



SOHO

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THE CLARION

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2019



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Cover image (repeated on page 32): Jenn Lambert @sohosketchbook

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



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Join the Soho Society today!

WHY?

- Get involved in your local Soho Community
- Support the Society's work reviewing PLANNING, LICENSING and LOBBYING on local issues
- Invites to 3 Member-Only Events (Next one is 11/10/19)
- The Soho Clarion delivered to your door

Membership Costs:

Individual

Resident £20/Non-Resident £30/Lifetime £250

Business

Business >30 Employees £50

Business <30 employees £200

There are 3 easy ways to join The Soho Society:

1. Below 



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2. **Via Our Website**

www.thesohosociety.org.uk

3. **Payment via your bank**

The Soho Society- Barclays bank

Account No: 13609987

Sort code: 20-10-53

(Use surname & postcode as Ref)

20th Century House and Soho's Heritage

The Society is continuing its campaign to save 20th Century House on the south west corner of Soho Square from demolition as proposed by the current owner of the building, Royal London Insurance. 20th Century House was constructed in 1937 and has been the home of the 20th Century Fox Film Corporation until the present day. It represents a key historical site in Soho and a key part of Soho's history in the film and television industry. It is also an unlisted building of merit in the Soho Conservation Area. Its loss would diminish Soho and one of London's oldest squares. Over 1,500 people have signed our petition asking for the withdrawal of the application.

Accordingly, the Society has made an application to Historic England for listing and has commissioned an expert's report on the case for listing, the case for its retention and prepared a note on the use of the building since 1937. The planning application has not been withdrawn but, we understand, is unlikely to proceed in its current form.

We remain concerned about the process of consultation by the applicant - the consultation with local residents failed to explicitly mention the demolition of the building in its questionnaire, referring instead to an increase in office space. Further, one of our local councillors feels that his role in seeking to represent residents' concerns over these issues can be met by merely asking the applicant about the consultation they have carried out. That needs to change.

If you are interested the various documents are on our website. You can also sign our petition at Change.org. We are also keen to help Royal London find a tenant for the building in its current form. Any assistance you can provide would be appreciated.

Councillor Richard Beddoe, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning, in his covering letter to the consultation on the new city plan said as follows:-

"It's absolutely vital that development must never be at the expense of our heritage. Our new approach to managing development will make sure planning for Westminster is about conservation not just preservation, and building tomorrow's heritage today. Our iconic landmarks and outstanding heritage form a stunning backdrop where people build lives, forge careers, and make memories."

We agree and welcome Cllr Beddoe's reiteration of a policy while questioning why he, or anyone at WCC or the development community, thought otherwise. We look forward to holding Cllr Beddoe to his renewed commitment.

The future of the Soho Centre for Health and Care

The Society understands that Living Care, which runs one of the GP services at the Soho Hospital for Women plans

to hand back its contract in the New Year having failed to make as much money as they needed to from the business. It is important to note that the failure is NOT because there is insufficient demand for GP services in Soho but because the community lost confidence in the company providing the services and the patients left.

I lost confidence in Living Care when it was explained to me that a telephone translation service was a reasonable alternative to a GP that speaks your language. On further examination, the explanations and excuses given exhibited a flamboyant lack of humanity or, indeed, care, though we recognise that a number of employees and locums do their best to help patients despite the difficult situation. There is now a risk that the CLCCG will use the failure of Living Care to close the service in Soho - despite the real need for it - and seek to sell off the valuable building for some other use. We need a new provider that commands the confidence of patients. The PPG have written in more detail on page 5.

The City Plan and Soho's infrastructure

The City Plan will come into effect next year following a long process of review of the comments and statutory consultation with the Secretary of State and the Inspector. Matthew Bennett has written elsewhere that the Society is broadly in favour of the City Plan Proposals because many of these are based on community's own Neighbourhood Plan as drafted, in part, by Matthew Bennett.

However the plan will not be able to stop development and economic growth per se which, under national legislation, is always considered to be a good thing no matter what the context. Barcelona, Venice and Amsterdam, under pressure from growing visitor numbers, have started to try to turn the tide on the basis that too much development and growth - especially in tourist numbers - ends up destroying the thing that the tourists are coming to visit and makes life for residents intolerable and damages the environment. I think Soho's infrastructure is under similar strain - construction, closed streets, street collapses, noise and piles of uncollected rubbish - which will eventually put off the tourists and is impacting on quality of life for residents. That is the debate that the City Plan could NOT have but I think it's a debate that does need to happen - especially if, as WCC has recently announced, we are to be carbon neutral in Westminster by 2040. Soho is a Golden Goose in many ways but it's not invulnerable.

We have a Society Social on 11 October (see our website for more details) where these and other issues can be discussed over a drink.

Tim Lord

SOHO NEWS

All sorts of events have taken place in Soho over the summer, some of which are covered in more detail elsewhere. First of all, there was the Soho Food Feast, which was a great success as always (see page 14)

Then there was the Soho Fete, which was also a great success - (see page 28), so I won't say more about it here)

There was Pride, which saw the streets of Soho packed with people enjoying the party atmosphere. The event was deemed to be a great success, although we have raised some issues, which will be taken up with the organisers before next year.

Ronnie Scott's celebrated its 60th anniversary with a street party on 20th July, which saw Frith Street closed to traffic. I couldn't do the event justice here, but there's lots more information on their website.

On the same day, Bar Italia celebrated its 70th anniversary (see page 10)

Most recently the Piano Bar, Bateman Street, hosted their inaugural Soho Live Jazz Week, which was a great success, with 45 shows in 15 venues, culminating in the grand finale on Carlisle Street, which was a six-hour jam. Their new look programme of jams, special features and jazz experiences launches this October if you are looking for a great spot for your Christmas get together please do visit pianobarsoho.com and get in touch.

New Beginnings

We have a bagel shop on the corner of Old Compton Street and Wardour Street! B Bagel Bakery opened last week and the smell of freshly baking bagels beckons you in! They have a selection of bagels, juices and coffee. They currently have an offer, if you buy a bagel before 10.30 of a free coffee. We wish them well.

Also the Breakfast Club has expanded to accommodate their queues, by taking over the premises that housed Polpetto at 11 Berwick Street.

Another premises due to open (Autumn 2019) is Folie at 37 Golden Square, "an all-day brasserie, inspired by 60s and 70s St Germain in Paris", apparently running the gamut of breakfast to late night cocktails with everything in between.

Rumour has it that a restaurant based on the DC comic book universe is to

open in the premises that housed Mash Steakhouse, at 77 Brewer Street, which are to be redeveloped into a restaurant "rooted within the DC Multiverse", so watch this space!

The old Patisserie Valerie site on Old Compton Street is to open as a pizza restaurant towards the end of the year. Building works are ongoing. Watch this space.

Gay Hussar update: Meanwhile negotiations continue to save The Gay Hussar, Mark Seddon of the Ghoulash Co-operative told The Clarion, this week, "No agreement has been struck yet as the buildings owners have to bring it up to scratch with fire regs etc, we have a meeting with the landlord's rep soon and will be accompanied by local Councillor Pancho Lewis, who is very supportive". Here's hoping!

Next door to the Gay Hussar in Greek Street is Milroy's, the specialist whisky shop, home to a basement bar called the Vault, which houses one of the largest whisky collections in Soho now have a second premises in a town house in Spitalfields. We wish them every success, but they are not leaving Soho, and we hope to catch up with them before the next edition of the Clarion.

Building Works Update

The Poland Street vaults have been repaired - after nearly two years! However, the road is in such a state that it should be completely resurfaced..... Also the vaults on Berwick/D'Arbly Streets are as yet not completed. Hopefully they will be completed shortly.

The fiasco that is 90-104 Berwick Street is yet further delayed. We are told the target date has shifted into the new year. April is the extreme end but, weather and Brexit permitting, the aim is to get the building handed over before that. Shop fitting, and so on that is not part of the contract will obviously take place afterwards. And there will be highway works in Hopkins/Peter Streets that are unlikely to be completed by then.

The other major building sites are progressing, and we don't hear any horror stories about them.

We understand that there is now not going to be a hotel built on the site of Film House on Wardour Street, which we think is good news.

Finally, to end this section, there is the good news that the Walker's Court development is nearly complete and the Boulevard Theatre, which looks fabulous, will open its doors to the public with the London premiere of the Ghost Quartet, which starts previewing on 24 October. For more information on this and other events that they plan to host go to their website: boulevardtheatre.co.uk. We wish the venue every success.

Jane Doyle

We're Watching

Recent planning applications have often been about renewing consents for tables and chairs to be placed on the highway. Such consent is always time limited and needs to be renewed. This to ensure that if the tables and chairs are causing a nuisance the consent can be reviewed. However, Westminster seldom question renewal unless there have been complaints. If you are concerned about some tables and chairs outside a restaurant or café, either because of how they are laid out to prevent people passing easily, or other issues like noise nuisance or litter or the way advertising boards have been placed on the pavement, please let us know and give us the details. We will then follow it up.

Restaurants installing openable windows is another bone of contention. Yes, the summers are hot and we all want air. But neighbours don't want the noise from the beat of amplified music and all the other noises from within wafting over to them so they can't work, think or sleep. We have had to oppose a number of applications for openable shopfronts completely or ask for a condition that if they are granted there should be no amplified or unamplified music allowed within the premises.

The big development by Soho Estates on either side of Walkers Court applied to re-order the use of some parts of the development. The proposed restaurant on Peter Street will not go ahead and is to become a shop, and that is welcome. The kitchen for the new Boulevard Theatre goes into the basement, and on the upper floors there is a rearrangement of the rehearsal space and administrative office space. In the basement there is

to be an increase in night club space. On balance, we did not object to the application but asked for a condition that the additional nightclub space should not be used to increase the capacity of that club.

A large scheme at 12 Soho Square came to us for comment. It is to replace a rather undistinguished building fronting a small part of Soho Square and extending back along Soho Street. At present it relates strangely to the street with the ground floor well below the surface of the pavement and a big roller shutter in the middle. After quite a bit of consultation amendment and discussion about it over recent months we felt the new scheme is acceptable, apart from the proposal to have a restaurant fronting Soho Square which we objected to, preferring retail instead with any restaurant located in one of the proposed shops in Soho Street. It has long been our view and was for a long while that the two squares should be kept largely free from restaurants, bars and cafes to ensure that their character within Soho remains distinct. We are writing to Westminster to ask that they consider this and do more to protect the character of Golden and Soho Squares.

Soho Neighbourhood Forum

The draft plan was finalised for our AGM on 3rd July and on 17th July we started an eight week formal Regulation 14 public consultation on it. This also involved a number of statutory bodies that we are required to consult. The consultation closed on 11th September and I hope you were able to complete our survey and give your comments. The consultation had three aims, to further publicise the plan, to gauge support for it and, most importantly, to see from comments if there are things we had missed, or if the policies themselves or the justification for them need amending. We will now assess all the survey results and comments and make any amendments that are required. We then have to complete a number of supporting documents and once the whole bundle is complete, we will submit them and the plan to Westminster City Council to start the process of adopting the plan!

Matthew Bennett

Licensing

Westminster's Licensing Policy has been carefully constructed to meet the needs of the area with the biggest concentration of licensed premises in the UK, and is updated every few years to ensure it stays relevant. The Soho Society contributes to the updates and we therefore support this policy through the work of our licensing group. However, there can be times when we take issue with Westminster's own application of its policy.

Recently, a large, new restaurant applied for a licence in a fairly quiet Soho street. With a capacity of 300, they are seeking to stay open until 1 am on six nights a week. Given that it would potentially mean an extra few hundred people in the area each night, with attendant noise into the early hours of the morning as customers leave, we objected to the application. Had the owners kept within Westminster's 'core hours' (i.e. closed at 11.30-midnight) we would have had no objection, but the later time means more people in Soho late at night. More people means more noise – from people, cars, etc – and therefore increases the adverse cumulative impact on the area, diminishing residential amenity.

Last month, despite the hours of operation being outside of council policy, Westminster granted the application until 1am. They reasoned that, as the street was quiet and had few domestic residences, it would not therefore harm the delicate commercial/residential balance of the neighbourhood. This may sound logical until you remember that, in order to get from the restaurant to home (or wherever), patrons will disperse through surrounding streets, all of which can be more residential. And so more Soho dwellers will be listening to more late night noise. The implications for the few precious quiet corners of Soho should concern us all.

David Gleeson

Soho Square General Practice – Here We Go Again

We have reached a further stage in the continuing saga of the Soho Square General Practice at the Soho Square

Health Centre, No. 1 Frith Street.

