufficient to deal with the organised crime that is now attracted to Soho by the large number of intoxicated customers in the area at night - who are vulnerable to both theft and sexual assault. The Society's view is that this problem requires engagement by our leaders - the council (alcohol licensing is part of the issue and that is a council function), the mayor (responsible for the police) and the metropolitan police at a senior level. Continuing to talk about growth of the night time economy as an "opportunity" while crime continues to grow at this level is not a sensible option.

The issue of public toilets continues to be discussed. There has been some progress. The council has taken the provision of public toilets back in house and has committed to spending some serious cash on the issue. The Great Marlborough Street toilets will be renovated and re-opened at some point though no date has been given. The single ground level unit on Broadwick Street has finally re-opened and can now be operated with a card or a phone payment. On the flip side, Broadwick Street underground facility remains closed and we understand the council plans to sell it for some other (non-toilet) use so that this facility will be permanently lost. Ugly temporary toilets appear every weekend at a significant cost to the council. They are used extensively and reduce public urination but are not an attractive solution for the Soho Conservation Area. Plan for



Soho has submitted an application for CIL funding for a proper piece of analysis on what Soho really needs in the medium to long term, what designs might work and where, how to deal with ASB effectively and what the cost of both installation and ongoing maintenance would be. That work will provide a sound basis going forward for a new and reinvigorated plan for this the most basic of public need.

We have asked the council to consider returning 62 Broadwick Street to community use, as an alcohol free community cafe. Age UK Westminster, the Soho Society, the LGBTQ forum, the West End Community Trust, Plan for Soho and the Soho Museum are all part of the consortium. The existing use as an estate office would continue as the space is large and would retain a private meeting room. A refurbishment could in part be funded from CIL monies to bring it back to life. The original community centre operated as the Charles Norton Centre from 1968 to 2000 when it was closed by the previous administration at Westminster Council.

The Soho Village Fete is on Sunday 16 July from midday in the St Anne's Church Gardens and entry is free. Do come and see the Soho community celebrating its vitality and very deep care for this very special place.

PLANNING



We're watching...

Around up of activity from the last few months: let's begin with a success story. An application to Westminster Council by bar chain Simmons to add 3 Bateman Street to their premises at 2 Bateman Street as a drinking establishment has been turned down. Council officers recommended approval but, as reported in the local press, representations by artist Mark Wallinger, the Soho Society and Cllr Jessica Toale (on behalf of our three ward councillors, who were all present at the meeting) led the Planning Committee to refuse permission.

This is a clear sign that any new alcohol-driven establishment is inappropriate within Soho. The decision shows a proper understanding of the effect that the cumulative impact of existing premises has on residents, which has somehow evaded the council until this point. We hope this stance will be applied consistently from now on by officers and councillors.

Another recent decision gave permission for a new Muslim Prayer and Cultural Centre in the Trocadero. Although the proposal had been revised from an earlier submission, we felt numbers proposed were still too high but the council had a different view. However, our request for a condition to ensure equality of access for community groups, which appeared to be offered within the application itself, was agreed by the council.

We have objected to a large digital advertising screen on the London Pavilion. Apparently, Piccadilly Circus would gain 'impressive enhancement' and a stronger sense of place, and there would also be an 'immeasurable economic effect'. We disagreed.

We also objected to a change of use of part of 60-62 Broadwick Street. The premises concerned have a long

history of community use, including Age Concern's Charles Norton Centre, a Westminster Children's Society day nursery and the Soho Family Centre, as well as in more recent years the Soho and Covent Garden Estate Office. We argued that there is a clear and continuing need for community meeting space within Soho, which the previous administration had promised to address but failed to provide. In our view, the whole premises had potential for much more effective community use. Since then, Westminster Council have announced that a new

Housing Service Centre will be reestablished there. This is good news! But it would make perfect sense for the council now to drop the change of use and provide a community meeting room instead.

Soho Estates have applied for permission to develop at 75 Dean Street, the old De Lane Lea building. This is an interesting application, with a fair degree of sustainability and the very unusual ambition of incorporating features from the original Georgian townhouse, including panelling and parts of the staircase, to their original location. This is quite a story, which should probably

be told at more length elsewhere. We have no objection to the building becoming modernised offices, but we are concerned about the possible impact of a change of use to a private members club, and have objected to that aspect of the application.

We have also objected to a retrospective application for a roof terrace at 57 Poland Street to include speakers and projector. This is not a quiet amenity for office staff, which would be perfectly acceptable, but has already caused some nuisance to residential neighbours.

Andrew Murray



SOHO HOUSING

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CENTRAL LONDON

This year we're celebrating 50 years of The Soho Housing Association.

We came into being in 1973, a grassroots movement bringing together the people of Soho, born out of a desire to improve local housing conditions, defend homes at risk of destruction through redevelopment, and protect those working in Soho from being priced out of living in the city.

The ambition that moved our founders to take action continues to motivate us today. Then, as now, it sees us creating homes that local residents can afford, safeguarding some of London's most vibrant and diverse communities. It's these communities that give Soho, Covent Garden, Bloomsbury, Farringdon, Queens Park and Victoria the character that has always made them such beloved parts of our city.

From small beginnings, with the purchase of our very first properties, a residential terrace in Great Pulteney Street, we now own and manage nearly 800 homes and 37 commercial properties.

Our 50th anniversary is a big date for us. We want to celebrate it, but more importantly we want to treat it as a springboard to start a conversation about the role affordable housing plays in creating sustainable, exciting city centres. To this end, we are hosting a debate in St Annes Community Hall on 22 June for team members, residents, partners, and the wider local community to share their vision for the next 50 years. We'll use the day to reflect on where we've come from and the fact that the very same factors that prompted the foundation of Soho Housing still persist today. We'll also look to the future and gather ideas for the best ways in which we can successfully serve our community in the years to come.

The centrepiece of our celebrations is our Fifty for Fifty initiative to thank our residents who make up the vibrant and diverse fabric that is central London today. We are looking to partner with businesses that would be happy to donate items for our residents to enjoy. We will of course recognise all support on our new website and our social channels, and are excited to share that we have already

received pledges from some great local organisations including The Soho Theatre, The Courtauld Art Institute, L'Escargot and our contractors refurbishing Sandringham Flats, Durkan.

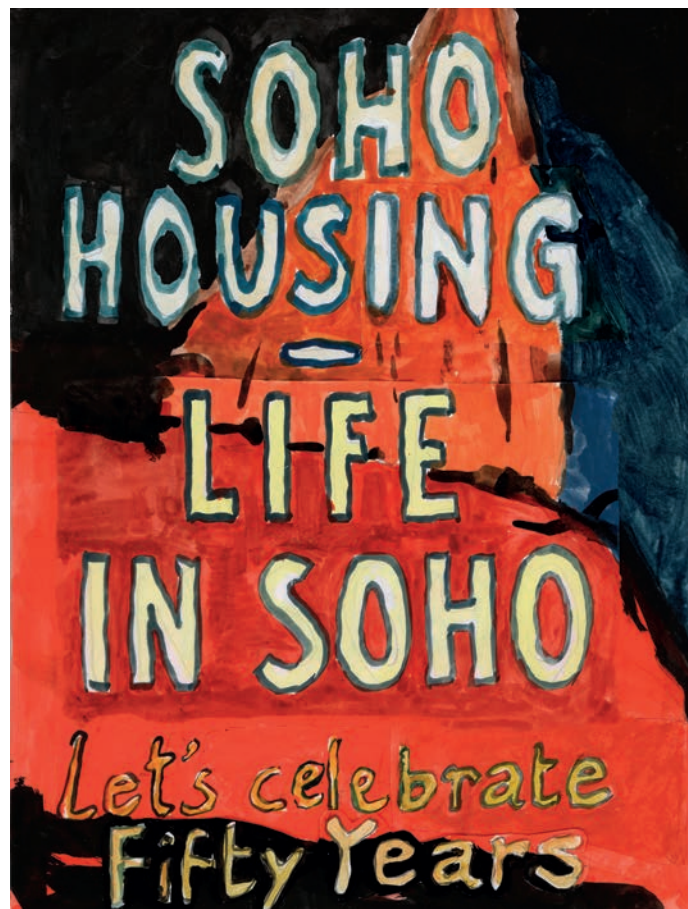
We have also commissioned a new series of posters by London based multi-disciplinary artist, DJ Roberts, to mark our anniversary. The eight posters, in mediums including water colour, pencil and photography, depict life in Soho, from views of St Anne's Church, to collages capturing 'The Spirit of Soho'.

We hope that you join us in celebrating our 50th birthday. Providing affordable living in city centres

plays an essential role in sustaining the exciting and diverse communities that have made London a city beloved around the globe.

We look forward to continuing with that mission over the next fifty years!

Barbara Brownlee





Soho Housing has moved to

18 Hanway Street
London
W1T 1UF

Affordable homes in the heart of the city
www.sohoha.org.uk

St. Moritz

SWISS RESTAURANT

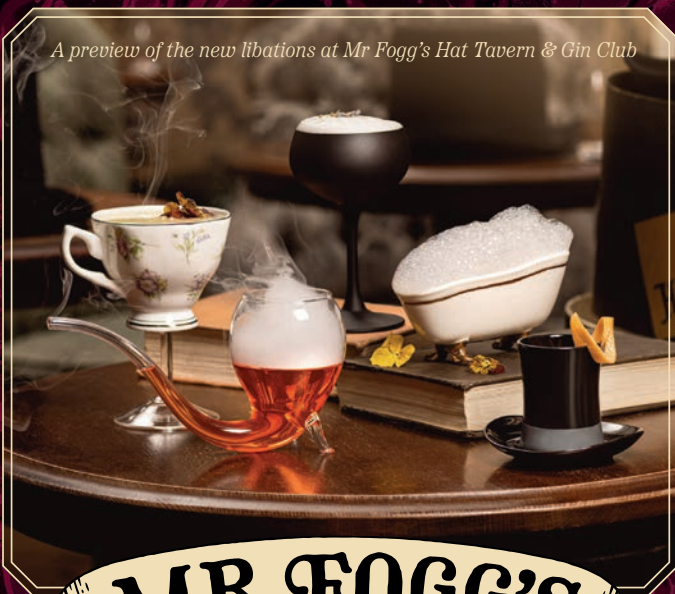
OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday
12 noon to 3pm
6pm - 10pm

Saturday & Sunday
6pm to 11.30pm

161 Wardour Street, London W1F 8WJ
Tel 020 7734 3324
www.stmoritz-restaurant.co.uk

A preview of the new libations at Mr Fogg's Hat Tavern & Gin Club



MR FOGG'S

**COCKTAILS
FOR THE
ADVENTUROUS**

Mr Fogg & Sons
50 Dean Street, W1D 5BQ

Mr Fogg's Hat Tavern & Gin Club
22 Great Chapel Street, W1F 8FR

&

SEVEN OTHER UNIQUE LOCATIONS ACROSS LONDON

WWW.MR-FOGGS.COM

GERRY'S
WINES & SPIRITS

International Wines and Spirits

74 Old Compton Street
London W1D 4UW

Telephone
020 7734 2083
020 7734 4218

If it's drinkable it's here

LICENSING

In the first five months of this year the Licensing Committee has looked at 60 applications for new alcohol licences, or increases in licensing hours and submitted objections to 29 of these.

Objections are almost invariably on the grounds that the additional licensing hours and increases in capacity, whether new licences or extension of hours, would add to the number of individuals who would leave the premises for the overcrowded streets of Soho in a potentially inebriated state.

Soho is becoming swamped with licensed premises. There is a cumulative impact which is occasioned by the award of each and every new or extended licence. Licences are never, or very, very rarely, given up. Even if a business goes bust, it seems that a new business in the premises will invariably be awarded a licence. We joke – except it's not a joke – that even a building on a site that has been a hole in the ground for the past few years, but previously the space had a licence, will be granted a licence.

So the number of licences awarded just goes up and up and up and up. And the number of inebriated people on our streets goes up and up and up.

So also the crime on our streets goes up and up and up (with a totally inadequate number of police officers on our streets to deal with it as you will read elsewhere in the magazine).

And urinating on our streets goes up and up and up (exacerbated by the dire lack of public toilets).

And the corollary of the increased number of premises with a licence is that there are fewer available for other forms of retail. Also, landlords are able to charge vastly greater rents for premises with a licence, which pushes up the cost of rents for premises without a licence.

Applications for new or extended alcohol licences, if there are any objections, go to a panel of three councillors, two from the majority party and one from the minority party. Objections

may have been submitted by the Soho Society, individual residents, or businesses who believe that the awarding of the licence, or extension, would negatively affect the amenities of the neighbourhood (including, for example, the potential for an increase in crime). Objections are also often made by the Police over concerns regarding additional crime being committed, and sometimes by the Council's own Environmental Health Officer.