The Practice was established in the 1990's with strong support from the local communities, in particular the Soho Society, and championed the interests of the Cantonese speaking community, with Cantonese speaking Clinicians, Receptionists etc., and the LGBT+ community.

Back in 2014, the organisation holding the contract to manage the Practice (known as the "Provider") announced that they did not wish to continue. The NHS gave Patients the option of finding another practice (a system known as "dispersal"), or if there was overwhelming opposition to this, they would find another "Provider" to run the practice.

In a remarkable example of local community groups coming together from Soho, Covent Garden and Fitzrovia to support their communities, three hundred patients attended a meeting called at very short notice, and the Chinese community organised a paper petition, which reached approaching 2,000 signatures in a very short time.

The NHS received an unprecedented 800 plus responses from patients to their consultations. The responses were almost universally opposed to dispersal.

We are now once again faced with potential closure of the Practice.

All the Cantonese speaking staff, and the two experienced, long standing and much-loved GPs left within a period of three months, and eighteen months of locums and instability has followed. No wonder that patients have been leaving and the Provider has decided to hand back the contract.

The CLCCG (Central London Clinical Commissioning Group)/ NHS are consulting patients and stakeholders, who are invited to write in to confirm support for the continuation of the practice.

If we do not want to see the closure of this historic practice, with nearly 30 years of working with our communities, patients and the communities from which they are drawn must once again come together and make their voices heard loud and clear.

The Practice can be viable under a regime that provides a high and

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stable level of care for our diverse communities, one that is responsive to those communities, and one which the communities feel they can support to increase the patient roll, which is essential, as the Practice's income is dependent on patient numbers.

To find out more, and offer support (including who to send a letter of support to), contact the PPG (Patients' Participation Group) on sohosquareppg@outlook.com or check the Society's website and the dedicated page on this subject www.thesohosociety.org.uk.

Wendy Harcastle

Ward Panel Update

Summer is nearly over. Our police have been busy on our behalf. However, with their very limited resources, there's only so much they can do. The good news is that Mr Johnson and Mr Javid are promising to increase the resources of the Met - though how many of the promised officers will come to our Borough is another matter, or indeed when they will come, as they can't be conjured up out of thin air!

Luckily, we have little knife crime, as such, in Soho. However the drug related crime seems never-ending. Every time it seems slightly better other stories emerge. As some of the users/dealers move on, others arrive. Cambridge Circus and its environs are still the main focus of activity. The dealers seem to have not a care in the world and carry on dealing openly, becoming aggressive with those that cross them, even if they are trying to access their own premises. There is also a lot of begging, sometimes very aggressive, obviously to fund drug and other addictions. Please report any threats or concerns to the police. Soho also has a lot of crime in the hours between midnight and 4 am, when people are perhaps more vulnerable and not as alert as they might be. However the police are aware of this and I am told they are taking measures to deal with it. There are also pickpockets who are never far away on the look-out for victims, so be careful of your possessions. Don't leave phones on tables, bags on show. Some of the

perpetrators are very quick and have various ruses to attract attention, so be vigilant. I know this is obvious, but.....

Another crime that seems to be on the rise in Westminster is cyber crime. I'm told that in July (which are the latest figures available) over 150 reports were made to Action Fraud costing a total of £1,419,098 (an average of £9,461 per victim), the main ones being false representation, banking fraud and investment fraud. As to the latter, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is, and the FCA has issued some advice, most of which is obvious, such as to reject unsolicited investment offers whether made online, on social media or over the phone. If you are tempted to invest check the FCA Register to see if the firm or individual you are dealing with is authorised and check the FCA Warning List of firms to avoid, and get impartial advice before investing.

If a stranger calls asking you to change a standing order, direct debit or bank mandate be very suspicious. It is probably a fraudster. If an 'official' calls asking you to transfer funds, it's almost certainly a fraudster. HMRC, banks, etc, do not ask you to do this over the telephone.

Always report scams fraud and cyber crime to Action Fraud, either online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by telephone on 0300 123 2040.

Another thing that constantly exercises us is pedicabs. It's unlikely there'll be any legislation in the near future with the turmoil that is Brexit. However, report any noise or other issues to Westminster Council. It can be done online under "Report it", which is easy. You will get a report number, and it will give the council an idea of where the particular 'hot spots' are, and hopefully something will be done over time.

Remain vigilant and report crime. If people do not report crime it's assumed there isn't a problem, so we wouldn't get the extra police we need.

Jane Doyle

Update From The Met

Thank you for again asking me to write this article, it is a great way for me to engage with so many of you that either live, work or visit Soho.

I hope you've all had a great summer. We have had so many fantastic events since the last article. The food feast and the fete were both so well organised and run that it meant we had no issues at all and allowed us to meet with and speak to the visitors about the work we do in Soho. Pride was again another great, well run and organised event, again with low crime figures considering the amount of visitors we had. Both myself and some members of the community have identified numerous things that could be changed for next year, and I've taken those to Pride; who have taken them all on board and will look at potential changes to various things with me in the lead up to next year. In Soho we are seeing an increase in theft and have done for a number of months. We are doing more and more each day to target suspects and advise potential victims and businesses on crime prevention. It is important that whilst out and about we all pay attention to our phones/wallets and bags. Pickpockets and thefts from tables account for most of the crime in Soho and the rest of the West End. Robbery has dropped significantly since the last article which is great. However it does still happen. We try to have officers out at night in the right places at the right times. We have organised numerous drug operations and have undertaken all of these in plain clothes. We have managed to follow drug users straight to their dealer and on occasions have been able to make arrests. In fact, in the last three weeks we have had three people for dealing and a further three for being concerned in drug dealing. Investigations are ongoing for all cases. Whilst these operations have seen dealers arrested we have also arrested nearly 30 individuals in the last few weeks for offences such as failing to appear at court and being recalled to prison. Our work with tackling all of these issues is still ongoing and we are doing all we can every day. I know begging is an issue and have been told on numerous occasions that it is getting worse and more aggressive. We deal with this when we see it. However, we still get very few reports so please do report this when you can using one of the methods detailed below. We now have various ways to report

both crime and ASB: you can call using 101 for all non emergencies, but for any emergency call 999. Non-emergencies can be reported online at www.met.police.uk/report, and during the day between 8am and 10pm you can tweet a direct message to @metcc (this is exactly the same as reporting online or by calling as we have staff operating this account to deal with the reports). Whether you use the phone, online or twitter officers will be despatched if needed. If officers aren't needed - perhaps the ASB has stopped (e.g. an aggressive beggar has now left the area - then the calls still help by giving us a true reflection of the offences/issues occurring on the ward. In relation to rough sleeping please report this to street link using www.streetlink.org.uk. Any tents are initially dealt with by Westminster Council. these amongst all other council issues can be reported online at www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it. Finally a reminder you can view what we are up to on a regular basis. Pictures of wanted people and those who are banned from the area are on our twitter page @MPSSoho.

Steve Muldoon

Proposed Pedestrianisation of Beak Street

We understand that Westminster City Council is working with Shaftesbury plc on proposals to extend the Kingly Street / Carnaby Street pedestrianised shopping area further south to encompass Beak Street. The pedestrianisation would extend along Beak Street from Warwick Street to Upper James Street. All westbound traffic on Beak would be turned down Upper James Street into Golden Square and then on to either Brewer Street or Sherwood Street and then presumably on to Shaftesbury Avenue. Alternatively the traffic could turn down Bridle Lane or Great Pultenay Street back onto Brewer Street. Deliveries would take place between 7 am and 11 am in the morning - when traffic would flow, leaving the rest of the day (and night) from 11 am to the following morning at 7 am for pedestrians - shopping and presumably tables and chairs on the highway and drinkers from the pub much like Kingly Street, though this will depend

on further planning and licensing decisions.

The Marshall Street junction with Beak Street would also be closed, thus routing all Broadwick Street traffic down Lexington Street or up Poland Street. Traffic will be reversed on (the now relatively quiet) Bridle Lane which may mean an increase in car traffic past the residential buildings on Bridle Lane.

These proposals are intended to increase comfort for pedestrians and are based on a traffic survey provided by Shaftesbury and "generally support the modal shift to pedestrians in this area". Shaftesbury has not yet made the traffic model available despite repeated suggestions that it would be helpful to do so. Its view (see below) is that the partial closure would reduce rat run traffic that transits Soho to avoid the junction at Piccadilly Circus. To be honest, we think that there may be other ways to address this problem without closing Beak Street, and that might have been a better question to put to the traffic consultants. We note that traffic can still transit Soho via Great Marlborough Street.

Next steps are an informal consultation with the local community run by the Council. If there is "broad support" there will be an experimental traffic order and formal consultation. WCC have "secured support" for the cost of this.

In addition to the informal consultation that is coming from WCC you can also complete the Soho Society's own informal survey - see our website - www.thesohosociety.org.uk - for more information. Initial results from that survey indicate considerable concern from residents.

The Society's initial view from its July board meeting is that it is worrying for the council to be working for this length of time this closely with a private company whose interests do not necessarily align with those of residents who may be adversely impacted by the implementation of these proposals. It also creates a risk of a conflict of interest in the council and a perception of poor governance that brings the council itself into disrepute. The actual proposals would appear to risk yet further traffic chaos in Soho (especially with this and the cumulative impact of other temporary road closures for construction, etc) and

the risk of increased noise nuisance at night.

Shaftesbury have asked us to publish this statement:-

"We encourage and welcome a full consultation on the Beak Street proposals. Naturally, we have been working with the Council on these proposals, but the aspiration to improve Beak Street is not a new one and was in fact first mooted with the Soho Action Plan back in 2007, and again in the council's Soho Public Realm Study (as a priority project) back in 2014. With our long term commitment to the area, why would we not help the council to deliver improvements? We have a long standing record of investing in Westminster's public realm all over the West End, which has helped to improve residential amenity and the way that people can move about the city more easily on foot. We have always discussed projects with the Council in line with their publicly stated policy objectives. We agree with both you and Matthew that this particular project has been in gestation for way too long. Ideally we would have wanted open consultation on it at least a year ago. We also agree that a look across Soho as a whole is crucial to devise the best way for the area to go forward in the future. For this reason, when we asked a traffic consultant to look at what could be done in Beak Street we made sure that the traffic study they did, surveyed the whole of Soho to ensure that this would not be a project considered in isolation of how all of Soho moves and operates. With the whole of Soho in mind, we support the Council's policies on improving air quality and reducing traffic, as opposed to an approach which would re-open streets up. We would welcome inclusion of wording in the summary at least which highlights that between 30 and 60% of the traffic using Beak Street has no purpose in Soho whatsoever, and is rat running via a route past Soho Parish School. If the majority of that traffic was eliminated from the area the proposals could improve pedestrian safety along the entire length of Beak Street, for the residents who live there and those that work on and visit the street."

We have asked for the traffic study to be published sooner rather than later.

Tim Lord

COUNCILLOR

TIM BARNES

CONSERVATIVE WARD COUNCILLOR

Rough Sleeping

Westminster City Council spends over £7m per year on rough sleeping – more than any other council in the country. Of course, it's a bigger issue here too, with people from all over the UK, mainland Europe and beyond, finding themselves sleeping rough. This is an issue that residents, local businesses and campaigners raise regularly with me and fellow councillors. At a recent Soho Ward Panel meeting over the summer, chaired by the Soho Society's ever-energetic Jane Doyle, one resident asked an innocent-sounding question about rough sleeping and accidentally took over the agenda for most of the meeting!

In response to the problem, Council Leader Nickie Aiken, has initiated Westminster City Council's 'Hidden Network of Heroes' campaign to raise awareness of the work done to help more rough sleepers off the streets and turn their lives around. An army of staff and volunteers already helps rough sleepers who may be suffering mental illness, battling addiction, family breakdown or abuse, but without sufficient recognition. In highlighting their work, we hope to say thank you and to underline the need to support them.

The dedication of these staff and volunteers enables over 80% of rough sleepers to avoid a second night out. It's worth noting that less than 3% of rough sleepers in Westminster have links to the area and 97% of those that engage with our services find their way off the streets for good.

Although you might feel better giving to the needy person in front of you, the professional advice is to support charities that help to improve the lives of vulnerable people. So, every time you're tempted to give cash or a sandwich to a street-sleeper, please think it through. Many of those on the street of Soho and close by are part of organised begging gangs or have deep drug or alcohol problems and their interests are almost certainly better served by your generosity through existing charities and intervention programmes.



Tap London takes a fixed donation when you touch with a card and splits it between 22 homeless charities. This one is in a window on Haymarket.

There are many charities to which donations can be made.



CentrePoint Soho is based on Berwick Street and focuses on getting young people off the streets.

Donations to St Mungo's and The Passage work infinitely better than cash donations directly to the person.

The 'Hidden Network of Heroes' is a priority for Westminster Council. To find out more about the Hidden Network, the services available to rough sleepers and to donate please head to: www.hidden-network.help/launch.

Join us for Silver Sunday Tea Dance – 6 October!

Senior Soho residents and those from elsewhere in the West End and St James are invited to a tea dance from 3-5pm on Sunday 6 October in recognition of Silver Sunday.

We will be delighted to offer tea, refreshments and music to dance to for those who will join us and we may have a few surprises on the day!

Organised by the Conservative Councillors from the West End and St James' Wards, we are grateful to Zedel's in Soho, who have provided the Crazy Coq's, 20 Sherwood Street, W1, for the event.

If you would like to join us please email Mark via mark@45west.com to let us know!

Cracking Down on Illegal Renting

You may have read last month about a Westminster City Council tenant who has been ordered to pay over £100,000 after losing a court case against the Council. This is an issue that causes problems in Soho, the wider West End and, indeed, much of central London.

The use of Airbnb and other similar sites has driven up housing costs so long-term residents find it ever harder to afford to live here. Even the best meaning short-term residents may not be able to understand when to put rubbish or how to take care of properties, which leads to incidents of anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and noise issues too. Furthermore, most mortgages and insurance companies don't allow for short-term lets meaning that owners may be risking losing their homes if disaster-strikes, and then they may not be able to meet the costs of their own repairs or those of their neighbours.

In the well-publicised case reported on across much of the media, Westminster City Council had identified a Council tenant who had been sub-letting their property against the terms of their tenancy agreement. Council staff had found the property being advertised and he was taken to court last summer but now that his appeal has been rejected, he has had to pay over £100,000 and has lost his council flat, which will now be offered to someone with more genuine need. We currently have over 1,500 properties across Westminster under investigation and are pressuring the Government to introduce a compulsory cross-platform registration scheme for property owners who want to short let their property.

Let's Talk

Cllr Jonathan Glanz and I hold a councillor surgery in Soho on the last Friday of every month at St Anne's on Dean Street from 5pm. You can just turn up and drop in – no

appointment needed – and all local residents and businesses are welcome.

Meanwhile, please feel free to contact me via phone on 020 7641 3411, @CampaignTim on Twitter or tbarnes@westminster.gov.uk if you prefer.

COUNCILLOR PANCHO LEWIS LABOUR

Over-development in Soho

As readers of The Soho Clarion will know, in the Robert Davis era it often felt like Soho was run in the interests of big developers. The whole system appeared to be designed to meet their interests alone, and the voice of the local community didn't count for very much at all.

Since the local elections last year, Westminster Conservatives have begun to wake up to the scale and depth of local discontent. They've finally agreed to introduce a Soho Special Policy Area (SPA) to help protect Soho's character. Initially they refused to implement one – but after residents included it in the Neighbourhood Plan and we, the Labour party, included it in our manifesto, they acquiesced. This shows that by campaigning together we can make progress.

But the latest version of the Soho SPA has been watered down. Measures to stop big hotels and protect small businesses aren't as robust as they were initially. I've been lobbying to strengthen these along with residents, and I hope the Planning Cabinet Member Richard Beddoe will listen.

On a related note, the Soho Society are running a stellar campaign to prevent 20th Century Fox being demolished - which I'm supporting. Demolishing this iconic building would rob Soho of an invaluable part of its cultural heritage. I urge everyone to support the petition which you can find by googling 'Royal London 20th petition'.

Update on the Gay Hussar

You may have noticed the site where the Gay Hussar stood on Greek Street remains boarded up. I'm working with the Goulash Co-operative – a group of journalists, politicians, and lawyers – to try to re-open the renowned Hungarian eatery. It's critical that Consulco, who manage the property, listen carefully to the arguments put forward by the Co-operative. They have a strong business case to re-open the restaurant.

Toilets are a public right

I'm running a campaign demanding that Carlisle – the



private organisation owned by Conservative donor Lord Ashcroft which runs public toilets in the City of Westminster – is held to account for its poor performance. Toilets are regularly closed without notice and left in a very dirty condition. One example is the Broadwick Street toilets which are closed regularly without notice.

Access to toilets is a public right and yet this right is in effect being denied. In practice, many are having to pay to use the toilet. Tourists, workers, and residents alike often find the only way to use the toilet when they're out and about is by going to a café or a pub and getting a coffee or a pint while they're there. Others will sneak past hoping not to be spotted - no-one should have to be forced to have to do this in the first place.

Declaring a Climate Emergency

Turning to bigger picture issues, I've been lobbying Westminster Council to publicly declare a state of climate emergency. More than a hundred local authorities across the country have already declared one and set ambitious dates by which to become carbon neutral. The scale of the climate crisis, as articulated by Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough, requires local authorities – as well as national government – to take dramatic action to reduce carbon emissions in transport, energy, planning, and elsewhere. I'm pleased to say that Westminster Councillors have now voted to publicly declare a climate emergency. I've been working with the community to press the Council hard to declare one, so I'm really pleased they eventually agreed to it. The hard work to tackle climate change begins now.

I hold monthly surgeries every third Saturday of the month: Between 10-11am at Danceworks, 16 Balderton Street, Mayfair, London W1K 6TN; and 11.30-12.30 at 68 Dean Street, Soho, W1D 4QJ

No appointment is necessary.

BAR ITALIA 70 YEARS ON

On 20 July 2019, Frith Street celebrated two major events, Ronnie Scott's 60th anniversary and the 70th Anniversary of Bar Italia, which has been in the same family since its 'birth', which in these ever changing times in Soho is truly remarkable. I recently caught up with Tony Polledri to hear a little more about the Bar Italia and its history.

Tony's grandparents, Lou and Caterina Polledri came to England in the 1920s and a little later set up a café in Long Acre, not far from the then famous Covent Garden market, which Caterina kept going during the war years, despite Lou having been interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien. Later, in 1949, they saw an opportunity in Frith Street and set up Bar Italia, and borrowed £50 to buy the place! During those post-war years Bar Italia, which was a success from the beginning, was a cornerstone of the large and thriving Italian community in Soho - it was a place where people could meet for a coffee, find out what was going on back home, find work, meet old friends, make new ones. They had the second Gaggia coffee machine manufactured, then gas powered, but replaced 50 years ago with an electric model which is still going strong today. Not long after opening there was a street carnival. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello took part, riding cycles on the street to publicise the event. There was also a prize, a baby Gaggia, for whoever could drink the most coffee! The prize was won by a little old lady, who tucked the machine under her arm and went off with it! Would that would be allowed to happen today? Unlikely!

Tony's father, Nino, took over the business in the 1970s, and Tony came a decade later, making the third generation of Pollidris in the family business. He remembers many of the Soho 'characters' from those days, who all came to the smoke filled café. Tony, who didn't smoke, would open the doors to let some of the fumes out, and installed ceiling fans, thus the café started the move into the street where you can still sit and enjoy a cup of coffee and watch the world go by.

At one time Bar Italia used to close at 9 pm, but Tony's father's motto was never to close when there was a customer present. He soon realised there was a thriving night time business to be a part of. They then applied for a late night licence which now allows them to remain open to 5 am. The only day that Bar Italia closes is Christmas Day. In the 1990s, the family were aware that there was the potential for a restaurant, the premises next door having been vacated by Bianchi's, so they opened Little Italy, still going strong to this day, opening from noon to 3 am. (See their website for details).

Bar Italia has long been a haunt of 'celebrities', who come in unnoticed for a cup of coffee - David Bowie, Kylie

Minogue, Adam Ant, Suggs, Mick Jagger, Mick Hucknall, to name but a few. In fact, Kate Moss had been in the day before.

There are many photos on the walls of customers past and present, famous and infamous, including one of Rocky Marciano, which takes pride of place. The picture was sent to the Pollidri family by his widow to thank them for looking after him when he was in London. Having heard that he was tired of eating in London restaurants, Nino had befriended him and taken him to his mother's house, who fed him on some of his favourite Italian dishes. The picture has left Bar Italia only once, when it featured in the film *Absolute Beginners*. Soho and the Bar Italia were replicated in the studios in Shepperton but the picture could not be, and so it went off there. Tony and his brother, Luigi, had a part in the film, making coffee (and thus guarding the picture)!

Tony has seen Soho change over the years, but he is proud that the Bar Italia has remained the same. Two of his proudest moments, he tells me, were Italy winning the World Cup in 1982 and 2006. In 1982 the surrounding streets after the match were one huge party! In fact, when Italy play football to this day you can tell from afar how the team is doing by the cheers and/or groans when a goal is scored!

One of his saddest moments, he says, was when Caffè Nero opened, not because of the competition but because it meant the corporates were coming to Soho, and he feared it could lose some of its 'identity'.

As to a little history of the building, in 1926 John Logie Baird, one of the pioneers of television, first demonstrated live television from the fourth floor to the second. The building has a blue plaque in commemoration of this historic event.

For the 70th anniversary party, a wonderful day, three generations of the family were there, Tony's parents, Tony, of course, his brother and sister, and their children, alongside many of their friends, no doubt being looked down on with approval by Caterina and Lou. Here's to the next 70 years!

Jane Doyle



BERENJAK

27 Romilly St, W1D 5AL



There are an estimated 70,000 Iranians, 1.4 million Indians and 250,000 Chinese thought to be living in the UK, or at least that's what the Home Office thinks. So you would think that there would be a good number of Iranian restaurants, proportionally representing this great and historical culture, which is certainly the case with India and China, happily assimilated into that great melting pot that we call British cuisine. A majority of these Iranians came to the UK after the 1979 revolution - that's 40 years ago. You would have thought that in 40 years they would have made a bit more effort to spread the joy that is Persian cuisine, rather than hiding it and keeping it all to themselves. A very selfish attitude, which thankfully the Indian and Chinese communities chose to not do! Otherwise we would be none the wiser when it came to Chicken Tikka or sweet and sour pork.. imagine...

Soho has always been a hub of immigration from all corners of the world - Italians, Maltese, Russians, Chinese and even the Swiss. With these hordes came their cuisine, and as a result Soho today is blessed with probably the best multi-cultural mix of restaurants in London. However, something was missing, not an Iranian restaurant in sight. That was until recently when Kian Samhain decided enough was enough, time to bring Persia to Soho.

Berenjak, which according to their website mean handfuls of brightly coloured, toasted rice. Is the new addition to Romilly Street. Hiding behind a reimagined Persian shopfront is Soho's answer to a rustic hole in the wall eatery from Tehran. Like Palomar in Rupert Street, Berenjak has a large open kitchen with bar seating, with a dining room at the back. I would always sit at the bar wherever possible, certainly if you are alone or with one other. It doesn't work so well if there are more than two, as conversation can become a problem, particularly when trying to discuss the merits of Persian cuisine over Lebanese or Israeli when the chefs are battling their flaming Tanoor or Mangal barbecue just feet away. The chefs were more than happy to give me

some assistance in deciphering the menu, and of course giving me their two pennies worth when it came to ordering.

Now, finally to the food. There is an array of fabulous starters, Panir Sabzi being my favourite - simple, colourful and flavoursome. The mix of fresh tarragon with the feta, walnuts and radish is very special. The Mirza Ghasemi, burnt aubergine, garlic, tomato with Cacklebean eggs takes the humble idea of a Baba Ghanoush and takes it up 10 or 11 levels. All of the offered Kababs are sensational. If I had to choose, I was blown away by the Jigar, a delicious combination of liver and sweetbreads, onion and lavash bread.



However if liver and sweetbreads ain't your thing, then you would not be disappointed with Jujeh or Barreh Kababs, which I thought were extremely tasty. Whatever you order, I would recommend you try the Taftoon or Sangak breads which are very handy in the mop up operation. If you haven't, as I usually do, over ordered and you do feel like pudding then you will enjoy the Baklava ice cream sandwich - a perfect way to end a truly memorable meal.

Philip Antscherl

WALKING

In the mid 90's I spent two years walking the streets of Soho as a kind of 'runner' for several of the unlicensed sex video shops. I took over from a nice but unreliable old alcoholic with a nickname so seedy you couldn't make it up. My role wasn't particularly illicit, I fetched food for sex video shop staff.