Anyone who has put in an objection by the designated date has the right to attend the hearing and to speak and answer questions if they wish. The Soho Society always tries to have a representative there and this is an enormous time undertaking. Many objectors, if they work or have other commitments, find it difficult to do so, but we do encourage objectors to attend the hearings if they possibly can.

The Soho Society is usually represented at the hearings by Richard Brown of Citizens Advice. He covers the more technical and legal questions at hearings and we are really indebted to him for his support. He can also be contacted for advice, as can the Soho Society, in preparing an objection. His

email is licensing@westminstercab.org.uk. He provides this service for the whole of Westminster, and his costs are paid by the Council.

Until very recently we have felt that little weight has been given by councillors to the concerns of residents, or the Soho Society, but at recent hearings it has been clear from their questions and comments that some are beginning to have an understanding of how the relentless drive for more and more licences, or licensed hours and increases in capacity affects the community. Also, in May two licence applications were refused.

The Licensing Committee



WARD PANEL UPDATE

AND OTHER NEWS

The ward panel meeting was held recently, attended by our local ward officers, Matt Carr and Andy de Santis, and their sergeant, Mark Pettit. Paul Fisher, one of our councillors, our neighbourhood problem solving co-ordinator and others from the council, and residents attended. Thanks to 75 Dean Street for hosting us. The police and council updated the panel on crime figures, which, sadly, do not make for happy reading. The figures are harder to understand as the police borders have changed as far as statistics are concerned. However, robbery has increased over the year, with most robberies taking place between midnight and 5am. Violence is slightly down on the previous year, as are drug related crimes. However, ASB has increased. The police have an incredibly difficult job as they are very under-resourced (despite the government's much trumpeted increase in numbers and Sadiq Khan's promises). However, they do have extra resources at the moment, particularly at the weekends, with support from the TSG (specialising in public order policing), the response team and other units, including special constables.

Greek Street continues to be one of the major streets for crime, particularly into the early hours, and gangs come in from outside to prey on those that are vulnerable. Old Compton Street / Wardour Street also continue to be problematic. As ward priorities the police select one and theirs are these two areas in particular. The community select two, and these are theft from person and drug related ASB.

There is a lot of opportunistic theft at the moment with criminals targeting cafes and bars, looking for phones, bags, purses, laptops - anything left unattended. So everyone should be careful, the thieves are very quick. Also, there is quite a lot of begging, and if you see someone walking around with the Big Issue, unless they have ID, they're unlikely to be genuine, as those properly permitted to sell the Big Issue have pitches and they're supposed to stay on them not wander around.

Don't offer your bank details to any cold callers - no genuine organisation will ask for these.

Dial 999 in an emergency, otherwise 101. You can report crime on the Met website or on twitter by private message @metcc. They will give you a CAD number. There will be more on this in the next issue of the Clarion, and newsletters, and in the meantime stay safe.

For other news, Manzi's, the new fish restaurant in Bateman Buildings, which has been 'coming soon' for some time is due to launch at the end of June. It's to be an all day seafood and fish restaurant, over two floors, with outside seating. It is from the same family as Zedel and the Wolseley, so expect good food, with a nod to the old Manzi's just off Leicester Square, which closed its doors some time ago. We wish them every success.

Nima, 40 Dean Street, is opening a new restaurant '64', at 64 Old Compton Street, and we wish them every success.

If you want to eat outside, head to James Court (just off Manette Street) where there is Kapara, an Israeli restaurant, or Milk Beach, an Australian restaurant, both of which have plenty of outside space.

Summer is at last upon us. By the time you read this the Food Feast will be over. Pride is on 1 July.

The French House will be celebrating Lesley's 34th year in charge on Bastille Day, 14 July. Our fete is on 16 July, as readers will have seen from other pages. Come and join us for the entertainment, and visit the French House Bar, which is all made possible by Lesley and her staff, and also Hugues (from Meteor) (see picture) and have a jug or glass of Pimm's, a pint of Meteor or

Jane Doyle



Illustration by Bob Murdoch

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

For 53 years the homeless charity Centrepoint has occupied the ground floor and basement of 54 Dean Street, next to the entrance to St Anne's. It is where Centrepoint was started by the curate Revd Ken Leech. Originally built as both the Church Council meeting room (aka the vestry) on the ground floor, and a boys' gymnasium in the basement, it is owned by St Anne's, though the entrance to it is now separate.

As part of Centrepoint's review of their operations they have vacated the premises, and the Parochial Church Council have agreed to let the basement to another charity and, for up to 18 months, explore how the ground floor might be used for church and community use. It is beautifully furnished and opens onto a small garden terrace. One suggestion is that it operates as a community café, run in partnership with another agency, with daily events such as Citizens Advice, debt relief, Ward

Councillors surgery etc. Another suggestion is an LGBT+ community hub that is alcohol free. As St Anne's community hall and Allen Room are regularly booked it could also provide affordable additional meeting room space for community, charity or commercial hire.



I would love to know what you think Soho needs. Amongst all that is on offer in our magical square mile, what is not on offer? Whose needs are not being met? Can we help change that?

Please, do contact me with your thoughts and suggestions to rector@stannes-soho.org.uk. This is the first chance in half a century to use this space for something new and creative: for something that meets the needs

of Soho today.... Please let me know what you think our community would benefit from.

Revd Simon Buckley



Watsons Pharmacy 屈臣氏藥房

Watsons Pharmacy has been established for over 35 years in the Soho area. Our aim is to provide a service for our local community.

1 Frith Street, London W1D 3HZ
T. 020 7437 2270 F. 020 7287 9358
E. watson.charles@gmail.com
E. watson.sale@hotmail.co.uk

Medicine and Appliances Dispensing
藥單配藥服務

Repeat Dispensing
重複藥單服務

Healthy Lifestyle Advice and Promotion
健康生活諮詢及推廣

Medicine Disposal
安全處置藥物

Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)
電子藥單配藥服務

Emergency Hormonal Contraception Service
緊急避孕服務 (事後避孕藥)

Stop Smoking Service
戒煙服務

Minor Ailment Service
輕微疾病諮詢服務

New Medicine Service
新處方使用跟進服務 (只限哮喘、糖尿、高血壓、薄血病患)

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)

營業時間

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	休息
星期日	休息

Opening hours

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

FAREWELL MISS

I arrived at Soho Parish in 2004. On the day of my interview the school had just had Ofsted on the same day that Archer Street had been closed due to a murder. Despite the mayhem outside, the school was a calm haven of children happily taking part in a range of exciting learning experiences. I knew immediately that I wanted to teach in this child-centred, creative school community.

Over time, I came to know the Soho community too – so different in the day from previous visits in the evening. It was wonderful to take the children to buy vegetables from Berwick Street market, to play hockey round the sunbathers in St James's Park and to work with local museums, galleries and theatres on a range of exciting projects. What a wealth of opportunities this area provides for both adults and children.

I won't forget the ladies who used to entice men in from the darkened doorways on either side of our school gate on Great Windmill Street. They would go inside at the start and end of school and were fiercely protective of the children; chiding suspected loiterers to be on their way. While I am glad to see less of this seediness and exploitation, I often wonder where those ladies and the ones who came after them have gone.

It has been a pleasure to lead Soho Parish, first as Deputy and since 2017 as Headteacher. I have been privileged to work with extremely talented and caring staff whose main aim is for pupils to experience the 'life in all its fullness' promised by Jesus which forms the basis for our school vision. Over the pandemic this could be seen particularly, in phone calls home, weekly assemblies by staff and the clergy from St Anne's and St James's Piccadilly and interactive learning. We are proud to have had 81% of Y6 pupils at the national expectation in July 2022, compared with 59% nationally (a much lower figure than usual due to the pandemic). This is testament to the staff, who took on a front line role, and worked so hard to provide for the children's well-being as well as to educate them to such a high standard.



Louise Ritchie

Soho is a village. We are the 'village school', evidenced by our Maypole dancing on the 'green' (St Anne's Gardens) each year and by our partnership with the 'village Church', St Anne's Dean Street. I have been privileged to work closely with Rev'd Simon Buckley, who is such an advocate for our children. I have also enjoyed working together with our community partners, including the Soho Society, Jane Doyle (hello, Ed!), the YMCA and all the local businesses including Shaftesbury, the French House, Archer Street Bar and Storm Flowers who support our phenomenal fundraising efforts.

Our tiny Victorian classrooms can only hold between 23 and 26 children, so we have always had to 'fill the gap' left by government funding which is based on a per-child model. With a significant falling roll (70% of pupils for the available spaces) in Westminster, we are now averaging 20 pupils per class, making the funding gap widen ever further. I will never be able to share with every individual, restaurant and business who has supported the Food Feast and our other fundraising how much their efforts have impacted on the provision for our children, but I hope any of them reading this know how much they mean to the children, parents and staff. We raise over £150,000 each year to provide an arts-rich, creative and ambitious curriculum and we need all the help we can get to maintain this and our lovely little school.

Soho Parish is now entering into a partnership with All Souls, Foley Street. This is not a 'merger', as the two schools will retain their own staff, governors and unique character. In line with our value of 'individuality', we will continue with no uniform and children will still address adults by their first name. Alix Ascoug will be 'Executive Headteacher' of both schools but Soho Parish will have its own 'Head of School' – Oliver Knight. I wish Alix and Oliver every

success; partnerships are more and more common in small London schools, which have been particularly impacted by the reduction in pupils, and I believe this step will secure the future of the school.

I look back over the past 18 years with pride and love. It has been a privilege to lead this school and to be a part of this incredibly vibrant, diverse and friendly community; a true village in the heart of London. I move on to pastures new; working with headteachers and advising other schools, but I take this 'small school, big heart' with me. Once Soho, always Soho.

Louise Ritchie

Headteacher, Soho Parish CE Primary School



The King of Soho encapsulates the rich creativity and unique lifestyle of the effervescent London district of Soho. Premium spirits crafted in small batches; a celebration of the life and legacy of the original King of Soho.



Crowning Glory

Makes 6 Portions

- 100ml King of Soho London Dry Gin
- 100ml King of Soho Variorum Gin
- 100ml King of Soho Copacetic Vodka
- 50ml Peach Liqueur
- 300ml Cold Green Tea w/Jasmine
- 1 cup Caster Sugar (to taste)



📍📱🌐 TheKingOfSoho

Find out more at www.KingOfSohoDrinks.com

Mix everything in a punch bowl or pitcher and serve in sugar-rimmed glasses.



Manzi's
of Soho

Opening

THURSDAY 29TH JUNE

MANZI'S IS AN ALL-DAY SEAFOOD AND FISH RESTAURANT LOCATED ON BATEMAN'S BUILDINGS, NESTLED BETWEEN GREEK AND FRITH STREET.

WE'RE DELIGHTED TO BE JOINING THE SOHO NEIGHBOURHOOD THIS SUMMER!

THE SOHO SOCIETY HOUR



Broadcasting live from 8.00-9.00am every Thursday on sohoriolondon.com, catch up on the Soho Society website thesohosociety.org.uk/soho-radio

I am going to start with our very warm and heartfelt thanks to Soho Radio for continuing to host the Soho Society Hour every Thursday morning, which it has been doing since its very first days on air, the brainchild of Leslie Hardcastle and the radio's founders and owners.

The Soho Society Hour starts, as all topical programmes should, with a weather report as observed from the studio window. Well, this is the summer edition of Clarion but it doesn't feel much like summer. However the lively good spirits of our guests and presenters at 8am every Thursday have provided the warmth that has been so lacking outside.

We had worried that the earlier hour of the live broadcast, from 8.00am to 9.00am, might be a problem for some people but this has not been an issue, in fact for some it has meant less time out of their working day.

We continue to welcome Jim Cooke's weekly, pre-recorded, round-up of what's on, and coming on, in his Arts Review, taking in not only theatres but also other cultural events in the West End and beyond. An innovation has been for presenters and guests to be asked for the cultural highlights of their week. We hold that it is important to cover events London wide as one of the joys of Soho is the good transport links we enjoy to the outer reaches of the City. Local shows and exhibitions are regularly highlighted and the photographers and artists represented come on the show to talk about their work.

So who have been our guests in the last months? We are

always keen to highlight the work of local charities and The Connection told us about their work with local homeless people. Likewise we like to be kept in touch with what our local politicians are up to. Councillors Jessica Toale and Aicha Less have joined us, most recently to talk about the work being done to protect women on our streets; and Councillor Tim Rocha spoke about changes to education in the Borough. Music and photography have been represented by Alistair O'Neill, Mark T Goddard, Charlie Milligan and Augustin Bousfield. In early March a programme was dedicated to some of the lovely tributes received following the death of Leslie Hardcastle. Barbara Brownlee, CEO of Soho Housing Association, came on and told us about their pending celebrations recognizing the fifty years since it was founded; and we were delighted that Brian Clivaz was able to come and tell us about the reopening of L'Escargot, one of the oldest surviving Soho restaurants, following refurbishment. Soho restaurants will also be the subject of an upcoming programme on the Food Feast.