To contextualise how I came to do this job, I need to skip back just a few months: my first job in Soho was in the St James Tavern pub on Great Windmill Street. I lived upstairs in the smallest room in the building. If you look up to the top floor, you can see a funny little lead lined dormer type window, squashed between two tall chimneys. Squeezed in with two lads, an Australian and a New Zealander, I slept on the floor pretending not to see the small black cockroaches that shared the room with us. I had run away from my home town, and because of my pride I had no one to turn to and in all honesty I can't even remember why now, it all seemed so important and desperate at the time. The manager was a total crook, charging us rent and council tax, so that we barely had any wages left to live on. To be able to eat I used to steal food, a few chips or scampi here and there, out of the dumb waiter before I took the plates out. I knew this was wrong, and the prices the customer was paying were pretty high and the food not that great, but I couldn't afford food and I remember feeling so hungry. All the live-in bar staff from the pubs in the surrounding vicinity hung out, everyone seemed to be far away from home.

While I worked in the pub I met a north London lad with an amazing smile, a cheeky charmer...and I was charmed. Let's call him Tony! Tony became a regular. He started to come in at the same time every day, prop up the bar and talk to me while I worked, something that tourists never do. There was something very on the edge about him - I liked that.

The same guys worked in each shop on the same days, and I would storm in like a crazy whirlwind demanding their order and money was ready. Each person would write their food of choice and I would head off to get it. My shifts were filled with unexpected happenings, so many stories, but my route always the same. Starting on Great Windmill Street with a small shop, less dingy than the rest, bright and modern looking, a few doors down from the Duke of Argyll. We used the pub as our 'office' for the Friday staff meetings, all the bar staff knew us well and after meetings we would stay for drinks. This part of Soho had a way of making me feel at home, a sense of dysfunctional familial belonging. Walking round to Brewer Street, almost opposite Green's Court, there were two doors right next to each other, one with a large entrance opening straight into the shop and another smaller door with shabby narrow stairs that led to a shop below. I once got stopped and questioned by two people from the council asking who I was and what I was doing. Wandering from shop to shop dropping 'stuff' off could look a little suspicious - twice daily, seven days a week! The next stop was my least favourite, the shop at the far end of Green's Court. I never liked the man in the shop. He was the only person who ever, and always, asked me for sex. This one was next door to a clip joint, the kind where the price list was taped on the back of the entrance door.

The girls who stood in the corridor down to the clip joint befriended me. They were Sweet and friendly, though persistent in their attempts to persuade me to join them as a hostess. One day they introduced me and my friend to a man whose penis was down to his knees!

There was a tiny shop half way down the main run of Old Compton Street, then finally heading towards the last two shops. My penultimate stop was on Moor Street, the last parallel with this one but back on Old Compton Street. These two were the smallest and seemed the sleaziest of all the shops, one nestled quietly opposite Metamorphosis and The Spice of Life. All the shops have been gone for years now and many of the food places too, such as The Stockpot. Bar Bruno is still popular. I sometimes sit staring intently out of the window, looking for the people I knew, back then. I scrutinise people's faces, scour the streets searching for a tiny bit of proof that I once existed here. I am here now but no longer have a presence. For a brief moment in time I felt like a part of Soho, but now I am nothing but a tourist.

Amy McKenny



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SOHO PARISH SCHOOL

School Garden Receives a Boost

The school garden has been revitalised with a kind donation of plants from the Warner Gin Distillery Chelsea Flower Show. The Warner garden. Designed by Helen Elks-Smith the garden won a silver gilt medal on Main Avenue. The garden (pictured below) was designed to reference the pastoral setting of Falls Farm where the distillery is based.



The donated plants were collected and replanted by some parents and children bringing a new lease of life to the garden and creating a natural environment for playtimes and relaxation. The school run a weekly enrichment gardening club in which the children grow vegetables and make bug hotels to encourage wildlife. The school still needs some large planters or balcony boxes so if anyone can help please get in touch: anna@sohoparish.co.uk.



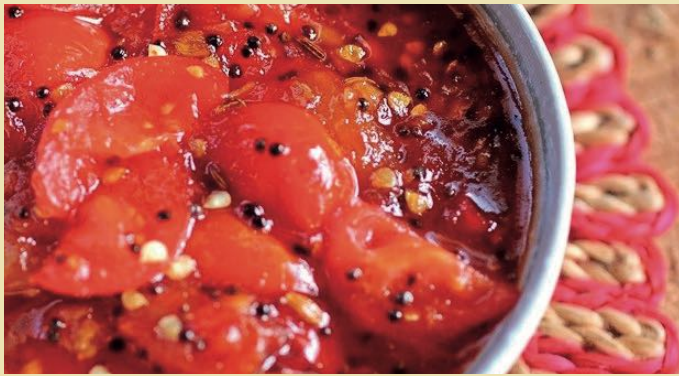
Soho Food Feast

The annual Soho Food Feast in June saw a record breaking amount raised for Soho Parish School. Over 60 restaurants including Lina Stores, Hix and Bao took part along with King of Soho Gin and Truman's Brewery at the bar. The weather held for two day event in St Anne's Gardens and saw some truly delicious food being served, amazing cooking demos and the ever popular vegetable sculpture competition. This fundraiser is vital for the school which relies on the generosity and contribution of the local community and is greatly appreciated. The money raised has been used to repair and repaint areas effected by damp in the building and replacement of the old strip lighting over the summer break ready for the children's return to school.



SOHO BAKERS CLUB

Moles Tomato Chutney



Makes approximately 5 jars (you can also halve the recipe)

900g red tomatoes
225g peeled, cored apples
225g onions
225g sultanas
225g sugar
1/2 teaspoon ginger
285 mls malt vinegar
1 teaspoon pickling spice
1 rounded teaspoon mustard powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 shakes of paprika

- Finely chop or mince the tomatoes, apples and onions and place in a large pan
- Add the sultanas, ginger, mustard, salt, pepper and paprika
- Simmer until it resembles a sauce
- Add the vinegar, sugar and tie the pickling spices up in a small piece of muslin / gauze
- Bring everything to the boil, then leave to simmer very gently without the lid until the chutney has thickened. Stir from time to time during the cooking period
- When it's ready you will be able to draw a spoon across the surface of the chutney and make a trail that doesn't immediately fill up with surplus vinegar
- Sterilise approximately 5 jars: wash in warm soapy water, rinsed and dried with a clean cloth and sterilise in a medium oven for 5 minutes.
- Spoon the cooked chutney into warm sterilised jars, seal well with parchment discs / wax as paper and tight lids, label the jars when cold
- Keep the chutney for 1 month to mature before eating

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A life in a coffee with *Colin Vaines*

Photographed by Richard Piercy

I recently had coffee with Colin and we discussed all manner of things, starting with the subject of the redevelopment of 20th Century House, more of which later.

Colin has been connected to Soho and films for most of his life. He and his older sister were real film fanatics. Born in Croydon, they had no connections with the industry, but loved movies. Croydon (which has a good film heritage, having produced, among others, David Lean) boasted several cinemas where Colin and his sister spent a good amount of their formative years - in fact, one of his earliest memories is, aged about 5, walking past a poster of 'Jason and the Argonauts' and informing his mother that he "wanted to see that"!

His sister, in pursuit of this love affair, got a job at Paramount as a secretary in the 16 mm division. Colin, then aged about 14, used to visit his sister at Paramount House on Wardour Street whenever he could.

Colin's experiences and love affair with Soho started at that time and he's never really left.

His sister took him to the Star Café (now the London Gin Club), where anyone from the film industry was treated as 'family' (see below). At this time in the mid 70s, the porn industry in Soho was rife - very exciting for a red blooded young man! In general, Colin felt that Soho had a feeling of tremendous energy, with its long and varied history of attracting creative people over the centuries, from weavers and instrument makers to writers and film-makers - not to mention the criminal elements who inhabited much of the space. What struck Colin at 14 most of all was the cosmopolitan feeling of the area.

The more Colin came to Soho, the more he wanted to be in Soho and wanted to be involved in the film industry. His plan at that time was to become a journalist and eventually a film critic. He left school early and did a journalism course. On completing that, his sister, by luck, had seen a small ad in Screen International saying, "Wanted, junior reporter". He was interviewed by the magazine's then publisher Peter King, who had taken over Cinema and Television Today and turned it into Screen International. As Colin puts it, Mr King took a long shot employing "this snotty nosed, long-haired kid with three cuttings from Time Out" (where he'd done some work experience). However, Colin had an encyclopaedic knowledge of film and persuaded Peter King that, being so cheap to employ, he couldn't afford not to take him on! He loved it and was there for seven years, becoming co-editor with Adrian Hodges, who went on to an illustrious writing career in film and TV.

The offices of Screen International were at Film House, "a building now earmarked to become yet another hotel" (though it appears that it may have had a reprieve from that seemingly inevitable fate). The offices were also close to the Star, home of Mario Forte, larger than life, ebullient, full of

terrible jokes. It was treated as the staff canteen and branch office for interviews and so on - a real centre for the film business. For Colin, it was a microcosm of Soho, high life, low life, decent food that wasn't expensive, and great people, who were treated as family. Everyone knew everyone else and looked after them when the need arose.

After a while Colin got married and went to live in Tooting (which he felt was in the middle of nowhere). Sadly the marriage didn't last, nor did Tooting.

After leaving Screen International in 1984, he went to work for the National Film Finance Corporation (which went on to become British Screen), and then for David Puttnam at, first, Columbia Pictures in Wells Street, and then Puttnam's own company Enigma in Kensington. Of course the industry was 'Sohocentric' at that time, so Colin was never far away.

After Enigma's contract with Warner's came to an end, Colin continued in a consultancy capacity and, leaving Tooting, decided that he wanted to live in Soho. Thanks to another small ad, this time in the Evening Standard, announcing that former cutting rooms were available at an affordable rent on D'Arblay Street, Colin moved in.

The rooms were above a sandwich bar. There were three flats in the building, the top floor being occupied by an editor, who was a sitting tenant and had created a huge loft-type space. Colin's flat was two rooms plus a kitchen and bathroom, all with nicotine stained walls - perfect. His office was there, and he feels he spent some of his happiest years in D'Arblay Street (often going out at 7.30 in the evening, returning at 7.30 the next morning, having never ventured more than 150 yards away from home). It was a time when everyone was out and about in this village atmosphere.

It was also the time when Colin was trying to get going as a producer, having produced his first film for Puttnam and won an Emmy. It was a time when everything seemed possible. He loved this flat. It was a building where all the tenants were in the creative industry; they became great friends, and were in and out of each other's flats all the time. There were also legendary parties that filled the building most Fridays! After a time the parties got so out of control that they stopped having them, but people still turned up queuing to get in. The sandwich bar has long gone and is now home to the Breakfast Club - are the constant queues for the Breakfast Club, or for Colin's parties? Does this account for the Breakfast Club's success? Who knows!

The flat was in a great position, the real chaos of Soho being further south. There was at that time, of course, a huge film presence. Apart from the majors on Wardour Street, new companies like Palace Pictures were in places like Wardour Mews, and the George pub on the corner of D'Arblay Street was the 'office' of the upcoming young indie producers - just a stone's throw from the Star Café.

There was also the Star & Garter (Poland Street/Broadwick Street), not far away, which is still a meeting place for post-production teams, and is one of those Soho places seemingly untouched by creeping gentrification!

Colin moved on to run production for one of the film companies created with lottery funds, The Film Consortium, and after a time, was offered a job heading the development department for Miramax. He went to New York, lived on Washington Square, and worked day and night on movies such as *Gangs of New York* - an extraordinary period of his life (one day he promises to write about those days - suffice to say they were memorable, complicated and complex).

He says he learned so much about film-making during this period because he had so many opportunities to work with directors like Martin Scorsese (some of which he puts down

You think it's great now, you should have seen it in the 50s

to the 'posh' English accent). It was 24/7 work, but he was good at his job, was able to accomplish things, and also, importantly, being cine-literate he knew what he was talking about. Where he lived in Manhattan, like much of London, is a vanished world, having been gentrified massively since those days.

When Colin returned from America in 2001 he decided to buy in Soho

rather than rent, and bought his flat on the first floor of a building on Tisbury Court. Several years later he bought a fourth floor flat, which has a roof terrace (see attached photograph). He switches from flat to flat depending on his mood, the seasons, using one as an office and one as a home.

Everything Colin loves about Soho is minutes away from where he lives. There are the clubs - new favourites like the Soho Whisky Club, and old ones, like The Groucho, which started about the time Colin was working for Puttnam in Kensington, opening on the site of the old Gennaro premises - an aside, whilst they were redecorating they found the old sign. The club started with a sense of "let's kick against the system", and for a long time, says Colin, it was a place where anything went, and the "bad" boys and girls of the 80s and 90s could behave badly. That obviously changed with changes in management, the opening of other premises, and so on. Also bad behaviour has a nasty habit of catching up!