We were sad that Cat O'Shea was unable to continue supporting Tim and JP in the studio due to other commitments. We wish her well and hope she will make return visits from time to time. David Gleeson has stepped into the supporting role.

A big thank you to Jane Doyle, Lucy Haine and Simon Buckley for standing in for Tim and JP from time to time, sometimes at very short notice. We hope to see them co-hosting, including reading the news, more regularly going forward.

Wendy Hardcastle

PLAN FOR SOHO

NEW WEBSITE, PLAYGROUND AND LOOS!

Have you seen our website? Thanks to generous ward budget funding from Westminster City Council, we now have a new site which we are delighted about.

The aim was to explain who we are, what we do and hopefully make CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy and the CIL process 100% transparent, what it is, how to apply for it and which community projects might be applicable. Please have a look and let us know what you think! Scan QR code to visit.

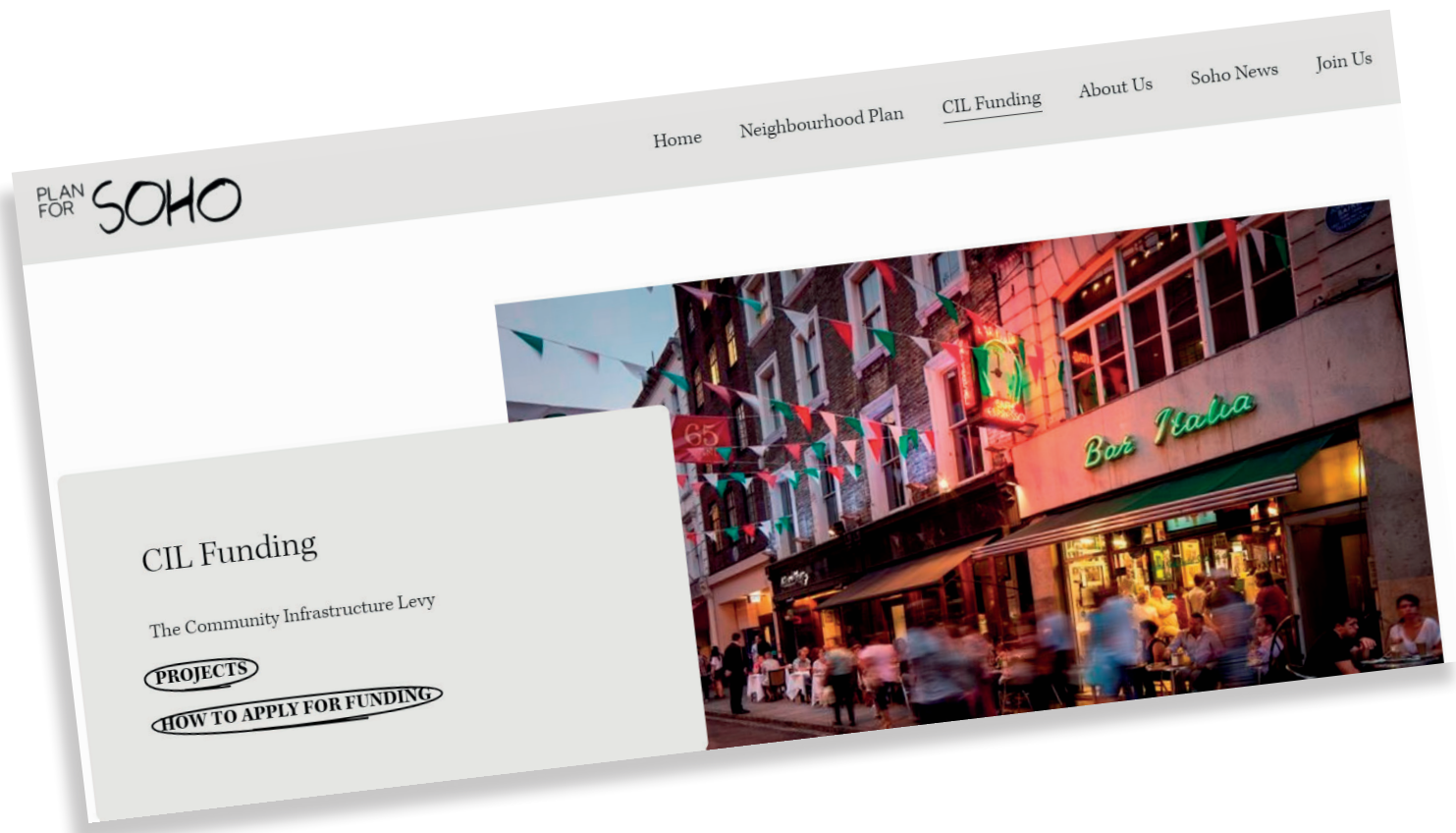
Meanwhile CIL projects move ahead: with plans afoot for a small playground in the corner of Golden Square, which we are discussing with the Westminster parks team, a full consultation will follow. We are working with St Anne’s Church to fund equal access to St Anne’s Gardens, hopefully in place for next year’s Food Feast and Fete; and we are also looking for a community space, working with Age UK and

Westminster LGBTQ to find the right site in Soho.

We have applied for funding for a study of Soho’s current loo provision, including proposed sites for new toilets and insight into what other big cities do. This study will be carried out by consultants, Orbitl and Crystal Associates who created “Soho Comes Clean” research into waste provision.

Westminster City Council has started looking at Traffic, Air Quality and Noise monitoring – a project which has come directly off the back of a CIL initiative. We hope the 40 monitoring points will be in place in time for the Soho summer holiday peak. www.planforsoho.org

Chair: Lucy Haine



CUTS

THE HAIRDRESSER WITH A DIFFERENCE COMES FULL CIRCLE IN SOHO

Cuts has been in Soho for nearly 40 years, having been founded by James Lebon in Kensington in 1979. They came to Soho in 1984, starting off by renting a couple of chairs at Nino's, an old established barber's more or less next door to Bar Italia, calling themselves "Cuts Barber Shop for Men and Women". Their popularity grew and they needed larger premises.

A new partnership was formed becoming 'Cuts Soho', and the business moved to 39 Frith Street in 1990. This salon thrived, cementing their reputation as the 'coolest' salon in London. Despite receiving plenty of media attention and attracting a 'who's who' list of customers, they always managed to give the same laid-back service, and became as well known as a meeting place for the young creative minds of London as for hairstyles.

In 2009, for various reasons they had to relocate. Determined to keep the Cuts' 'crew' together and to keep serving Soho, they opened 'We are Cuts' in Royalty Mews off Dean Street, just behind Quo Vadis. There had been an art gallery in Kensington, and it was here that the decision was made to bring back the gallery, and so Cuts began to exhibit emerging and established artists. Despite Royalty Mews being a 'hidden' location, their clients followed them. They were there until 2014 when a fire in the adjacent building forced a further move, this time to 33A Dean Street, where they took up residence in the basement of Gino's (a long established barber, who has recently been forced to close as the building was sold and is going to be refurbished) and continued there until 2019.

In 2019, they came full circle and returned to 41 Dean Street, where they have a basement 'space', in which they host art exhibitions, events such as "Celine's Salon", music performances

- anything that appeals to them, such as the 'Late Lee Black Childers Iconic Photographs', which included pictures found after his death and not previously shown in a solo show before. The exhibition was fascinating and spanned Lee's amazing life from being part of Andy Warhol's Factory to being tour manager for David Bowie and Iggy Pop to bringing his band, the Heartbreakers, over to join the Anarchy Tour with the Sex Pistols.

They have recently obtained an alcohol licence enabling them to serve drinks at events, and you can probably get a glass of wine whilst having your hair cut, highlighted or ... This also qualified Daniel to run in last year's Waiters Race at the Soho Fete! Let's hope he or one of the staff does a repeat run this year!

In the past there have been pop-ups at Somerset House and Selfridge's where the staff provided 'bespoke cuts in their purpose created installation spaces', as part of exhibitions.

A wonderful book has also been published. There was also a film (recently re-released).

The next exhibition is 'The Revellers' in mid-June and the venue is also available for hire.

For more information and more of their story, go to their website : www.wearecuts.com

You can even book a haircut, and chat to

Daniel or Pete, who will be able to tell you far more than I can here.

Jane Doyle

Photograph by Richard Piercey



NICKIE AIKEN

CONSERVATIVE MP FOR CITIES OF LONDON & WESTMINSTER



My Plan to Make Soho Safer

I know many of you across Soho are concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour. It's a matter I've received a lot of emails and calls about, or heard whilst speaking to local people whilst out and about. And as someone who lives locally, I've witnessed it myself.

That's why I launched my Policing and Crime Survey to hear from you about your concerns and what you believe the police should focus on.

The results were clear. You want more police on our streets, support for the most vulnerable, leadership laser-focused on Westminster, to tackle anti-social behaviour, and to crack down on cannabis smoking.

Thank you to every Soho Clarion reader who responded to my survey. Alongside local people from across our neighbourhoods, thousands of you had your say.

Based on what you told me, I've launched my Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour Plan for Westminster.

My Plan is to increase police visibility by ensuring the 3,468 extra Metropolitan Police recruits, funded by the Government, are out patrolling the streets, re-introduce estate wardens to tackle anti-social behaviour, enforce a zero-tolerance policy on cannabis smoking in public spaces, re-establish the Integrated Street Engagement Unit to support the most vulnerable people in our society, and create a single Borough Commander for Westminster to ensure our Borough Commander can be laser-focused on tackling crime here.

I am working with our local police officials and Westminster City Council to deliver this plan, though I am disappointed by the council's response so far and fear its leadership is not taking our concerns seriously. The council, after all, has a critical role and leads the local response to tackle anti-social behaviour with a number of tools at its disposal. I will continue to take action to push the Council to use those tools so that local people across Soho and Westminster feel safer.

If you haven't already, take my policing and crime survey

and read My Plan to Make Westminster Safer at nickie.news/MyCrimePlan

I've also launched a campaign to ensure delivery cyclists ride safely.

Since the pandemic, there has been a huge increase in the number of us embracing the gig economy and ordering food and groceries from our phones. This has led to an increase in delivery cyclists, who, unlike van and HGV drivers, require no safety tests or an understanding of the Highway Code.

It's impacted Soho especially, and I've heard repeatedly from local people who have shared their stories of a delivery cyclist skipping a red light, ignoring a zebra crossing, or going the

wrong way down a one-way street. Like many of you, I've also had a near miss with a cyclist riding into me whilst I was walking on the pavement.

That's why I'm calling on the likes of Deliveroo, Getir, Uber Eats and similar companies to work with me and cycling organisations to establish a simple but safe professional cycling certificate that will be recognised across all platforms.

Find out more about my campaign and take part in my survey at nickie.news/DeliveryBikes

On pedicabs, I'm continuing to have meetings with the Department for Transport and officials at Downing Street. The Government remains committed to our licensing scheme and I am working with Ministers to get pedicab licensing implemented as quickly as possible.

If I can be of help on any issue, please send me an email at nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk or write to me at Nickie Aiken MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Keep up to date with how I'm working for you at www.nickieaiken.org.uk and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube at [@TwoCitiesNickie](https://www.instagram.com/TwoCitiesNickie)



PATRICK LILLEY



It was a pleasure to join outgoing Lord Mayor Councillor Taouzzale at one of his final engagements as he met the residents of Dean and Meard Streets at their Coronation Street Party. Our 23 year old Lord Mayor presided over the ringing of the changes in Westminster as Labour took control for the first time in its history. What a year to be Westminster's First Citizen, as two of the largest events he attended were the funeral of Elizabeth II and the Coronation of King Charles III.

And now to the serious of stuff of Soho: noise, crime, pedicabs, dockless bikes, and more noise. No issue will ever be permanently solved unless behaviours change and we find systemic solutions.

The West End Three (WE3), Cllrs Fisher, Toale and I have had some successes: on planning, the Committee rejected plans by Simmons on Bateman Street to extend into next door enlarging the vertical drinking space. WE3 attended, and Cllr Toale spoke persuasively. On licensing recently four other proposals by this chain were withdrawn following Ward Councillors working closely with the Soho Society. There have been other occasional wins along the way as we hope councillors from both parties begin to understand the plight of Soho residents living in the cumulative impact zone.

Although not enough, WE3 have praised the increase in police resources in the Greek, Frith, Old Compton and Wardour Streets area following the rise in crime. We are told organised criminals come into the area to prey on the vulnerable in our packed narrow streets each weekend.

PEDICABS AND DOCKLESS BIKES – WHERE'S OUR BILL? Joint operations between City Inspectors and the Police against nuisance pedicabs continue with the courts imposing fines and costs (now totalling many thousands of pounds). Hopefully, this is acting as a deterrent to rogue pedicab riders who play loud music after 9pm. It's a tragedy for Soho (and other areas) that the much heralded Transport Bill has so far not materialised from the government. I agree with Nickie Aiken on very few things but this is one we have both spent many years campaigning for. The government is allowing this dangerous free for all not just with pedicabs, but also the

Department for Transport has turned a blind eye to the plague of e-bikes littering our streets.

My "open letter" calling for better government regulation of dockless e-bikes is winning support from councillors across London. E-bikes could have a very positive effect (no more arriving at work all sweaty), and could help reduce pollution and increase active travel. Westminster Council is fully aware of the problem of dangerous parking especially in Soho. We

met with operators, we have done walkabouts with residents and officers and spotted hot spots and tried to get them banned from all narrow pavements in Soho. Over the summer WCC will be identifying 200 experimental parking bays outside of which bikes will be stopped from parking through geofencing. These efforts need to be backed by government regulation to allow councils to fine operators when there is dangerous parking outside the bays.

BT RED BOXES IN A STATE: I was joined by a BT staff member, members of the Soho Society, our local beat bobby, a City Inspector along with our Neighbourhood Coordinator to visit every BT phone box in Soho (there are 13). We

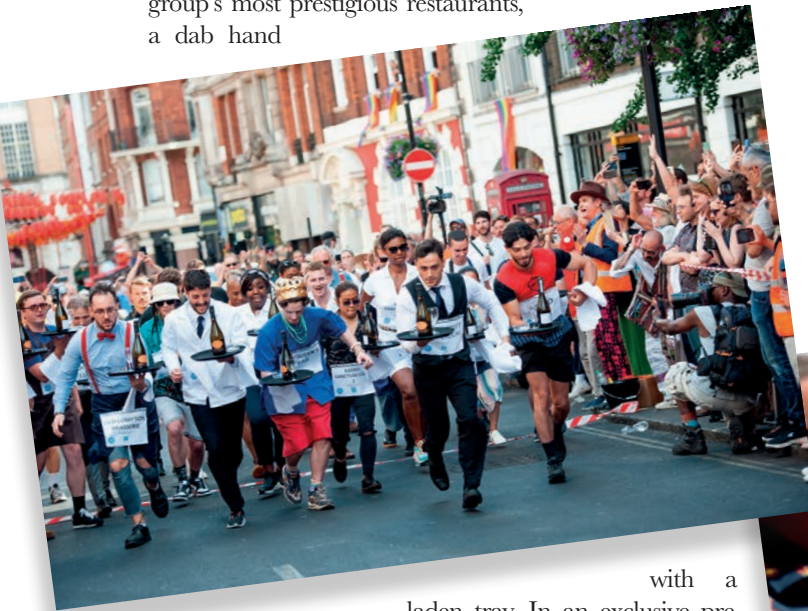
have their location, number and condition. Many of them are disgusting and legal letters have been sent to BT about those that are poorly maintained. We learned that they do make a lot of money and many get robbed. I am committed to doing our best to ensure they are better maintained by BT.

PEE BACK TIME: Westminster Council have now deployed splash back paint (thank you Soho Business Alliance) in "wet spots" like Bridle Lane, Peter Street, Hopkins Street, Tylers Court and more. Summer will test of our efforts to discourage this selfish behaviour. Westminster continues to fund two dozen portaloos to mop up the excess each weekend. I personally intervened to bring their deployment in on Thursday nights as it's clear the weekend starts then. I will continue to lobby colleagues for increased provision of permanent public conveniences to match the needs of Soho and its thousands of visitors.



GOING FOR A HAT TRICK

Endri Bombai, a waiter at The Dean Street Townhouse, has won the Soho Waiters' Race for the last two years. A third win this year, may be a first in the history of the race. Endri is under no illusions about the strength of the competition. His first win in 2021 was a photo finish with a waiter from Kettner's, and he recognises competition will be fierce. However, Endri was the school 100 metre champion in Mykonos, Greece, and as a waiter at one of the Soho House group's most prestigious restaurants, a dab hand



with a laden tray. In an exclusive pre-race interview, Endri reveals his simple but deadly strategy, an explosive start from the front, palm flat and hand close to the body.

The Soho Waiters' Race is the main event at the Soho Village Fete. This year's race takes place at 3pm on Sunday, 16 July, starting and finishing from outside the iconic French House Pub. The race dates back to the 1950's when Waiters in white jackets and bow ties were photographed by Getty Images racing around Soho Square. Waiters are recruited in the weeks before the Fete from Soho's hospitality community and include restaurants, bar staff, pubs, and cafes, and last year even a hotelier, Mark Fuller from Soho Sanctum Hotel, took part.

Competitors run up Dean Street, along Carlisle Street, round Soho Square, back down Frith Street, winding round Romilly Street to finish up, back at the French House. Competition Rules are strict, and 100 volunteer marshals will be keeping an eye out for any Waiters not following these rules;

1. A proper waiter's uniform to be worn (you must look fantastic).
2. Each competitor will be given a tray, a napkin, a bottle of Champagne (Prosecco very kindly supplied by Coop UK) a Champagne glass and an ashtray.
3. The tray must be held in one hand only. Two hands may only be used to steady items on the tray for no more than three paces.
4. The winner shall be the first past the winning line with ALL items on the tray intact - unless infringements are reported by the stewards.
5. The decision of the judges is final and will be given after sufficient time has been allowed to consider reports from the stewards. In the case of a dead heat, a points system will be used to decide the dispute, based on items left on the tray.



Up to 50 Waiters take part. If you work in hospitality in Soho, please visit the Soho Society's website and sign up, entry costs £20 and we expect the establishment to pay for entry, first prize is £100 and your name recorded for posterity on the Soho Waiters' Race trophy, with second and third winners also receiving cash prizes up on-stage post-race, at the Soho Fete.

We are looking for 100 Volunteers to support the Waiters' race, keep an eye on the racers and support in registering Waiters and sweeping up glass at the end. All volunteers will get a raffle ticket to the Soho Village Fete raffle drawn at 4.45pm – it could be you! If you can volunteer, please come to the Soho Fete, and listen out for the volunteer call out or sign up via our website.

The Soho Village fete on Sunday 16 July, is organised by a team of volunteers from the Soho Society, many of whom live in Soho.

The Fete is a fantastic free afternoon in St Anne's Church Gardens, Wardour Street, 12-6pm with a never-ending cornucopia of events and activities, including six hours of live music, pints flowing from a bar run by Lesley Lewis and The French House pub, tea and cake with More Tea Vicar, Bric-a-Brac, Tombola, The Human Fruit Machine, Snail Racing, Splat the Rat, Elvis and The Pearly Kings and Queens! There is also a mix of community and retail stalls from China Exchange, Soho Print Store, Storm Flowers Garden, The Met Police, Westminster WI and LGBTQ and Soho Parish School.

Highlights include:

12.30pm Spaghetti Eating Competition

1pm The Soho Dog Show

2pm The Tug of War, Soho Police vs Soho Fire Service

3pm The Soho Waiters' Race from outside The French House, Dean Street

4.45pm Raffle Draw

This is essentially a traditional

village fete in the most central of England's villages, a real local community day, the headliners, the Red Stripe Band are fronted by a Soho resident, where a member of Roxy music might take to the stage alongside Pearly Kings

and Queens, and it's all rounded off with a drag queen finale.

Even the fete poster is a work of art, lovingly crafted by cartoonist David Shenton and available at the fete, from the Soho Society stand or our website. All the proceeds from the fete support the Soho Society's work in campaigning for Soho's heritage and keeping it a great place to live work and visit.

Visit our website to enter the Soho Waiters' Race, The Dog Show, buy a raffle ticket or Eventbrite ticket to the fete and Volunteer please.

Arrive early on the 16th and bring us sunshine!

www.thesohosociety.org.uk

Thank you to our generous sponsors and supporters without whom the fete could not take place including The Crown Estate, Shaftesbury Capital PLC, Broadwick Soho Hotel, Soho House Group, The Co-op, Westminster City Council, The Rotary Club, Soho Housing Association, Lesley Lewis and The French House Pub, Rapid Security Services Ltd, St Anne's Church, The Fete Team Committee and our fantastic volunteers.



BEAUTIFUL SHOPS

As the High Street loses big names at an unprecedented rate, independents strive hard to maintain market share, stand out from the crowd, keep up with rising rents, business rates and ecommerce pressures all playing a part in the decline of physical retail. Soho's independent heritage retail, keeping the new luxury chains on their toes, fronts up to both the Regent Street creep and changes in Class E planning use. Retailer Lucy Haine reviews two Soho stores in our regular feature, a celebration of beautiful shops.

ALGERIAN COFFEE STORES, 52 Old Compton Street

Ownership: Third generation family business, co-owned by sisters Marisa and Daniela, UK Registered.

The Store has been trading since 1887, founded by an Algerian, Mr. Hassan, and the store was bought by a Belgian in the 1920's who sold it to the girls' grandfather in 1946.

Store layout: A tiny footprint with the original counter and shelving still in place, "people don't like change" says Marisa. Her father, Paul, tried to change the frontage to black in the 80's but changed his mind when everyone complained. You smell the wonderful aroma of the merchandise as you walk in. The



accessories, and confectionery. During my visit, pre-opening, there is a hive of activity post the bank holiday, with online orders ground and packed ready to be dispatched globally, from Norway to Mauritius. Algerian Coffee Stores has had a successful online business for many years, which really saved their business during the pandemic.

Meet the team: A long-serving clan, Joe has been there 10 years with a break for Uni, Carla 11 years, Stefana 4 years and Chris 5 years.

Soho Best sellers: The in-house coffee blends Café Torino, Formula Rossa, Velluto Nero and Algerian Special

Busiest time: Saturdays afternoons and Christmas of course.

Events: None

What you like most about Soho: Marisa pauses, "I used to like it, finishing work, and falling straight into a bar, not so much anymore with a baby! I do worry that the sense of community has gone, it is so important to keep the independents Soho is known for and whenever a new place opens, I hope it will be a shop rather than another bar or restaurant."

Soho discounts: None

Did you know? The in-house joke is that the tiny stockroom right at the top of the building is haunted, with mysterious noises attributed to the Coffee Stores "ghost."

Did I buy? Yes! A delicious cappuccino, which I



inhaled and bought another on my way out. Priced at a very reasonable £2.00 it's not surprising there is a queue for coffee.

Website/Socials: www.algeriancoffeestores.com

@algerian_coffee_stores

Trading: Monday to Wednesday 10am – 6pm, Thursday to Saturday to 7pm, Sundays Closed

most expensive coffee blend is Indonesian Wild Civet Coffee at £27.00 for 100gr. Filled with coffees from around the world, the store also stocks an incredible range of loose teas,

SO HIGH SOHO, 22 Peter Street and 7 Berwick Street

Ownership: Owned by business partners Anna Boyle and Beth Kolomeitz, UK Registered

So High Soho celebrated 30 years of trading this year on 1 April, celebrating by moving their fancy dress into a new store on 22 Peter Street. The business was started in North Wales, by Anna's first business partner Marsha (Beth's Mum), who moved to a stall on Berwick Street market outside number 9. Anna worked on the stall whilst a student. Over the years they have traded in several Berwick Street locations, number 5 (now Misan fabrics) 96 under Kemp House, before moving to 7 and 9 Berwick Street.

Store Layout: So High Soho is two stores of unique eclecticism. Berwick Street sells incense, aromatherapy, flowers and jewellery whilst Peter Street houses their famous fancy dress collection, from Carnival headdresses to Miss Haversham-style Halloween Bridal gowns.

22 Peter Street, large floorplate with plenty of colour; feather boas in the window, wigs and accessories are shelved next to the till with plenty of floor space around the costumes and a large floor to ceiling mirror for theatrical pirouetting. So High Soho has clothed through the eras, from the Dance music scene in the 90's to Rave, and Burning Man. When I arrived, owner Anna was altering a white mesh sparkle top for a Mighty Hoopla partygoer - perhaps this sums up their approach to building a loyal clientele, service, expertise, giving the customer an informed answer and personal service direct from source. Celebrity customers include the late Paul O'Grady and Robbie Williams, and their queue at Halloween is phenomenal, and they offer costume-hire as well as buy.

Meet the team: Anna with Clary and Amy in Peter Street, a new team post-covid.

Busiest time of Day: Peaks and troughs throughout the year with queues down the street on Halloween, the store was busy when I visited, with Mighty Hoopla.