Another place that came up in conversation was Gerry's Club, possibly the last gasp in Colin's view of 'real old Soho'. This is a small club, started in 1955 by Gerry Champion who played Billy Bunter (who would never be allowed to exist in these politically correct times!). It was in a basement on Shaftesbury Avenue (known as the 'hole in the ground'). It was a club for actors and those in the film and theatre industry who kept fairly antisocial hours. Gerry paid little regard to the licensing laws, but never had any

trouble from any authorities! The premises moved to their current home in Dean Street, which were designed and built as much like the old premises as possible, and are run today with great panache by another legendary Soho character, Michael Dillon.

Another Soho fixture for Colin is *Quo Vadis*, the restaurant in Dean Street, another haven from the hustle and bustle of Soho, which has a members' club upstairs. Like many of us, Colin feels 'comfortable' in places where the welcome is warm, and the food and company good!

Then there are the newer bars - for instance, *My Place* on Berwick Street, which just "worked", as Colin puts it, and now seems as though it has always been there, catering for older residents and the next generation alike, welcoming all. Soho has always had an intriguing mixture of people and businesses, which hopefully won't be killed by the pressure of gentrification. Colin feels, like many of us, that one of the problems with gentrification is things come and go, with a lot of 'short termism', too often at the expense of communities. Sadly, there are fewer and fewer families here, too many flats on short term lets, or empty, which has the knock-on effect of ruining communities, as family businesses, schools, and so on, can't afford to continue. A question is, can you hang on to old Soho? Save Soho, the lobbying group which Colin was part of with Stephen Fry and Tim Arnold among others, came about as a result of trying to save *Madam JoJo's*. *JoJo's V.02* will open at some point, but will it, and indeed the area around Walker's Court, ever be quite the same again? But this is for another time.

Colin admits to wearing rather rose-tinted glasses, and like many of us, is nostalgic for the old days of the sex industry and the 'characters'. Most of the sex clubs and clip joints are long gone. Even the *Windmill* has gone, a place that remained open throughout the war, following a 'sting' which claimed the 'no touching' rules were being flouted.

A 'new kid', *Sophisticats*, moved into the old *Shadow Lounge* premises, in Brewer Street, since when, says Colin, the area around Tisbury Court feels safer, with less criminality, due to security personnel at night, alongside a very good CCTV system. They are good tenants, he says, proactive with neighbours and always ready to fix problems in the building, which can only be a plus.

We touched the drugs and homeless problems in 2019 Soho. Whilst Soho has always had a history of drink, drugs and bad living, the problems seem to be overwhelming at the present time. The police have made real efforts to address some of these issues, he feels, but without more resources and the integration of some kind of social support, it's hard to see how things are going to change much in the near future.

Colin feels very lucky to have been here over the last 40 years, but remembers being told as a teenager in the *Star Café*, "You think it's great now, you should have seen it in

the 50s”, as no doubt generations to come will repeat about the 21st century! Still, he is very happy to have been around in the 70s and 80s when it still had the real low life/high life collision – perhaps what we would say was the analog version of Soho, before it became ‘digitalised’.

I said at the beginning we would be returning to 20th Century House. Colin had what he describes as a ‘visceral reaction’ to the possible demolition of the building, which, following conversations with others, he believes was the right reaction. He was one of the people behind the Soho Society’s petition against demolition, which has over 1,500 signatures, many from those in the industry.

He believes there has to be some conception of the history of a place and its place in the community. When Century House opened in 1938, it was only a few years after the historic merger of Fox and Twentieth Century, and marked the firm commitment of the new Hollywood major to European markets. Given Soho’s historic links to the film industry, there’s an iconic quality to this building, with the classic Searchlight logo a recognisable landmark for over 80 years.

When it was originally built, Century House was clearly designed to reflect a square that has been there for centuries. Like many of us, Colin feels the proposed new building looks completely out of place, and would destroy the integrity of this historic London square.

He and his colleagues in the business who support the retention of the current building feel that every effort should be made to refurbish it and find a new tenant who will recognise and be proud of its heritage. A recent inspection has revealed that there are many, many fine original features in the building, which is a classic piece of 30s architecture by a distinguished architect. In terms of both the heritage and environmental issues, Colin believes it’s imperative to persuade the owners of the building to abandon their default option of demolition and construction of something new and flavourless. The Soho Society agrees. Let’s hope the powers that be agree.

Jane Doyle

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KEEPING SOHO SPECIAL

Soho is full of iconic small suppliers of various types, ranging from vinyl records to specialty foods, from fabrics to sheet music. It is one of the main factors that makes Soho special – indeed unique. The Soho Society is keen to retain this ‘specialness’.

The Society already currently keeps a close watch on licensing and planning applications and objects to any that look as if they might diminish Soho’s character. But this is not enough: legal frameworks for official decisions about planning and licensing do not take account of how interesting, quirky or historical a provider is. Perhaps worse, there are never ending pressures on small providers from landlords who raise rents above what a small business can reasonably afford, resulting in a slow take over by boring, amorphous retail chains.

The Soho Society is developing a new approach that it hopes will:

- 1) encourage visitors to use providers that contribute to making Soho special, to help them succeed in a world of increasing rents, rates and other pressures;
- 2) identify to landlords, and to Westminster Council, those providers that are truly part of making Soho different and whose loss would reduce the specialness of Soho.

This new approach comprises an award of the accolade of

Soho Preferred Provider

The Soho Society will award ***Soho Preferred Provider*** status to providers that it considers sufficiently special; the list will be kept up to date. The Society will champion the ***SPPs***, both to the local community (eg at events, such as the Society’s summer fete, in editions of the Clarion), to visitors and tourists (eg notices in hotels, entries in tourist brochures and books), and of course to Westminster Council whenever the occasion arises. The Society has designed a special sticker that every SPP can display to identify its ***SPP*** status.

As well as being a provider that the Soho Society is proud to support, there are four factors that we will take into account when awarding ‘Soho Preferred Provider’ status. They are that the provider is:

1. Special - adds some special character to Soho, helping to make Soho distinct
2. Local and independent - is owned and/or managed within Soho or is at least able to take decisions locally, eg on its offering, its appearance, its contribution etc.
3. Historical - has been in Soho for a long time (over 10 years) or has other good historical links to Soho

4. Community oriented – explicitly contributes to the activities and living of the Soho community

Preferred Providers will need to satisfy at least two of these criteria, with cafes and restaurants expected to satisfy at least three of them. To ensure exclusivity and specialness, the numbers being awarded Preferred Provider status will be limited.

The Society will build up the numbers of SPPs gradually and carefully. There are some obvious candidates - The Algerian Coffee Stores, Maison Bertaux, Romany’s Hardware, MacCulloch & Wallis of Poland Street, Milroy’s, the Vintage House and Gerry’s Wines & Spirits. Please let us have other nominations for consideration to **admin@thesohosociety.org.uk** with an indication of which factors you think each one satisfies.

We will announce our selected ‘Preferred Providers’ in future issues of the Clarion.

Please see our provisional map on page 34.

Quentin Thompson



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

www.sohoha.org.uk

THEATRES, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

BY JIM COOKE

WHAT WE'VE SEEN

COME FROM AWAY

The Phoenix Theatre - ★★★★★ - Until Feb 15, 2020



Winner of four Olivier awards including best new musical, *Come From Away* is a feel-good show for dark times. It is an affirmation of community and kindness, expressions we need more of in the world today. In the fearful days around 9/11, Gander, Newfoundland doubled in size as planes were diverted from US destinations to this rural nowhere. The people of the town welcomed those who had “come from away” and provided a stark contrast to the dark forces that seek to divide us and try to parse our common humanity. The grumpiness and suspicion that are present in such traumatic situations are not hidden, but the caring of community triumphs. The music is infectious. There is humour and above all there is hope that we can be so much better than what the hate-filled seek to turn us into. This is a musical entertainment, but it is also a call to be our better selves. A spontaneous standing ovation from the audience included us.

Mon - Sat: 19:30

Wed & Sat: 14:30

Nearest tube: Tottenham Court Road

OLAFUR ELIASSON: IN REAL LIFE

Tate Modern - ★★★★★ - Until Jan 5, 2020



Olafur Eliasson's creations are both curiosity and value driven. They are not confined by medium or genre, and they appeal both to the senses and the mind. This show covers almost three decades of his work from Moss Wall to Waterfall, specifically created for this show. The installations are innovative and draw both on geometry and nature for their inspiration. They both delight and provoke, challenging thought and perception. We were confounded by *Din blind passenger* (Your blind passenger) and delighted by *Big Bang Fountain*. This is art you experience and interact with both as an individual and as part of a community. There is so much here, so set aside enough time for the experience. And, be sure to spend some of that time in The Expanded Studio and learn about projects like the Little Sun and Green Light - An artistic workshop. Eliasson's notion for a studio is fascinating and his practical commitment to social and environmental issues is inspiring. The artist's eclectic set of interests and commitments extends to food and the Tate Modern's Terrace Bar has a special Eliasson-inspired menu!

Sun - Thu: 10:00 - 18:00

Fri & Sat: 10:00 - 20:00

Nearest tube: Waterloo

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

FOR SERVICES RENDERED

Jermyn Street Theatre: Sep 4 – Oct 5, 2019

Somerset Maugham's family drama about life between the wars.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD

Palace Theatre: Booking into 2020

Harry is grown up and dealing with family issues of his own.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Tate Britain: Sep 11 – Feb 2, 2020

This definitive retrospective of the British genius' work is the first in a generation.

GAUGUIN PORTRAITS

National Gallery: Oct 7, 2019 – Jan 26, 2020

The first-ever exhibition devoted to the portraits of Paul Gauguin.

For more reviews and ratings visit:

www.londonlivinglarge.com

Twitter: @LondonLivingUK

SOHO SWAP SHOP

Soho trends, with a Sustainable Fashion Swap-Shop Pop-up!



Mid-July saw colourful sustainable retail concept, Swap-Shop, popping up at 52 Brewer Street organised by Comfort in partnership with ELLE and Cosmopolitan.

The concept being, turn up with your un-loved outfits and swap them in the shop. They'll be washed and ironed ready for you to swap your clothes, helping to breathe new life into your wardrobe. The shop was fully stocked with hidden gems from leading charity, Oxfam.

Nothing to trade? There were clothes for sale too, with all proceeds going to the Prince's Trust charity, helping young people to get into jobs, education and training.

The Swap-Shop boasted an embroiderer to personalise newly swapped or purchased garments in return for a donation to the Prince's trust and the chance to win designer accessories. There were talks by Sairey Stemp, Senior Fashion Editor at Cosmopolitan, and Molly Haylor, Accessories Editor at ELLE, on how to bag the best second-hand bargains and sharing styling tips.

The Soho Clarion, always on the crest of a wave, was first in the queue at Swap-Shop with some searching questions about fashion's coolest trend;

Are you planning on bringing the pop up back to Soho and if not, where is it going next?

The swap shop pop-up has been a huge success for us and all parties involved (Hearst UK/Hearst Live UK, Comfort, Oxfam and the Princes Trust). It has been hugely well received by everyone – both the public and other businesses/third parties, and we would love to do it again. However, this was an initiative that came about from a partnership with Comfort who funded the project so we would need to either partner with them again or work with another sponsor – which we are totally open to.

Why Soho?

We explored a number of locations but chose Soho due to the high footfall from our target audience (predominately female aged 18+ who are interested in fashion) and the fact that Soho has a history of fashion and really is the heart of independent stores in London. Overall, it was the right fit for this type of activation and it worked incredibly well.

What about the tie-in with Comfort? Is this a Comfort

initiative?

It's an initiative that came about as part of a wider partnership with Comfort Elle and Cosmopolitan.

Have there been any celebrity swaps while the pop up has been in place in Soho?

We had two talks in the store from two of our editors

@saireysmile (Senior Fashion Editor of Cosmopolitan magazine) and @whatmollysees (Market and Accessories Editor of ELLE magazine) and I am told that Gail Porter also paid a visit on Thursday morning

We had visits from a number of influencers including: @

thestylistandthewardrobe @annaerihart @gracevictory (part of Prince's Trust and hosted a talk in the shop for the charity)@paulknopsie – of Love Island fame

Could the Swap-Shop be permanent store as many locals are very keen on it!

Unfortunately, we would not be able to commit to anything permanent as it requires a lot of investment to deliver the experience we have created – to be able to swap your clothes for free, but it could be something we roll out annually for one week every year if we have an interested partner. We are very open to this.

The Swap-Shop is part of a growing interest amongst fashionistas in buying second hand and upcycling.

This September, Oxfam will launch a focus on sustainable fashion with their latest campaign "Second-hand September". whilst worldwide, whole malls are springing up which are dedicated to second-hand clothing and repaired



pre-loved goods.