Soho Bestsellers: Gold Hotpants £24 and rainbow raver hats £10.

Best thing about Soho: The camaraderie of the community, bit of a battle but worth it.

Soho discounts: Anna will work with Soho residents to give them a good deal.

Events coming up: None but something to think about.

Did you know? The glass base of their Octopus-man mannequin exploded just before the move to Peter Street. Anna takes that as a sign, the move was a necessity.



Did I buy? I have my eye on a sequin, outfit perfect for a Christmas Euro glitter do.

Website/Socials: www.sohighsoho.co.uk @sohighsoho

Trading: Monday to Wednesday 11 - 5pm, Thursday to Saturday 11am to 5.30pm, Sunday closed

Soho shops - use them or lose them #ShopLocalShopSoho

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

Lucy Haine

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Stepping off the plane at Perth airport at 5am, my nostrils were immediately and happily assaulted by that wonderful Australian eucalyptus perfume. It's a long way. My third visit to Oz, this time it was Western Australia's turn. Total solar eclipse-chasing hordes in the main, were descending on Exmouth. However, our destination was further north: Dampier, and then out to the Lowendal Islands. Nearly didn't get there, as a Category 5 cyclone was sweeping in from the Indian Ocean straight into the Dampier area...

Dampier itself is a small settlement on the NW coast of WA just south of the Great Sandy Desert. The one place to stay, was a wonderfully Aussie rough and ready motel - precisely the sort of place to expect Slim Newton's "Redback on the Toilet Seat". My arachnophobia notwithstanding, leaving the loo seat up in my room seemed prudent. Monster, but harmless giant huntsmen are seriously scary just because they're big. I was almost disappointed not to encounter one though. Never thought I'd hear myself thinking that.

The Lowendal Islands are a small archipelago some 150 kilometres to the south-west of Dampier. This was to be our eclipse viewing site. Our particular spot was a small, scrubby uninhabited isle about half the size of Soho. Treeless and shadeless, the intense Aussie sun seriously depleted my sunblock supply. The aforementioned cyclone helpfully cleared the skies of cloud. Great for perfect eclipse viewing, but oh that relentless sun. But once you've seen a total solar eclipse, you ache for the next one.

The news of the the sad demise of comedian Barry Humphries was everywhere. The Aussies, rightly in my humble opinion, hold him up as a national hero. Even a

State Funeral was under discussion. Dame Edna and our total solar eclipse were the news. For a week.

A pleasant 200 kilometre drive up the coast from Perth, The Pinnacles are a 'forest' of extraordinary limestone structures that stick up in a sandy coastal landscape. I've never seen anything like it and could easily imagine being on Mars. It has to be seen to be believed. It's like a Lilliputian Monument Valley. Watching the sunset in this desertscape was a real treat. Crystal clear skies as the sun set; then followed by a thin crescent moon and Venus, could not be done justice by any mere photograph.

Then as we assembled after sunset, the full majesty of a clear, dark sky came into view. Seeing the Milky Way in full glory arch across the sky, the Southern Cross, the Coalsack Nebula as well as the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds, was a rare privilege.

If you do ever find yourself with a couple of hours to kill in Perth, a trip around the Mint is a good idea. The largest gold nugget ever found in the world, was dug up in the area. Approximately the size of a cat, but weighing considerably more, there is a life-sized plastic model kicking around the museum. There is a standard gold bar that you can try to pick up with one hand, and the largest ever minted gold coin (99.99% pure and weighing a tonne)

in the world. Also a furnace on the go all day where our guide retrieved a crucible of the molten stuff and poured it into a mould.. Impressive.

Margaret Bloomer





SECRET SOHO ROOF GARDENS



Cavit of Soho Dairy

High above Soho's busy streets lies a serene panorama of plants. Affectionately known as "Costa del Soho," this garden is home to over 14 different varieties of fruit and vegetable plants and fragrant flowers growing on the terrace of an urban flat.

There are vivid fuschias, bright petunias and begonias hanging on the rails, dahlias, and multi-coloured climbing roses; a dazzling sight accompanied by the fragrance of the fruit trees that grow around them.

This is Cavit's garden, a well-known member of Soho Dairy in Berwick Street Market, who has been growing plants here since 1998.

We met with Cavit on a rainy morning over a coffee at My Place while he showed us photos of his garden and cultivated crop at different times of the year.

Cavit's experience of gardening started when he was young, growing up on a farm back home in Turkey with a family of experienced farmers. His brothers still look after a large 8-acre farm.

Why do you like gardening?

Cavit: Gardening is so relaxing. I can spend hours in the garden; you don't realise the time goes so quick. I like to sit, have a coffee or tea and a cigarette, enjoy a breakfast out there in the morning or a summer BBQ with family and friends.

In Soho, Cavit has a Loquat tree (also known as New World Fruit). First grown from a stone 16 years ago, it took 6 years before it first bore fruit. Thanks to his green fingers, the tree has enjoyed a fruit harvest over the last couple of years.

He has a Cherry tree, currently blossoming, which brings the

bumble bees and butterflies to the garden. The fruit will begin to come out from June and July onward.

This may already sound like a lot of fruit trees, but we're just getting started! There are raspberries, strawberries, mint, peppers, and even a cauliflower (once – it didn't grow very big). Cavit says he tries everything!



Sweet peas growing in the garden

What is your favourite plant in the garden?

Cavit: The apple tree - it smells so nice in the summer.

The apple tree produces large "Golden Delicious" apples and is about 18 years old. A scented pear grows in the same pot, planted at the same time. This saves space in the garden but also helps yield more fruit, as apple and pear trees are great companion plants.

When new shoots come out, Cavit prunes them to keep the apple tree small. Pruning stimulates new growth and encourages a larger harvest.

What is the one gardening tool that you couldn't live without?

Cavit: My hands. I don't use a shovel, or tools. I've got them but find that I don't use them, as all of my plants are in pots.

Growing so many successfully producing fruit trees and

vegetable crops on an urban flat's balcony might seem an unbelievable feat (we were continually shocked photo after photo of delicious fruit Cavit showed us).

There are also some tomatoes that Cavit didn't plant; they self-seeded in a pot last year. But as the weather started to get colder, they didn't ripen, and frost killed the plant. Cavit collected all the green tomatoes and ripened them indoors.

"These are the best tomatoes you can see in Soho," he laughs, "but they're not for sale!"



Cavit in his garden

Certainly a very green-fingered gardener, Cavit has developed a number of garden “hacks” which help yield produce.

How do you grow an ‘unlimited spring onion’?

You will need: a 5L plastic water bottle, compost (Cavit gets his from the B&Q on Old Kent Road - if you’re in Soho then bus 453 is a direct route from Piccadilly), spring onion bulbs.

Cavit explains that he made about 50 holes in a large, 5L plastic water bottle with a soldering gadget (but a drill would work too). Fill the bottle with compost, and plant the small bulbs so they face outwards, as this will allow them to grow through the holes. He recommends doing this at the end of April.

To water, take the cap off a smaller water bottle, fill with water and place it inverted so the tops of the bottles touch. A smaller bottle is key here, as it will water the bulbs slowly and not flood them out of the compost. If needed, you can repeat the process.

Harvest the green stalks and they will regrow about 3-4 times. Enjoy in a green salad or omelette!

Are there any other plants that you want to grow?

Of all the fruits and beautiful trees Cavit has grown in his garden, we wondered if there were any that he hadn’t grown already.

Cavit: I got a Kumquat tree that last year didn’t produce any fruit - maybe it needs a bigger pot. It’s maybe 5 years old - I’ve had it for 5 years but not sure how old it was before I got it!

Now that it’s Spring, what’s next in your garden?

Do you have any big jobs that you need to do or any new plants that you want to bring in?

Cavit: First of all I need soil. Without soil I can’t do anything at the moment! I’m going to get some general purpose compost, as some of the plants need their soil freshening up.

I’ve collected old eggshells which can be smashed into a paste and buried inside the soil where the roots are. This gives goodness to the plants.

Cavit tells us that he used to live in Covent Garden, where there was a communal garden. He carefully split a cutting from the Dwarf Fig tree there, which now grows in his garden in Soho. It will benefit from a soil refresh.

If you would like to tell your gardening story, we would love to hear from you.

Get in touch at florist@stormflowerslondon.com

With thanks to Cavit for sharing images of his beautiful garden. You can find him at [@SohoDairy](https://www.instagram.com/SohoDairy)

Nikitah Patel



SHOWGIRL TO THE MAX EBB-ON-KNEE

Interview and photo by Richard Piercy



On the evening of 24 May 2008, a gold Rolls-Royce gently glided to a halt outside Comptons in Old Compton Street. From its luxurious interior emerged the celebrated drag artiste Ebb-On-Knee, dressed in full electric blue regalia; an explosion of sequins and feathers, with a look she describes as 'showgirl to the max'. The occasion? - her final appearance as host and compere for the Eurovision party taking place inside the bar, a role that she had fulfilled since 2003. As in previous years, a huge amount of preparation had occurred behind the scenes. Not only to ensure all the Eurovision facts were at her highly manicured fingertips, but she had created the many different costumes she would be wearing during the evening – something she has done throughout a career that has spanned more than 40 years.

It all began in Kennington Hospital, south London, where Ebb-On-Knee was born to Jamaican parents. During the 1950's her father, Theo Campbell, opened Theo's Record Shop in Brixton. The shop specialised in calypso, soul, reggae, country as well as some classical titles. and Ebb-On-Knee has fond memories of the many genres of music that wafted through the family home. She proudly remembers her mother Laurel being the first black seamstress to make clothes for the late Queen Elizabeth and in the early days of Ebb-On-Knee's career she would make costumes for her too. She would often go with her parents to see West End shows, her introduction to the glittering world of showbusiness.

As sometimes happens in life it took an unexpected opportunity for Ebb-On-Knee to find her true calling. She was originally destined for a finance career in the City, having studied for a business qualification. She took a job at the Stock Exchange whilst working part-time as a barman at Harpoon and Louie's in Earls Court. The bar would put on live performances and one evening staged an amateur talent contest which the compere persuaded Ebb-On-Knee to enter. She came second winning a bottle of champagne and her first professional booking. It was around this time that Ebb-On-Knee first met Peter Searle at the club one Sunday afternoon. Peter performed as the artiste Adrella and was already a huge star on the cabaret circuit. As Ebb-On-Knee was still new to the scene, Adrella became her mentor, giving her tips on how best to put a show together. As Ebb-On-Knee explained to me 'People don't always appreciate how much work goes into a drag show, seeing it as just a man putting on a frock and miming to a backing track. As an artiste you must be performer, producer, lighting director, make-up artist, costume designer and seamstress. Adrella instilled in me the need to be as self-sufficient as possible.'

The shows they put together were the ones Ebb-On-Knee subsequently performed at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern and beyond.

It was not long before the West End beckoned. A theatre agent, who had been introduced to Ebb-On-Knee by a friend, alerted her to an advert in Stage magazine, advertising for 'boys as girls and girls as boys, plus principal boy and principal girl' to appear in a show called Bizarre, at Paul Raymond's club, La Vie En Rose in Soho – formerly the Windmill Theatre. Ebb-On-Knee passed the audition appearing as one of the Bizarre Sisters alongside Adrella and Ruby Venezuela. Her rendition of 'I'm Telling You I'm Not Going' from the Broadway musical Dream Girls won her numerous standing ovations, from amongst others, Diana Dors, Alan Lake and Superman; Christopher Reeves was in the audience one night! After the show came to an end a Finnish agent who had been so impressed arranged for the Bizarre Sisters to do a five-week tour of Finland, followed by a second tour adding Lily Savage to the line-up.

Ebb-On-Knee's career has at times taken her in different directions, from stage, to the TV and recording studio, as well as appearing at some of London's best known clubs. She's performed in a sell-out play, 'The Third Sex' at the Hong Kong Arts and Fringe Festival, and released a record with Ruby Venezuela and Bradley, the MC at The Hippodrome under the name of Bradley and The Boys. The track was called Dyna Dall – A Dream of Dallas and Dynasty which went to number 3 in the Australian charts. This led to an appearance on The Wogan Show. In 1991, during the height of the AIDS epidemic, Adrella organised a weekend at Butlins in Skegness called Camp Camp. Ebb-On-Knee remembers a fun packed weekend working there as a pink coat and hosting aerobics classes on the beach. Lily Savage was on the bill and Eartha Kitt headlined, the latter arriving at the event only to discover she'd mislaid her makeup. Fortunately, Ebb-On-Knee's well stocked vanity case saved the day! She's also regularly appeared on TV game shows such as Treasure Hunt, Lose a Million and Your Numbers Please to name but a few.

In recent times Ebb-On-Knee has limited her performances to charity events which have included her closing act at the Soho Fete, having originally been brought on board in 2011 by Ruby Venezuela. Since then, she's performed at the fete every year alongside her current co-star, Minnie Diamond CBE. Whilst she's keeping tight-lipped about the songs she and Minnie will be performing and the glamorous costumes they will be unveiling at this year's event, we know for sure that it'll be as fabulous as always!

LOVE LEDA

BY MARK HYATT

Reviewed by Clive Jennings

Love Leda is a lost gem of a novel, written in around 1965 by little known poet Mark Hyatt. It chronicles the daily life of Leda, a young gay man ricocheting around the West End and Soho, in particular. A portrait of a lost Soho, as well as an important document of queer, working-class life, from a voice long overlooked.

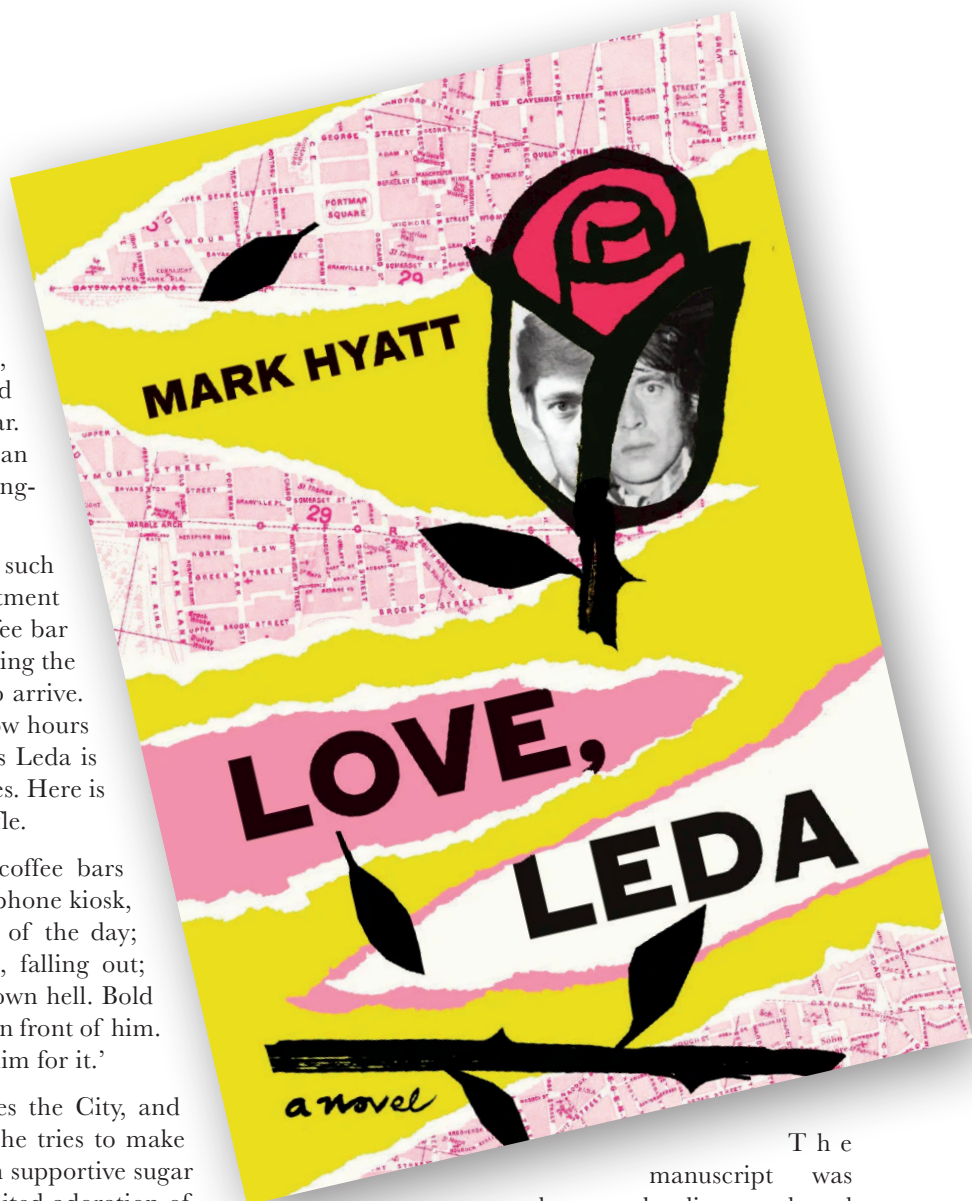
Leda is lost. Bouncing from job to job, such as menial work washing up in a department store restaurant. He wanders from coffee bar to house party, spending his days watching the hours pass and waiting for the night to arrive. Trysts in the rubble of a bombsite follow hours spent in bedsits with near strangers, as Leda is forced to find intimacy in unusual places. Here is Leda's version of the Dean Street shuffle.

'It's mid morning. Cool. Not many coffee bars open. I, the brave one, god of any telephone kiosk, walk down Dean Street, see the man of the day; raincoat, shoulders round, hair black, falling out; heavenly blue eyes cast down into his own hell. Bold as brass I cross the road stopping dead in front of him. He raises his eyes, so sadly that I love him for it.'

Strikingly good looking, Leda traverses the City, and we experience his existential angst as he tries to make sense of the world. As he wanders from supportive sugar daddies, who adore him, to his unrequited adoration of an unattainable married man, we get an intimate view of bleak, and grimy London, still reeling from a World War. The glamour of the groovy Swinging Sixties had yet to materialise.

Author Jeremy Atherton Lyn described Love Leda as: 'A hip flask of a novel, brimful of phenomenal lines.' Couldn't agree more, and here are a selection: of his aphorisms:

- 'People are OK for conversation, sex and sight, but are they sincere?'
- 'I feel Mother Nature laughing at me, but I am merely a clown so I laugh back at her.'
- 'I sip my coffee and wish I could look at the world as sheer entertainment.'



The manuscript was only recently discovered and pre-dates the Sexual Offences Act of 1967. Amazingly, Hyatt received very little formal education, and only gained literacy as an adult. His short life reads like a Bloomsbury novel: he had a relationship with the novelist Cressida Lindsay which resulted in a son, Dylan. Soon after the child's birth, Hyatt's then-boyfriend, the publisher Anthony Blond, became Lindsay's lover, and would go on to father a child with her. Tragically, Hyatt died by his own hand at the age of 32.

Published by Peninsula Press, London

STRAT!

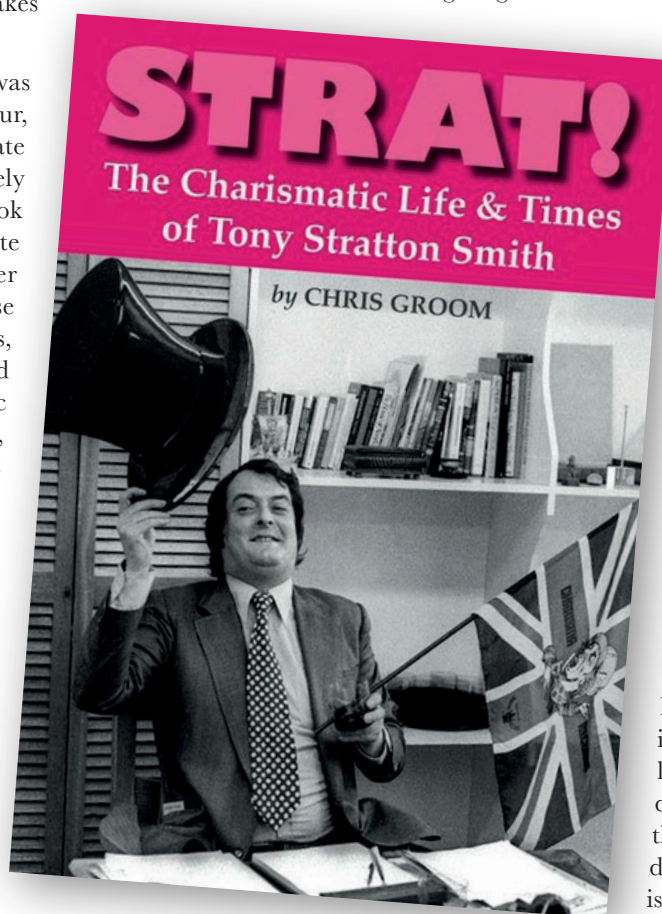
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TONY STRATTON SMITH

BY CHRIS GROOM

Reviewed by David Gleeson

In the mid-1970s, popular recording artistes Lindisfarne, Genesis and Monty Python's Flying Circus all shared a record label – Charisma – and the story of this Soho-based business, and the man behind it, makes an entertaining reading.

Tony Stratton Smith was a writer, entrepreneur, horse-racer and inveterate drinker with a hugely enjoyable life. The book has a very affectionate foreword from Peter Gabriel and is otherwise crammed with musicians, business colleagues and friends from the music and horse-racing worlds, all eager to testify to his great character, kindness to others, and general positive characteristics that set him apart from such ruthlessly aggressive bully-impresarios as Peter Grant or Don Arden. He was one of those rare people who actually seemed to do exactly what he pleased, moving from local sports journalism to running a record label with comparative ease. He located Charisma, his company, in Soho, moving between Wardour, Old Compton Streets and Soho Square in the 1970s. The book carefully numbers the nearby pubs and clubs where Smith would hammer out business deals: The Ship in Wardour Street, along with the nearby St Moritz for lunch afterwards; The Swiss (renamed The Compton Arms in 1986), and the Nellie Dean, close to Soho Square. It comes dangerously close to being yet another boring reminiscence on how people-in-Soho-just-don't-get-drunk-the-way-they-used-to, but is saved by the author's grasp of both the music business and Soho in the seventies.



Interesting factoids include Smith's faith in Genesis being so strong that he channelled record company money into building them up, including royalties for other bands on the label - including Lindisfarne! Fog on the Tyne or Seconds Out, anyone? And if, in the 1960s, you were looking to get a record in the charts, the place to go to

bribe someone to fix it was De Hems Dutch pub on the edge of Chinatown. Who knew? The book is packed with fascinating trivia all the way through - the explosion of popular music in the 60s and 70s and the opportunities it gave for making vast amounts of money under cover of artistic credibility attracted many to careers that had no template but were invented from one week to the next. Tony Stratton Smith found a world where he could spot talent, bet on it, and use his winnings to buy racehorses: one addiction fed another.

Despite all the plaudits, he inhabits the text of this book like a will-o'-the-wisp as, despite the best intentions of the biographer, he has proved difficult to pin down. There is much speculation: did he work for MI5? MI6? How did he get his money? How many horses did he own? So he obviously had bags of personal mystique, but still remains tantalising. When Queen turned the label down, he shrugged it off with "well there's only room for one Queen on Charisma", and therein lies a clue to so much more. His sexuality is only briefly mentioned, he died of alcohol abuse and despite artistic triumphs he was the man who foisted Phil Collins on the world. I can't help thinking this biography has missed a lot.

Wymer Publishing

THEATRES, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

FROM LONDON LIVING LARGE

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN ★★★★★
 @sohoplace | May 10 - Aug 12, 2023
 Mon - Sat: 7:30 pm, Thu & Sat: 2:30 pm



In 2005 *Brokeback Mountain* became an award winning film. Adapted from a 1997 short story by Annie Proulx, the tale of forbidden love has now come to the West End. The plot traces the twenty year relationship of two young cowboys who meet while they are protecting sheep grazing in summer pastures. They cannot acknowledge their relationship and strive to conform to social norms, but they are unable to forget their youthful encounter. It is this inability to commit to that love that will blight both their subsequent marriages and later lives. The story is relatively simple and depends heavily on making the characters and the development of their relationship credible. In this case, Director Jonathan Butterell has done a brilliant job, letting the characters' love grow almost wordlessly before the eyes of the audience. The pacing of the early scenes is exceptional as the atmosphere and mood are delicately established. Mike Faist, as the garrulous Jack who aspires to be a rodeo bull rider, puts in an extraordinary performance, hinting at his repressed desires while covering them with blithe banter. Lucas Hedges, as the taciturn Ennis who hesitates to accept what is happening, matches Faist's performance, but is perhaps less convincing when he tries to articulate his feelings in the discussions with his wife, Alma. His wrenching agony at the dissolution of that marriage doesn't quite ring true, although Emily Fairn does an excellent turn as the suspicious wife who doesn't want to believe what she knows. This is not a musical, but a play complemented by thirteen songs written by Dan Gillespie Sells and performed by Eddi Reader. The music nicely sets a context for the narrative, reinforcing the atmosphere without retelling the story. The melancholy tone of Reader's voice beautifully underlines the action, and *Brokeback Mountain* is a deeply touching presentation of first love viewed through the lens of bittersweet nostalgia. This is another first-rate production from the West End's newest theatre!