Missed this pop up? Never fear there's a new kid in town – The Gap celebrates 50 years of denim at 52 Brewer Street, corner of Bridle Lane and Brewer Street, and runs until the end of September.

Meanwhile, Swap-Shop we look forward to seeing you back soon, the Soho Society exec have lots of outfits in mind for your next appearance.

Lucy Haine



WHEN SOHO LOST ITS LOUCHE

Soho in the sixties had a unique dynamic, peopled by writers, painters, gangsters, ghosts and molls, serenaded by jazz, be-bop and faded sloe-eyed divas. They drank, they fought, they wept, and then in no more than a decade that world was

gone. Where it went to nobody seems to know.

The denizens were to be found in The Coach and Horses, The French, The Colony Room, Ronnie Scott's and Wheelers. Now Norman Balon's gone, Muriel from the Colony, The French now also has a restaurant although should probably have a blue plaque for its former punters, and somehow the miasma has evaporated. It can't just be the smoking ban.

To be fair new clubs have opened, Groucho's and the Soho House amongst them, but they are far removed from the old

haunts of palely-loitering poets and painters, and the price of a pint, the only membership fee ever needed, won't get you in there. So that world is gone, but not forgotten.

The poet Jo Reed lived through that decade, with digs in the heart of Soho, and has emerged with memories she has recorded in four short collections she has called A Soho Sequence. She does more than merely document that world - her lines evince moods and shadows of a milieu imbibed with the acute eye of a poet, lucid and moving, which she inhabited.

As the poet Sean O'Brien has written: "This is powerfully evocative work, persuasively blending time, place, characters and the ambiguous addictive climate of a remembered Soho, inviting the reader or punter back in to the inexhaustible venue."

She will be reading from Blokes, the final section of A Soho Sequence, at **St. Anne's Church in Dean Street at 7pm on Friday, October 18th**. Tickets £5 to include wine and refreshments.

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戒煙服務</p> <p>Minor Ailment Service
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新處方使用跟進服務 (只限哮喘、糖尿病、高血壓、薄血病患)</p> | <p>Medicine Use Review (MUR)
藥物使用跟進服務</p> <p>Health Check Service (Blood pressure)
健康檢查服務 (量血壓)</p> <p>Home Delivery Service (within 1 mile)
送藥服務 (一里之內)</p> <p>Supervised Medication Consumption
藥物使用監管</p> <p>Chinese Language Access Service
中文翻譯服務 (只限於藥物翻譯)</p> |
|--|---|--|

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	上午十時 至 下午四時
星期日	休息

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



Photograph by Richard Piercy

LAST WEEK ON BERWICK STREET

Soho Rock n' Roll in the Third Millennium

During the customary mid-session break at Soho Joe I consider whether a more rock n'roll restaurant exists. The server approaches. "Your drinks will be with you... when they arrive".

As they play the sense is of making music in Soho being a treat, can I retain this moment, and perhaps remember it later, am I in the past I am in the present?

Will we do more? A serious attempt to bring live music back to central London in a meaningful way is an achievable start.

But yes. Long live rock and roll! Long live Soho!

*Steve Head
9thinc.com*

Rock and roll is dead. Soho is dead. It is said The Doors coined the former, in 1969. The latter is not a new expression. The Museum of Soho's 'Record Stores of Soho 1946 - 1996' poster illustrates the retreat of music retail here. Where there were once 122 - presumably not simultaneously - five remain. The Borderline, closed on 31 August. Denmark Street is unwell. And so, as a third decade of a third millennium looms - what is the state of rock and roll in Soho? Last week on Berwick Street is as any other. While we wake our upstairs neighbour continues her piano study. Downstairs, Mieko Shimizu prepares the release of her new album, 'I Bloom'. A stream of black cabs ferry to and from Sister Ray, Reckless and IF Music. One couple moves more rapidly than most and speedily leave Soho with at least one copy of From Elvis in Memphis. Each. At St Moritz work is underway on a new Wednesday. Later in the week Gaz's Rockin' Blues continues its reign of almost 40 years of Thursday night boogie woo. A person who may not have changed their clothes since 1981 is speaking to the telephone about this evening at The 100 Club. "Specials mate. THE F*****N SPECIALS!". Denmark Street feels particularly desperate this summer. However, you wish to soothe your hangover with some whimsical and internet price-matched boutique effects at 18:59 on a Thursday evening? Wunjo's second-hand cabinet awaits. You are suffering from a large hole in your acoustic guitar? Stairway to Kevin is the answer. Soho Radio. The Ship. Is there anything more rock and roll than the electric blue sequin jacket in the window of Tom Baker's shop? In our studio this week we are recording a man called Tom Moody.



THE CLUB, GERRARD STREET (NOT RONNIE SCOTT'S)



When you are next visiting the New Loon Moon Supermarket, take a moment to read the plaque above the porch. This declares that 9 Gerrard Street, the site of the former Turk's Head Tavern, was where Joshua Reynolds and Dr Samuel Johnson founded

The Club in 1764. Today the building may purvey fresh coriander but, over 250 years ago, it was a meeting point for some of the most illustrious men of the eighteenth century.

Firstly, Dr Samuel Johnson, the well-known critic, essayist and later dictionary writer. Despite his fame, he was poor, often depressed and lonely. His friend, Joshua Reynolds, the artist and portraitist (and first president of the Royal Academy), recognised this. He decided a getting-together of friends on a weekly basis, for supper, lively conversation and drinks, would be therapeutic. The two men chose the Turk's Head Tavern in Gerrard Street as the venue for their new literary and dining club.

There were nine of them at the start, the two founders, plus seven friends, among them Edmund Burke, the political thinker and parliamentary orator (who had rooms in Gerrard Street), and Oliver Goldsmith, the playwright (*She Stoops to Conquer*). The members were chosen carefully for their 'clubbability': even if only two men turned up, they should be able to happily entertain each other. They met each Friday at 7pm, and often stayed until the early hours. Politics were discussed as little as possible...

Members could veto proposed new faces. Johnson was not enthusiastic about the actor, David Garrick, despite their long acquaintance (both from Lichfield) – 'he will disturb us by his buffoonery'. And James Boswell the diarist, Johnson's friend and later biographer (*Life of Samuel Johnson, LLD*), was considered too lightweight (both men were elected in 1773). Other members included Adam Smith, economist (*The Wealth of Nations*), Edward Gibbon, historian (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, playwright. The latter wrote *School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*, and invented the inimitable Mrs Malaprop: she who claimed 'He is the very pineapple [pinnacle] of politeness'!

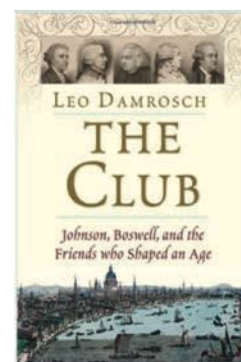
Dr Johnson was the heart of The Club, and his conversations were loyally recorded by James Boswell, and used in his masterwork (so important in the development of the modern art of biography). We know from this that

Johnson thought Burke's never-ending puns were appalling, that the redoubtable Adam Smith was very dull, and that he dubbed Gibbon 'The Infidel' (because of debatable religious views in his *Decline*). By 1783, when the membership had grown to 35, Johnson stopped attending, there were too many Whig politicians for his taste...

Not long after the Turk's Head had reverted to private use, and The Club had moved to another tavern in Sackville Street, Samuel Johnson died, in 1784. He and two of his fellow Club members – Garrick and Sheridan – are memorialised in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Although the motto of The Club was 'esto perpetua' (let it be perpetual), this was not to be: it ceased to exist in the twentieth century.

This piece was inspired by the newly published *The Club* by Leo Damrosch. It is a tour de force of research, although the author, an American academic, clearly believes that Gerrard Street 'is just off the busy Strand...'

Susan Fleming





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TEHRAN

Considering that they opened early last year, I took my time getting to Romilly Street's Berenjak, finally having lunch there just a few days ago (September 2019) with a Persian neighbour. No need to tell you too much as it is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, but it set me thinking about a recent trip to Iran. The carefully distressed interior with reclaimed furniture echoes hundreds of hole-in-the-wall places in downtown Tehran whose cobbled-together appearance gives no hint of the culinary delights readily and cheaply available inside. Berenjak's delicious menu reminded me of the sensual hedonism of Iran. Double take? Yes, I meant that. It's hard for us to associate the received image of the Islamic Republic of Iran with anything sensual or hedonistic, but this contradiction is typical of the country. It may be strictly religious, with Shi'ite Islam as the state faith, differing from the more strict, orthodox Sunni Islam (which drives Saudi Arabia and helps explain tension between the two countries). Whereas Sunni practice relies fundamentally on the words of the quran, Shi'ism allows more room for informed, creative thinking. Which doesn't count for much when women still have to cover up in public, but then the biggest annual holiday in Iran is Na Ruz, the new year. This happens in March and sees up to two weeks of parties and celebrations around what is essentially a pagan holiday: much to their chagrin, the Islamic regime have never been able to expunge this Zoroastrian celebration from the Islamic state. The calendar may be dominated by grand Islamic religious events like Ramadan, the month of fasting, and Muharram, eleven days of mourning for Husayn, the Shi'ite martyr, but Iranians will never stop leaping over fire to purify themselves before the New Year. This inability to rid Iran of pre-Islamic practices, despite their best efforts, may be frustrating for the mullahs, but it merely points to something quite basic: the difference between appearance and reality in Iranian society. Anyone who has read Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis* might recall her talking about how the imposition of strict Islamic religious values in post-revolutionary Iran created a huge disparity between public and private behaviour.



Although religious ceremonies are attended by many devotees, the hardline Islamic regime remains unpopular. Public and commercial buildings all display portraits of two Supreme Leaders – Imam Khomeini, the first leader of post-revolutionary Iran, and his successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – but every shopkeeper is quick to explain that the images “have to be there” if they see you looking. Public piety contrasts with huge party appetites in private, and domestic parties are the main way people socialise. Alcohol is officially forbidden, but widely available, either as luxury contraband or home-brewed staple, and fuels the parties. After much international travel over the last four decades, I think Iranians are the most hospitable and charming nation I have encountered.

With a population of about 16 million, Tehran is second biggest city in the middle east (after Cairo). It has grown swiftly since the revolution, and has the feel of unchecked development, with streets and houses thrown up without long-term strategic planning or regard for future impact. It is not an architecturally appealing city, but the teeming busy streets and alleyways are always lively and vibrant. The great bazaar in the centre of town is a huge maze of shops and stalls that sell just about everything and effectively controls the country's finances. Despite the huge crowds and busy streets, Tehranis navigate with gracious manners – getting around the West End here is much more fraught! Public transport is cheap and easy to navigate, with a metro system that is refreshingly free of advertising. The roads are often clogged with traffic, but the aggression of London streets is completely absent there.

Despite democratic presidential elections, real power in Iran resides with the Supreme Ayatollah, and nothing the President initiates or enables can actually happen without his say-so. This singular approach to democracy naturally alienates much of the population who reject their country's regime and continue to hope for something else. But it is striking how the daily reality of life in Iran differs from what we would expect from its media presentation here.

David Gleeson



THE 45TH SOHO FETE!

The sun shone, the snails and waiters raced, the Fireman won the Tug of War by a whisker (apparently) with the help of a couple of New York Ringers, the dogs behaved, the Human Fruit Machine was a wow, the entertainers went down well and vast amounts of

Pimm's, Pints and Proseccos were consumed, all rounded off with a firework tribute to Ruby - this Year's Soho Fete was a big hit!

Photographs: Shahin Shaboulin



The Soho Society would like to thank our very generous Sponsors who make the Fete possible. Thank you! The Crown Estate, Shaftesbury PLC, Broadwick Street Holdings Limited, Knight Frank, Soho House, Westminster City Council, PMB Holdings Berwick Street, The Rotary Club of London, Soho Housing Association Ltd, and The Yard. We would also like to thank Vapiano for sponsoring the spaghetti eating competition. We would also like to thank our wonderful Soho businesses who donated superb Raffle prizes. Thank you! Firmdale Hotel Group, Archer Street, West End Drinks, Storm Flowers London, Fleet London Ltd, Kinky Octopus, David Bieda, Nimax Theatres, Mildred's, The Algerian Coffee Store, Crosstown Doughnuts, Duck & Rice, and The Vintage House.

We would like to thank Arthur Beale's for lending us the Tug of War Rope, to Laing O'Rourke for providing us with the all-important loos and electricity, and our wonderful sound man.

We would also like to thank the Soho Bakers for their wonderful cakes, and Bistro 1 for the Börek, and a big thank you to Lesley Lewis of the French House and her staff for running our Bar,

Finally we would like to say a huge thank you to our group of volunteers who set up the fete, manned the stalls, carried kegs of beer, ran stalls including the Tombola and helped us clear away afterwards - you are all amazing! Thank you to Darshan from Outlet, Steven Eckett of Meaby & Co, Clive Jennings, Wendy Hardcastle, Hazel Kerr, Jessica

Mance, Smith T, Stephen Boyer, Saule Jukn, Bam, Ayati, Marian Obando, Benedetta Morsiani, Franco Scintu, Henry Morris, Cleo Harrington, Louise Guthrie, Sunny Samra, Terence Doyle, John, Lucy Roff, Sam Ellen Davies, Tino Pharaoh, Storm Flowers London Team, Jennifer Sayer, Hugo MacGregor-Craig, Joel Levack and the Soho Society Fete Committee!

Would you like to join the fete team organising next year's fete on Sunday 28th June or do you have some suggestions for next year's fete? Please email Lucy and Rachel fete@thesohosociety.org.uk

See you all again next year on Sunday 28th June!

Lucy Haine



A MESSAGE FROM ST ANNE'S

It is clear that Soho means, and has always meant, different things to different people. At St Anne's we often pray for those 'whose home or heart is in Soho', reflecting that this dense network of little streets is rooted deeply in the affection of more than just its residents, which (along with the businesses) rightly form the Soho Society's core concern. But one of the challenges here is that just as Soho means different things to different people, so different people want different things from Soho.

I recently had a conversation with someone lamenting the loss of Soho's 'girls': meaning the young female sex workers whose handwritten notices, euphemistically describing them as 'models', directed their punters to the small flats above shops and restaurants. There are now only about twenty such flats- half the number in Soho that there were when I came here six and a half years ago (for which I can take neither the credit, nor the blame!). However, within a day of that conversation I had another with someone who would love to see an end to all prostitution in Soho, however it is dressed up or disguised as a 'health spa', considering it a blight on the neighbourhood (as well as on the lives of the girls working in it) rather than a characterful feature.

I'm reminded of the song from the musical *La Cage Aux Folles* in which the club (La Cage) is described as being variously "bawdy and a little bit bizarre.... slightly forties, and a little bit New Wave" where "You may be dancing with a girl who needs a shave... Where both the riffraff and the royalty are patrons," somewhere "You go alone to have the evening of your life... You meet your mistress, and your boy-friend, and your wife. It's a bonanza, it's a mad extravaganza at La Cage aux Folles!". That may be what some people long for Soho to be, whilst others (like the local politician in the musical who wanted the club closed down) would rather campaign against it.

Similarly, the church - in whatever manifestation - will frequently fail to be the church that some people want it to be, or think it ought to be. The recent Social Attitudes Survey showed the continued reduction in those professing any religious faith, let alone Christian and very definitely let alone Anglican (which is Church of England: St Anne's and my denomination). Within the church there is much soul searching about the cause of this decline and for every bishop who thinks it is because the Church now ordains women, is more affirming of the LGBT community or forsaken (in some places) some of its traditional liturgy and doctrine, there's another man (or woman) in a pointy hat who will cite the churches adherence to its traditional teachings, values and worship as being the biggest hindrance to its relevance to ordinary people in the 21st Century.

The Church like Soho, belongs to none of us and



simultaneously all of us.

This means that there will always be corners of both which its 'inhabitants' neither identify or feel entirely comfortable with. What is most cherished by one will be most loathed by another.

There needs to be a generous spirit in churches and in communities like ours, to acknowledge and respect the needs, rights and dignity of others which may be quite different to our own. Christians believe people to be made in the image of God, but often go on to make churches in the image of themselves - which may be what makes them least attractive to others. The affection with which Soho is held shows that it imprints something of itself in the heart of individuals, but we have to be careful that no one individual, or cluster of individuals, defines it (or designs it) for the future to the exclusion of anyone else.

Rev'd Simon Buckley



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ST ANNE'S DAY

In one of the entrance corridor niches at St Anne's Dean Street there is currently a photo of St Anne's Day 1969 which I snapped shortly after our wedding ceremony in the Allen Room. After taking our ceremony Father Hester joined us for lunch in Old Compton Street and then went to take an outdoor service in the church garden on Wardour Street where the photo shows him reclining with a very 60's bunch before starting the St Anne's Day service (it was a Saturday).

One of the challenges of the wedding ceremony is to be so confident of your vows that you are prepared to make them in public in front of an array of friends and relations. We didn't actually do that, maybe it was the 60's and we thought that it was a bit institutionalised for swinging London so there were only five guests at our wedding. Come July 26th 2019 on our Anniversary Day, we decided, 50 years late, to invite 60 friends and relations to our place of marriage at St Anne's to celebrate confidence in those vows.

It was when in a school band, and growing out of the 'skiffle' washboard as the percussion section, that I needed some drums and I got my starter kit at 'Drum Shop to the Stars' Footes at No 20 Denman Street, Soho. I never actually grew out of my starter kit but while buying it at Footes I noticed a flat-to-let sign above the shop. And it was there, a few years later, a group of us architectural students from Bedford Square, forced out generations of scrawny London pigeons and took over the flats.

The pigeons were there because the owners, Westminster Bank, for years had avoided the risk of the flats being used for immoral earnings. It was the reference from the Bishop, my grandfather, that calmed the bank's fears.

Quite early on in our tenure one of Denman Street's student architects chose to convert from studying architecture to be a bass/baritone at the Guildhall School of Music. Thus it came about that we embryonic architects invited the cast of a Guildhall student opera production back to Denman Street for a shindig. There I met Lillian, my opera singer wife.

As architectural students we had rather taken to the challenge of replacing the pigeon nests and, in our own nest-building created some of our own furniture. That night one beautifully designed, constructed and honed chipboard double bed was danced on by a heavy soprano and, with an explosion, collapsed in a cloud of dust - a dramatic collision of the Arts.

Sad to say our 50th Anniversary coincides exactly with the demolition of 20 Denman Street. But architect Tony Butler remained to the end. And those that joined us there, Alan Wakeman who could count 'architect' amongst his many qualifications, plus a family friend, Matthew Bennett, the epitome of versatility (who came to live next door at No 19), have both contributed to the area in a way that will long outlast their tenure in Denman Street.

On the whole we managed to avoid the rougher side

of Soho but for us architectural students getting on the wrong side of the scourge of Soho at that time, the Maltese Mafia, was not a good idea. In spite of the Westminster Bank's vigilance 'immoral earnings' had somehow moved into the first floor of No 20 in the form of a Clip Joint and, for our own

safety, we did not intervene when some rather grim things happened on the staircase below. Flat mate, architectural student Hugh Richards and I turned to the church, which involved ringing the bell in the delightful chapel in Manette Street and after the service having coffee at the house for reformed prostitutes in Greek Street, we also delivered the Parish magazine to a variety of Soho characters. Father Hester showed us his plans for rebuilding St Anne's. He took us to see the proposals at the architects in an alley off Regent Street. In the event he became persuaded that the church's work was in the streets rather than in an edifice over them. So it was shelved.

By coincidence I later found employment for most of my working life with those same architects, Ahrends, Burton and Koralek and walked past the unbuilt model of St Anne's in the office reception area for years.

When Father Hester married us in the Allen Room on St Anne's Day, July 26th 1969 it seemed only appropriate to be conducted by the 'Actor's priest', as Lillian was in train to tread the boards. When we tied the knot we were the first parishioners to get married here for 50 years, and we wondered whether we might make it to 100 years on St Anne's Day this year, but we hear that recently a couple of parishioners in their 90s were married at St Anne's. So, not many parishioners get married here but when they do they mean business.

John Hester can be content that, in hitching us, not only did 'Lillian Watson' have a successful international career as an opera singer, including being a guest soloist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden for over 25 years beside Hester's second church, but St Anne seems to have blessed the marriage he conducted.

St Anne - the patron Saint of women in general, teachers, horseback riders, cabinet makers, miners, sailors and crucially a protector from storms! - is a good companion Saint to have in marriage.

It also needs to be said that the success of our Anniversary do on Friday, is down to the brilliant facilities of 55 Dean Street, the warmth of Rev'd Simon Buckley's welcome and to Jake Lee whose efficiency, help and attendance made organising it so very enjoyable, relaxed and easy.

Hugh Morgan



20TH CENTURY FOX, SOHO SQUARE

20th Century Fox, History and Technical Advances

20th Century Fox came into being in 1935 when Twentieth Century and the William Fox Film Corporation joined forces. The latter company started film production in the Nickelodeon days in 1912 and despite a turbulent financial history Fox (later 20th Century Fox) was regarded as a technically pioneering film production company with an outstanding reputation.

William Fox Corporation, later 20th Century Fox, was one of the top seven Hollywood film production companies, the others being RKO Pictures and Universal founded in 1912, United Artists in 1919; Warner Brothers 1923; MGM 1924; and Columbia Pictures also in 1924.

When Warner Brothers introduced the first sound films on the "Vitaphone" sound-on-disk system in 1926/27, Fox (in association with General Electric) immediately responded with "Movietone" sound-on-film system. This was the first popular sound system to employ a sound track directly on film.

Many years later, to counter the negative effect that television was having on cinema attendance, 20th Century Fox introduced for the first time "Cinemascope", a wide screen process based on an anamorphic system of lenses. Their production "The Robe" received its first screening in New York in September 1953.

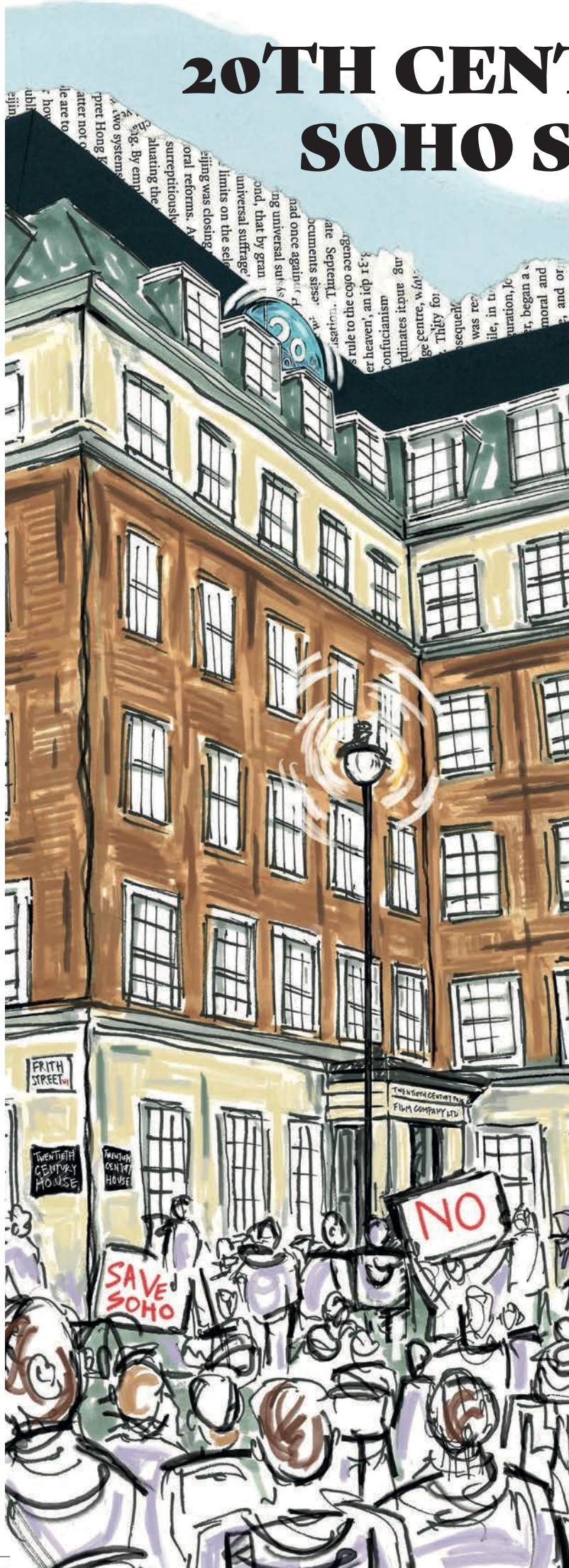
20th Century Fox's Productions, Stars and Directors

From 1935, 20th Century Fox pursued an ambitious programme of first rate film production that was both creatively and technically of a very high standard - as any list of their films will show:

Musicals - Carousel, The King and I, South Pacific, Hello Dolly, The Sound of Music

Social Dramas - Gentleman's Agreement, Snake Pit, Boomerang, Razor's Edge, How Green Was My Valley, The Grapes of Wrath

Large Productions - Cleopatra, The Longest Day, Paton, Towering Inferno, Mash, Titanic



Lasting Themes - Planet of the Apes, Die Hard, Avatar, Star Wars (one of the all time box office successes)

Fox made stars of many actors including: Marilyn Monroe, Gregory Peck, Henry Fonda, Warner Baxter, Tyrone Power, Richard Widmark and Shirley Temple.

And in earlier days:

Theda Bara, William Farnum and Tom Mix
Many of Hollywood's leading directors regularly worked for 20th Century Fox including Raoul Walsh and Frank Borzage, Ernst Lubitsch, Joseph Mankiewicz, Otto Preminger, Henry King, Henry Hathaway, Anatole Litvak, Elia Kazan. John Ford, regarded as one of the most important and influential film makers, made many of his best films working for the company. More recent directors include James Cameron (Titanic and Avatar) and George Lucas (Star Wars).

In the 1920s Fox brought F. W. Murnau, one of the world's most prominent directors, to Hollywood to make "Sunrise", one of the classics of world cinema.

20th Century Fox in Soho

In the year 1945 over 1,464 million people went to the cinema in Great Britain. The distribution and exhibition of almost all feature films was managed in Soho. 20th Century Fox headquarters in Soho Square was supported by eight branch offices in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

20th Century Fox diversified its activities to include television. Over the years 20th Century Fox maintained a considerable interest in the British Film Industry, producing many British made films including co-production of Chariots of Fire..

All this sustained activity over the years has meant that the 20th Century Fox Soho Square building has fulfilled an important role in one of Soho's traditional trading activities – the film industry. The present building which sits well in the environs of one of London's oldest squares, has been a meeting place for countless members of the film industry.

*Leslie Hardcastle OBE, Honorary President of the Soho Society
September 2019*

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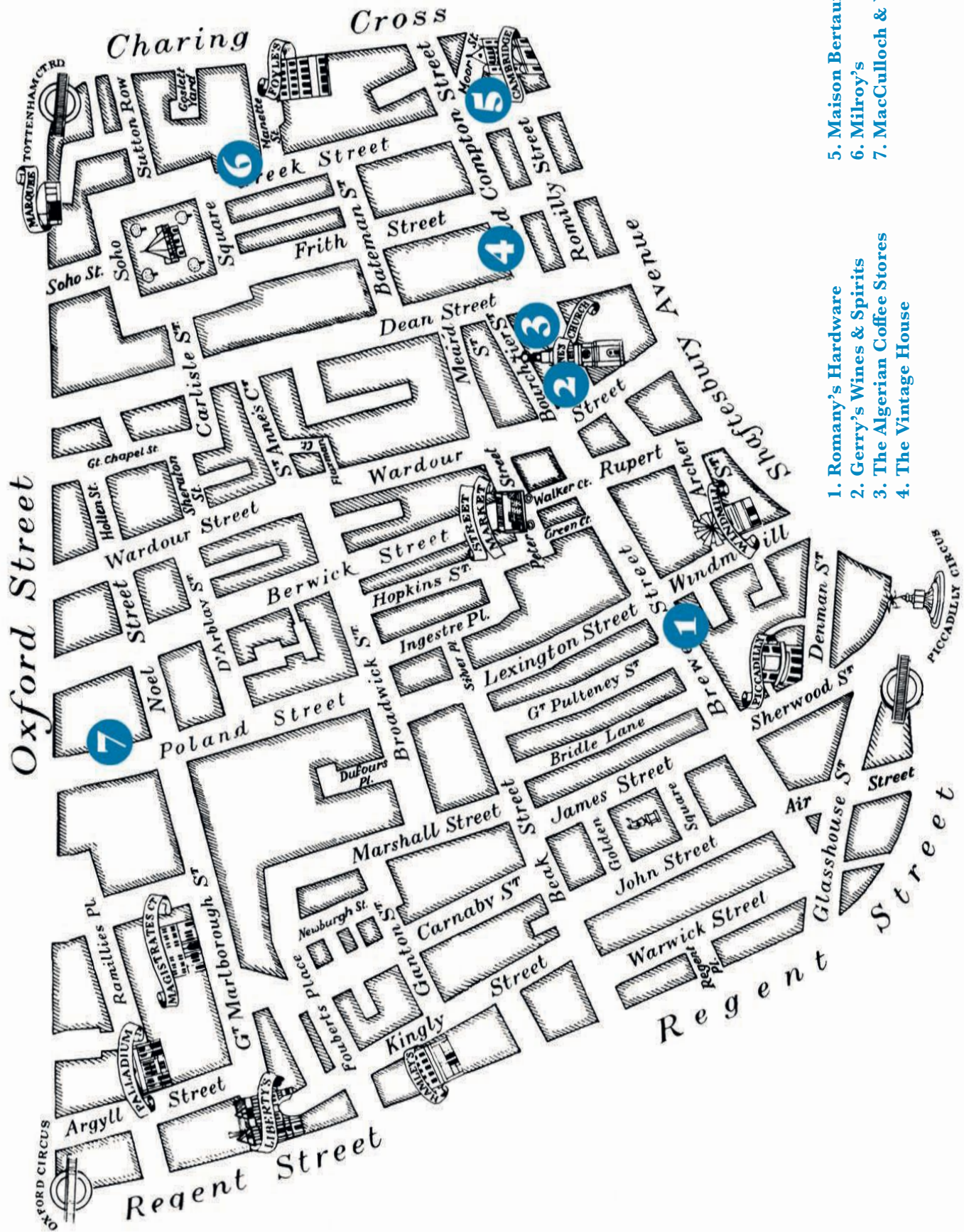
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Provisional Map for The Soho Society's Preferred Providers



- 1. Romany's Hardware
- 2. Gerry's Wines & Spirits
- 3. The Algerian Coffee Stores
- 4. The Vintage House
- 5. Maison Bertaux
- 6. Milroy's
- 7. MacCulloch & Wallis

THE 43 CLUB

A new musical celebrating a true icon of 1920's Soho



“Wife of a doctor, mother of eight children, mother-in-law of two peers, convicted breaker of the law- the most dangerous woman in London”. This was how the Daily Mail described Kate Meyrick in 1924”

85 years after her death Kate's trailblazing exploits have largely gone unnoticed (although she does feature on one walking tour of Soho). Writers Kenneth Clarke and Richard Daniels are bringing Kate's story to life in an exciting new musical, THE 43 CLUB, which celebrates the life of this undisputed “Queen of London's Nightclubs”.

Following a workshop presentation at The Other Palace, THE 43 CLUB is now in development for a full production.

Kate left an unfaithful husband and arrived in Soho with eight children to support. She opened a nightclub at 43 Gerrard Street (now a Chinese supermarket) and was to shine a torch for female independence in 1920's London.

She had to overcome a puritanical Home Secretary, undercover police raids and five terms of imprisonment, mostly for serving drinks out of hours in contravention of the strict licensing laws that prevailed at the time.

Circumstances, rather than willful criminal intent, led to Kate becoming a jailbird. She was determined to keep her children educated at Harrow and Roedean. Two of them married into the peerage.

The 43 Club suffered the effects of killjoy councils and unnecessary police interference that has resulted in the decline of many modern day nightclubs.

The strait-laced, reactionary Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, launched a campaign to close nightclubs, which he viewed as undermining social barriers. He embarked on a personal vendetta to close Kate down permanently and Kate soon served the first of four six months' terms of imprisonment, following the first of many undercover police raids.

But Kate's spirit was indomitable. After each incarceration she defiantly re-opened the 43, the club attracting royalty (the Prince of Wales would visit after dining at the Ritz),

stars of stage and screen, as well as notorious criminals.

Kate achieved celebrity status because of her court appearances, as her character witnesses included the King of Sweden and the outrageous American actress Tallulah Bankhurst.

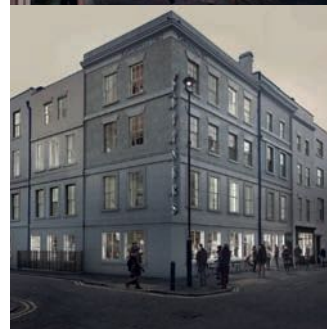
Kate's nemesis was Sergeant George Goddard, who led the undercover police raids. Goddard was taking protection money from businesses up and down Soho and protected Kate from the raids for the extortionate sum of £100 a week. Eventually Goddard was “shopped” by one of his own officers and this time Kate served 15 months' hard labour for bribing a police officer.

Kate kept the 43 open, but her health was deteriorating. She died of pneumonia in 1933. Dance bands across London observed two minutes' silence in homage to this extraordinary woman.

Kate was a self-proclaimed rebel against society conventions, defiant of elite social codes and protocols. A post-Victorian who took the side of hedonistic youth against the grandmotherly limitations set by the authorities on public amusement.

Queen of the London Scene. One of Soho's finest.

Kenneth Clarke



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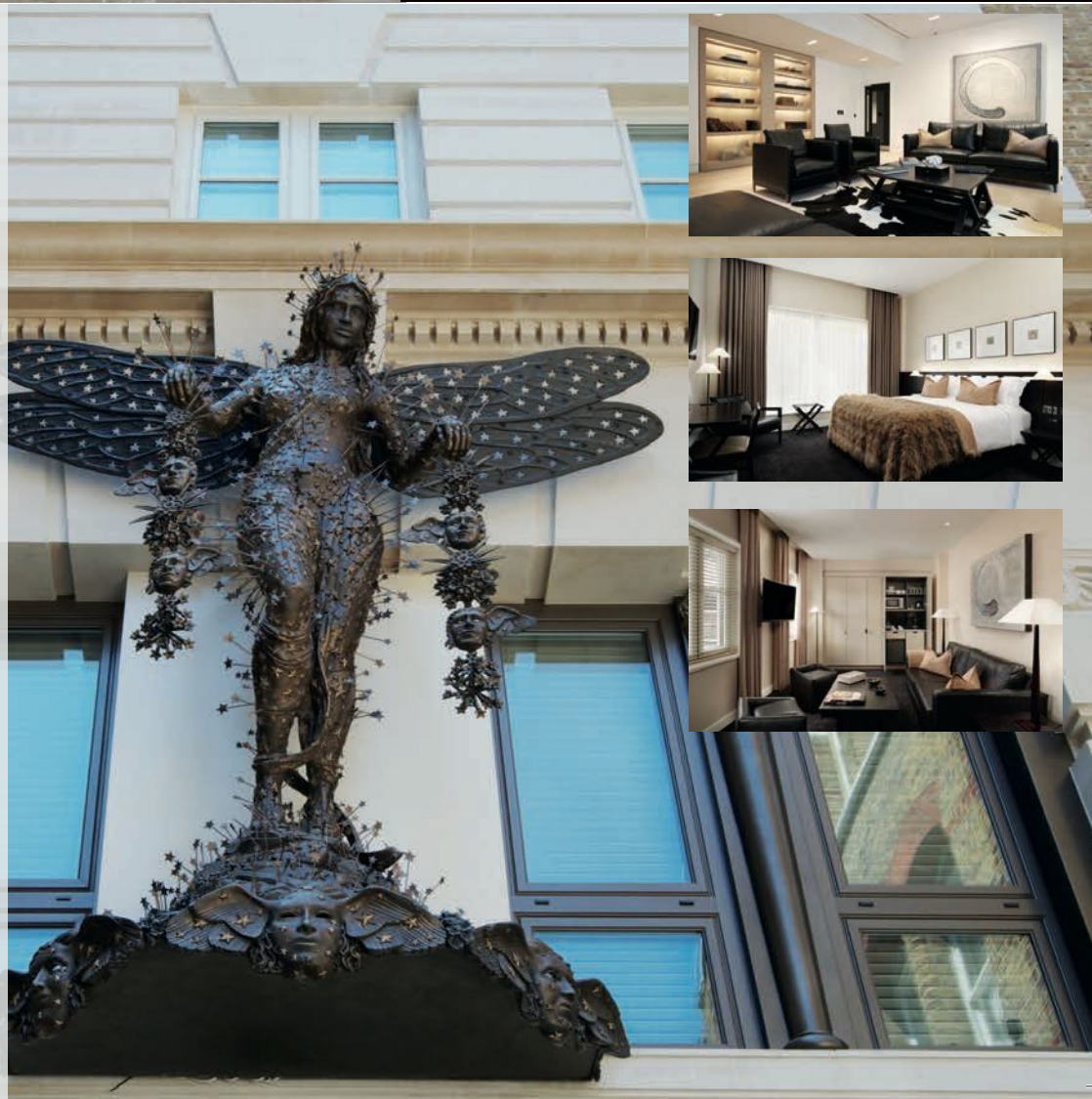
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