Reviewed by Jim Cooke
 Photo by Manuel Harlan

OPERATION MINCEMEAT: A NEW MUSICAL
 Fortune Theatre | Mar 29 - Aug 19, 2023
 Much depends on a dead man! One of the strangest stories of WWII comes to life in this new musical.

CHINA'S HIDDEN CENTURY ★★★★★
 The British Museum | May 18 - Oct 8, 2023
 Sat - Thu: 10 am - 5 pm, Fri: 10 am - 8:30 pm



Carl Sagan said, "You have to know the past to understand the present." Understanding China is no small task, but this excellent exhibition provides a fascinating glimpse into a shadowy era of the country's history. The 19th century was a tumultuous time for today's superpower. Through catastrophic wars and the disruptions of modernisation, everything changed and set the stage for a revolution that was to reverberate into the present. This exhibition brings together 300 objects and is the culmination of a four year project involving the collaboration of over 100 scholars from 14 countries. Divided into six sections: Court, Military, Artists, Everyday Life, Global Qing and Reform to Revolution, the story is told in a dramatic yet personal manner. Each section has an individual identified as a guide to that part of the narrative, and this device creates a wonderfully intimate tone bringing the selection of objects to life. From the Empress Dowager's amusing self-description and reference to Queen Victoria in the Court section to the tragic story of the painter Ren Xiong in the Artists gallery, the effect is to humanise the history. There is a lot of information to be gleaned from this remarkable aggregation of treasures but it is all kept in human perspective and made delightfully engaging. Don't miss the embroidered earmuffs, waterproof for workers, or portrait of Queen Victoria's little dog, Looty! *China's hidden century* may tell the epic tale of an important period in the country's history, but the hallmark of this extraordinary initiative is that it never overwhelms the viewer with information. Here's an exhibition that breathes life into a frequently misunderstood and insufficiently known period of the imperial state. It provides important insight into the past and essential context for the present.

Reviewed by Jim Cooke
 Image: Unidentified artist, *Portrait of Lady Li (Lu Xifu's Wife)*, about 1876. © ROM

DIVA
 Victoria & Albert Museum | Jun 24, 2023 - Apr 7, 2024
 Who doesn't love a diva? The concept of the iconic performer is examined in an exhibition looking at the worlds of film, opera, music and theatre.

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

PETER BROOKE

THE LORD BROOKE OF SUTTON MANDEVILLE CHPC

1934 - 2023

Member for the Cities of London & Westminster
1977 - 2001

Some recollections by David Bieda

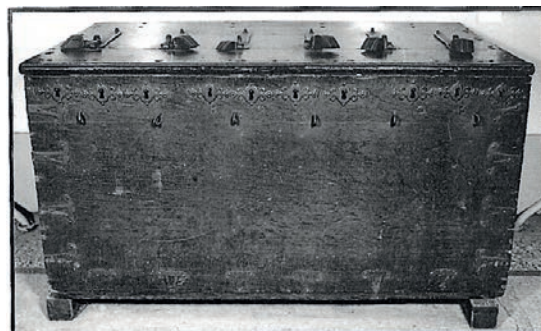
I was sad to learn of Peter's passing as I got to know him well during his time as our MP and afterwards.

Peter Brooke was born into a political family with long associations with Parliament. His father Henry Brooke was Home Secretary and his younger brother Sir Henry Brooke was a judge.

His most notable roles were as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and then for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). In two areas Peter left an indelible mark on our national life. The first was the National Lottery which he introduced as Secretary of State for DCMS. I recall suggesting that he displayed Thomas Neale MP's original 1694 lottery box at the launch event, which he duly did with a note thanking the Seven Dials Trust of which he was a patron. As Secretary of State for Northern Ireland he began to untie the Gordian Knot that was Northern Ireland. His patience and ability to listen to all interests began the process which had eluded many others, and led to the eventual peace accord.

Peter was the epitome of an establishment figure, but to my mind with a difference, as one of the last of the Tory pragmatic intellectuals, not hidebound by ideology. As our MP he had a great sense of duty and an understanding of the intricacies of city centre neighbourhoods such as Soho and Covent Garden (his two favourite areas). He was assiduous in representing all his constituents and ran a highly efficient office. I recall that when the residents of the Grosvenor Mayfair estate had issues

with a late night venue he sat on the roof until 2am observing the antics, not once but twice. At public meetings in Covent Garden he uncannily remembered the names of everyone asking questions. Answers always followed by letter, often followed up later to either report on progress or ask if the issue had been resolved.



*One Million Pound Bank Lottery Chest
In 1694, Thomas Neale MP introduced lotteries after the Venetian manner to raise funds for the Crown. His one million lottery was successful and the diarist Samuel Pepys recorded it as 'the talk of the town'. The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, Secretary of State, Department of National Heritage used the same chest at the launch of the Government's plans for a new National Lottery by arrangement with the Seven Dials Monument Charity and the custodians of the Public Records Office.*

On his retirement I organised a dinner in my house for residents from Soho and Covent Garden and asked Peter if I should invite Frank Dobson MP, his Labour counterpart in Holborn. "Don't do it without Frank, we've worked together behind the scene for years" was the response. Typical of a man who, whilst loyal to his party, engaged with others of all political persuasions.

When the Licensing Bill came up he helped me, Matthew Bennett and others by putting forward many amendments in the House of Lords. Whilst they failed, it led to the adoption of areas of Cumulative Impact in the Guidance which followed – based on Westminster's Stress Areas (sadly no longer existing). Matthew Bennett tells me of his support for the Soho Housing Association and the principle of social housing, promoted at a meeting with Sir George Young, then Housing Minister.

Peter helped me and colleagues in setting up the Covent Garden Information Technology Centre in Long Acre and was a great supporter of the Covent Garden Area and the Seven Dials Trusts. As a patron of the latter I and my

colleague Paul Draper took Peter out for lunch over many years and enjoyed Peter as a raconteur with his wry sense of humour and extraordinary breadth of knowledge. The most civilised of politicians, he will be sadly missed, as is his ilk.

LESLIE HARDCASTLE OBE

1926 - 2023

First I want to thank everyone who has written such wonderful things about Leslie.

Leslie never believed he was dying although those of us who saw him regularly knew it was just a question of time – he had many cancers but he somehow managed to dismiss that. Right up until the very last days of his life he was talking about what he was going to do when he got better.

I would like to share some of the lovely messages we received. But first a bit about his life beyond Soho.

He had such an amazing life, every part of which he was proud. Many of you will have heard his stories and goodness me there were so many and I can only touch on a tiny number He was born into a theatrical family and liked to say he was born in a trunk – like Judy Garland in the song. His maternal uncle was a prolific film actor of (mostly) small and sometimes tiny parts who, Leslie would say, “always died well” in the films he was in.

As Uncle Johnny was often out of work he had a sweet and toy shop in Newport Place on the corner of Newport Court. Leslie’s earliest memories of Soho were of visiting his uncle’s shop at the age of around eight, when he would re-arrange the sweets on the shelves – and meet the many actors who came to visit his uncle.

Later he tells the story of being thrown into an alcove in Leicester Place, by a bomb blast. He, a soldier in uniform and a prostitute all landed on top of each other.

He lied about his age – he would have been about 15 - to join the St. John’s Ambulance Brigade in Croydon, where he lived. He was a messenger boy and would peddle furiously through the bombing raids to carry messages between sites that had just been hit and HQ. There are lots of stories about that period of his life.

When he was called up Leslie became a nurse – a sick bay attendant – in the Royal Navy and spoke proudly of his time on the battleship HMS Anson, leaving the UK just as the War in Europe came to an end but sailing to the Far East where the war was continuing. He has photos of himself in a flattened and deserted Hiroshima to where he and a mate hitched a lift, only three or four months I think after the bomb. Extraordinary that they – anyone – were allowed to go there. Again, lots more stories of that part of his life.

Following his experience in the St. John’s Ambulance and then as a nurse in the navy, Leslie had wanted to train as a doctor but by now in his early 20s and having had a very disrupted education, he joined the BFI (British Film Institute). Before being called-up he had worked for British Lion in Wardour Street (cue more stories).

Leslie worked for the BFI at the National Film Theatre (NFT), now BFI South Bank, until he was retired (as a quasi civil servant it was compulsory to retire at 65). He oversaw the extension of the NFT to include the NFT2 and NFT3 and the restaurant; built up the London Film Festival; and then of course what must be the pinnacle of his creative talents, the creation of MOMI – the Museum of the Moving Image. Renowned throughout the world, and the highlight of many schoolchildren’s cultural education, it’s closure, after he had retired, he described as an act of cultural vandalism. I think many would agree with that sentiment.

After retirement he worked with Jonathan Sands at his Film Museum in County Hall and then in Covent Garden on a number of well received exhibitions, including on Harryhausen, Charles Chaplin and James Bond.

He was excited and enthusiastic when Soho Radio came into being – Soho’s own radio station – in 2014, and with Adrian Meehan, one of its founders, he came up with the idea of the Soho Society Hour. Until September 2022 he was one of its hosts every Thursday morning, for many years with Clare Lynch and latterly with Joel P Levack.

And of course he was one of the backbones of the Soho Society with Bryan Burrough and Matthew Bennett – and many others over the years – and a passionate founder member and supporter of the Soho Housing Association. I think he only ever missed one Fete, when our son got married. One of his favourite stories about the fete was the year when we had insurance against rain. It was a lovely sunny day, it had been a great success, and then it rained at 5pm. The insurers paid up. So the Society got double its money that year.

So that’s a whistle stop tour of Leslie’s remarkable life.

And now some of the lovely tributes:



Lucy Haine

Goodbye Leslie, I will miss our chats, your vast knowledge of Soho, humour, time and advice. You will be very much missed, a great ambassador of Soho and for us all.

Gaëlle Denis (BAFTA winner, animator, short film director author of graphic books script writer)

Leslie Hardcastle, my father-in-law, died this morning in Soho. Awarded an OBE, he was a cultured, kind, and generous man, and a wonderful grandfather.

Joan Bakewell (Leslie spent three weeks in China with Joan and others from the Arts in the early '80s at a time when China was just opening up to the West.)

I send much sympathy! I was Chair of the BFI when Leslie was a moving force. He was a mainstay of the institution he loved.... and a good friend to me. I remember him fondly.

Actors Children

Sending much love from ACT. Our late boss, Richard Attenborough thought the world of Leslie and spoke of him with great warmth & affection.

Paul Fisher (Labour Councillor)

So sorry for your loss. He was and will long remain a Soho legend

Glenys Roberts (former Tory Councillor)

So very sorry he was a marvellous man who worked hard for Soho, kind and rational, he will be much missed

Mark Fuller

So sorry for your loss. Every British cinephile (and many more besides) owe him a huge debt

Neil Brand (accompanies silent films on the piano, a composer, broadcaster)

The passing of a great man. RIP

Tino Giglio-Vigna, (life time Soho resident and neighbour)

Such very sad news for the whole of the Soho community. I can't think of anyone who embodied the spirit of the area and gave to it more than Leslie and with it all he was such a kind and gracious gentleman.

Pancho Lewis, (former Labour Councillor)

Leslie was an absolute legend, and I know everyone in Soho will miss him hugely.



SAVOURY QUICHE

A quiche – basically a pastry tart with a savoury filling – is ideal food for summer as it can be made in advance and served cold. Good for a picnic, taken whole in its tin to avoid breakage.

I must admit that I did not try the official Coronation quiche, but I do make quiches quite frequently, using the late John Tovey's recipe (somewhat simplified). The original Lorraine quiche would have contained eggs, bacon, cheese and cream only, but using a basic savoury egg custard, you can ring the changes with the filling (which French purists would deplore). You need roughly 350g vegetable, fish or meat, with perhaps some additional flavour- or texture-adding ingredients. Grated cheese (Cheddar, Emmenthal, perhaps a blue) sprinkled across the top before baking is always delicious.

Serves 4

filling ingredients (see below)

Savoury pastry

170g plain flour

85g salted butter, straight from the fridge, cut into pieces

a little curry powder, to taste

Savoury custard

3 medium eggs

300ml double cream (or 150ml each of double cream and crème fraîche)

salt and freshly ground black pepper

a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

Choose from the following filling suggestions, and prepare as appropriate.

350g bacon lardons, with 1 medium onion, chopped and fried in bacon fat

350g smoked haddock, with 50g grated Cheddar cheese and 1 tsp English mustard

400g broad beans, skinned, with 2 tbsp hazelnuts, roughly crushed

450g mushrooms, cleaned, sliced and fried in a little butter

350g vegetable (such as broccoli, cauliflower, peppers), all in florets or diced, with a little cheese, bacon or seeds and nuts

350g tomatoes, seeded and chopped, with 75g grated cheese, some olives and anchovy fillets

You need a 20cm loose-bottomed metal flan tin.

To make the pastry, measure the flour into the bowl of a food processor, add the chopped butter, and process until like crumbs. Add 2 tbsp water gradually, and pulse in. You may need a little more water, perhaps ½-1 tbsp. Gather together, knead a little on the work surface, then shape into a flattened ball. Wrap the pastry in clingfilm and chill it for 30 minutes.

To make the savoury custard, simply beat all the ingredients together, seasoning to taste, with salt, pepper and curry powder if you like – it's interesting...

Remove the pastry from the fridge, and allow to come back to near room temperature.

Roll out the pastry to a circle large enough to cover the base and sides of the tin. Roll the pastry around your rolling pin and place gently onto and into the flan tin. Press the pastry to the sides of the tin, and cut off most of the overhang. Prick the base of the pastry with a fork, and chill for another 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 160°C/140 fan/Gas 3, and place a baking sheet in the oven to warm up.

Line the pastry case with foil and baking beans, and place on the baking sheet in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and baking beans, trim the edges of the tart case, and return to the oven for another 15 minutes. Remove from the oven.

Turn the oven temperature up to 190°C/170 fan/Gas 5.

When the oven is up to temperature, arrange your chosen filling ingredients in the pastry case, and pour over the savoury custard. Slide into the oven and bake for 35 minutes.

Best when served slightly warm, but good cold, cut into wedges.

Susan Fleming



PRIDE IN LONDON

We are in the middle of Pride month, which runs from 1 June to 1 July this year, and is entirely run by volunteers. It ends with the Pride in London Parade on 1 July, which will see around 600 LGBT+ community groups march, with 30,000 people registered overall this year. The parade starts at Hyde Park Corner at 12 noon and finishes at Whitehall Place at 6 pm, so it should be amazing. The route goes along to Piccadilly Circus, down Haymarket and along Pall Mall to Trafalgar Square, culminating at Whitehall Place. You can watch from any of the designated public spaces along the route.

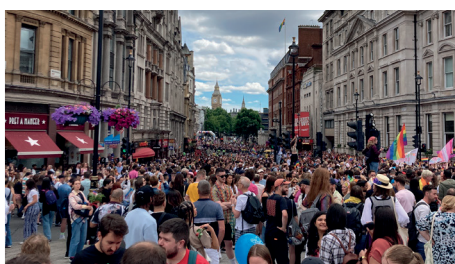
Soho will, as always, be host to a large number of events on 1 July, including a stage on Golden Square, plus a variety of stalls, beverages and food, with a variety of performances, speakers and entertainers.

Trafalgar Square also has a stage, with performances, stalls, food and beverages and a variety of stalls, variety of stalls, beverages and food.

A note of caution: be careful - there are sadly some very efficient thieves around, who will be on the lookout for pockets to pick, so keep your possessions out of harm's way and don't lose sight of mobile phones. There will be plenty of police and marshals on duty if you need them.

So stay safe, look after each other and your possessions and have a great day.

Jane Doyle



Leicester Square will host the women's stage. Likewise there will be stalls, food and drink.

Dean Street (the Shaftesbury Avenue end) has the cabaret stage, with a variety of acts.

St Giles-in-the-Field will have a dedicated LGBT+ family area with activities and performances for parents with children.

A selection of souvenirs will be available for sale, with all proceeds going to support LGBT+ charities.

The roads in Soho will be closed with many of the bars and restaurants supporting the event, particularly those on Old Compton Street and its surrounds, and there will no doubt be music and lots of entertainment.

FROM ST ANNE'S



It is hard to believe that a year has passed since Bella, my beautiful spaniel, won second prize in the dog show at the Soho Society Village Fete. She quickly overcame her disappointment at not coming first, of course, whereas with summer upon us I'm now reeling from the speed with which another year has passed.

Whilst Bella is the boundless ball of energy you'd expect from a 15 month old springer-cocker spaniel cross (a Sprocker, apparently), in many respects one of the joys of being a dog owner is that it forces you to slow down. Which, living in a place as vibrant and usually 'on the go' as Soho is, is no bad thing. Some people are often surprised to see dogs in Soho, assuming that dogs require their owners to live in a suburban semi rather than a Soho apartment. And whilst it is true that dog ownership is no doubt easier if you can open the back door when Fido needs the bathroom, there are many advantages to keeping a dog in the city.

For a start you meet people. Admittedly, if you're hoping to meet the love of your life out on the streets, the sight of you wrestling your dog's poo into a plastic bag with one hand whilst simultaneously restraining your hound from sniffing a run-over pigeon with the other might not be an instant turn-on to many potential suitors; but generally dogs are great ice breakers. The sight of a furry face with a waggy tail loving life simply makes most people break out in a smile. And frequently the smile goes from being aimed at the dog to its owner, resulting in all manner of sociable exchanges between strangers in a city where people otherwise appear desperate to rush past each other and avoid eye contact, rather than pause to swap usually dog-related life stories.

It's helpful that I have in Bella a dog that is as sociable as my previous companion Betty was reserved. Quick to greet

anyone who shows any interest in her, this is especially true when, as with Cristina in I Camisa and the chaps in La Porchetta Pollo where their exuberant greeting is followed by a few slices of prosciutto, Bella makes friends easily. Whereas the sight of another dog had my dear old Jack Russell paralysed with anxiety, a glimpse of another wet nose and a waggy tail has Bella lying on her back with her legs in the air quicker than you can say Pedigree Chum. She fits well in Soho.



It's also walking Bella, or whilst she's stopped for a sniff of something or other, that I see not only people but really take in our surroundings. Thanks to her I pay more attention to the trees bursting with life in St Anne's Gardens and with her I've become more aware of the condition of some of Soho's perilous pavements. Ambling the streets with her of a morning I have recently photographed the increasing amount of graffiti that we are seeing sprayed and scrawled across our buildings, walls and doorways, and have just sent the Council's Neighbourhood Supremo, Mary O'Connor, a collection of photographs for her consideration and, hopefully, action.

So whether it's the people I meet or the environment that might appear cleaner as a result of Bella, or just that she occasionally forces me to slow down during one of our frequent romps in the beautiful parks that surround us, I'm deeply thankful to have her in my life. I don't know whether she will be entering the dog show this year. But whether she does or not, with no offence to Dudley, Rolo, Coco, Otis, Pablo or any of Soho's other canine congregation - she's top dog to me.

Revd Simon Buckley



A. France & Son

Independent Family Funeral Directors
Est. 1764

A France & Son are an Independent family run business. We have been based in and around the Soho area and served it's residents for more than 250 years.

Our Head Office is still nearby at
45 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, WC1.

Funerals may be arranged at our office, or in the privacy of your home if preferred.

Pre-arranged Funeral plans are available.

Tel: 020 7405 4901 Email: info@afrance.co.uk

STORM
FLOWERS
GARDEN



Scan to shop!



Special offer for
Soho Clarion readers
20% off with code
CLARION20

Redeem online

Storm Flowers Garden is based in Soho, offering a curated range of tools and accessories for your urban garden needs!

Order online and collect from St Anne's Church clocktower.

www.stormflowersgarden.com | [@stormflowersgarden](https://twitter.com/stormflowersgarden)



MEDITERRANEAN CAFE

Established 1987

18 Berwick Street
London W1F 0HP

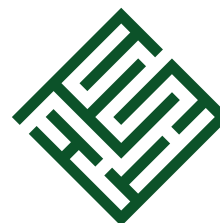
Mon - Sat: 9am-11:45pm
Sunday: 9am-10:30pm

Tel: 020 7437 0560
[@MedCafeSoho](https://twitter.com/MedCafeSoho)

email: info@medcafesoho.co.uk

<http://www.medcafesoho.co.uk>

**FIND US ON
BERWICK ST
MARKET IN
LONDON'S SOHO**



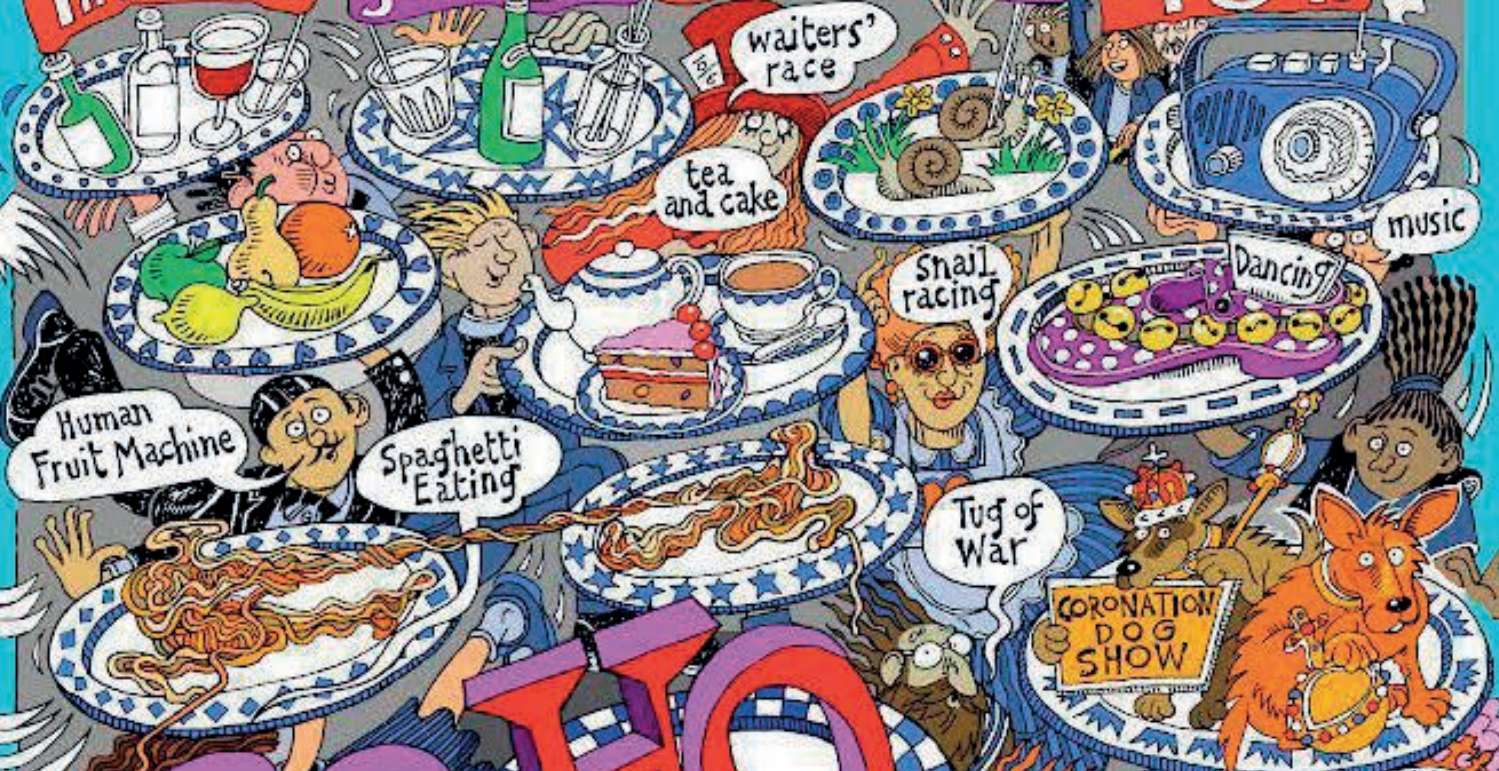
TWELFTH – A NEW ENTITY BEGINS TO BLOSSOM IN SOHO'S VIBRANT HEART WITH 5 SOUND PROOF STUDIOS, A CINEMA, A BAR, PODCAST ROOMS, OFFICE SPACE. TOOLED UP FOR FILMING, HOSTING PR EVENTS, BOOK AND FILM LAUNCHES, REHEARSALS, ART SHOWS, CONCERTS, COMEDY SHOWS, SCREENINGS, SHINDIGS AND COLLISIONS WITH BAR, A FLORIST, A MASSEUSE AND A PLACE TO TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF.

FOR MORE INFO

**EMAIL: twelfth@allisjoy.studio
OR CALL: +44 (0) 20 3921 0985**



The Soho SOCIETY PRESENTS the 48th



Human Fruit Machine

Spaghetti Eating

waiters' race

tea and cake

Snail racing

Dancing

Tug of War

CORONATION DOG SHOW

SOHO VILLAGE FETE

in loving memory of Leslie Hardcastle

SUNDAY
16th JULY
2023
12-6PM

ST ANNE'S
GARDENS
WARDOUR ST
W1

Admission Free

