



NO. 182  
THE CLARION CALL OF  
THE SOHO SOCIETY

# SOHO clarion

summer  
2022

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





## NOTICE OF THE SOHO SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Soho Society will be held in St. Anne's Community Hall, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF on **Thursday, 22 September, 2022 at 6.00pm** to 9.00pm

The AGM provides you with an opportunity to voice your thoughts and ideas, your hopes and fears for the future of Soho and to speak to those who are seeking to make Soho a great place to live, work and visit.

Papers for the AGM will be on the Society website in advance at [thesohosociety.org.uk](http://thesohosociety.org.uk). At the meeting we will report on the Society's ongoing activities:

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

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

PLEASE DO COME

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## THE SOHO SOCIETY

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EDITOR Jane Doyle

# FROM THE TOWER



Waking up early on Friday 6 May many of us were surprised to learn that not only had voters in the West End Ward returned three Labour councillors but voters in Westminster as a whole had selected 31 Labour councillors and 23 Conservative ones. This means that for the first time in 58 years Westminster City Council is under Labour control.

Our new West End Ward councillors are Paul Fisher, Jessica Toale and Patrick Lilley. Paul is to be Westminster's Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Licensing and is also on the Planning Committee, Patrick is Westminster's LGBTQ+ Champion and Lead Member for Soho, and Jessica is Deputy Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage and Culture and takes the lead role on Animal Welfare. They are a formidable team and we are looking forward to working with them.

What will this all mean for Soho? It will take a few weeks for the new Council to be appointed and to get their feet under the table, so it will take some time for things to develop.

However, one thing that the new Council has confirmed is that the Vision for Soho proposals (street closures for outdoor dining in Bateman and D'Arblay Streets and pavement widening elsewhere in Soho for the same purpose) will now be put on hold pending a thorough review. There will be some very relieved residents in those streets and throughout Soho.

Other indications on the new Council's future direction can be gleaned from the Labour Manifesto.

Here are six Labour Party manifesto promises that we think are relevant for Soho:

1. To revive the West End and protect it from over commercialisation to keep it special
2. To end Westminster's cosy relationship with developers and create a fairer and more accessible planning system for residents
3. To make Westminster Council transparent and give residents more say over their areas
4. Specifically on al fresco - to take a street-by-street approach, encouraging it in areas where the scheme was successful and recognising that some areas, such as particular streets in Soho, have layouts that aren't suitable

for al fresco, and have generated significant problems for both the resident and non-hospitality business communities

5. To introduce a retrofit-first policy for property development
6. To protect LGBTQ+ venues and areas such as Soho that are of national importance for the community

The emphasis on greater engagement with residents runs through the manifesto and provides a significant contrast to the outgoing administration's practice over recent years.

This will provide a new and interesting challenge for residents and businesses in Soho who have become used to being largely ignored by the Council on many issues over many years - for example, noise nuisance and its impact on human health, the failure to follow the Council's own cumulative impact policy on alcohol licensing, the loss of retail premises to restaurants, uncollected bagged waste on the streets, lack of public toilets and public urination, the inadequacy of the Council's own reporting mechanisms and poor systems for notifying residents of planning and licensing applications. In the new world we now need to anticipate a Council that listens to residents and wants to hear our ideas as to how Soho can recover in a way that works for the whole community - not exclusively its F&B businesses and commercial landlords - but residents, visitors and office workers too. It's a new and very welcome challenge.

The Village Fête is covered extensively in this edition of the Clarion. Suffice to say we look forward to seeing you all on 10 July 2022 in St Anne's Gardens, Wardour Street, between 12 noon and 6 pm for a celebration involving all of Soho - from the children at the Parish Primary School, the irrepressible Lesley Lewis from the French House, at least two vicars (one now with puppy) and our much loved Honorary President, Leslie Hardcastle.

We have had a large number of Royal Visitors over the years to the Soho Society but not yet Her Majesty the Queen herself. A letter of invitation has been despatched but whether she makes it to the Fête, as cheekily suggested on our front cover, or not, we would like to wish Her Majesty a very happy and healthy Platinum Jubilee.

*Tim Lord*

# PLANNING



## We're watching...

Friday 6th May saw the property industry scrambling around for information in a panic. Either that, or they were much better prepared than anyone else for Labour's victory in the elections for Westminster Council. After all, not even Labour expected to win!

What are the implications for planning? Labour's manifesto headline was 'A Planning System That Puts Our Residents First'. That's an aim the Soho Society thoroughly endorses and we look forward to seeing what progress can be made. But some caution is needed. First, the council can't ignore national planning policy or that of the Mayor of London and the GLA. Second, significant changes will take time. And third, there are bound to be resource limitations, given the current economic situation and the competing demands on the council's finances.

However, there is considerable optimism that there will be an important shift in the balance of influence on the council, away from the property industry towards local residents and amenity groups like ours. I well remember a former leader of the council some years ago saying that her message to business was, 'We're going to get out of your way'. Unfortunately, the West End has been suffering from that policy ever since. The economic success of central London is clearly important, but it should never come by ignoring the legitimate concerns of our communities. Business will always need democratic restraint, and we believe the brakes can and should be applied in certain areas, without threatening good economic growth.

We wait to see how the 'Vision for Soho' process will be followed up, and we are also putting together a list of issues that we think should be priorities for the new council in terms of specific planning policy and practice. It's time for a fresh approach!

If the Soho Society is to play its part we will need to broaden the range of people who contribute to discussion both about planning policy and about specific planning applications in Soho. I've learned so much since I

began attending our Planning Group meetings and it's a fascinating way to understand more about this unique area. Why not give it a try? We also hope to find ways to collect more information from our members about issues that directly affect them. If you would like to be involved, please contact me at [andrew@thesohosociety.org.uk](mailto:andrew@thesohosociety.org.uk).

Enforcement: following eventual success in getting advertising banners removed from the lovely building at the Old Compton St/Moor St junction (most people will recall it as Ed's Easy Diner), Tim Lord arranged a very helpful meeting with Roald Piper, Planning Enforcement Team Leader at Westminster. Essentially, we should not wait for Westminster to spot planning breaches as they have very limited resources, so it is important for the community to make reports via the Westminster website. However, once reports are made they are taken seriously and followed up, though the process will often be much slower than we would like. Please let us know if you face any difficulties with this process.

Recent applications: the London Pavilion (next to the Trocadero) could be turned into a 964 bed tourist hostel. We objected to the loss of a cultural venue. We supported Meard Street residents in objecting to an application for Rudy's at 80-82 Wardour Street which would affect the amenity and the character of a very special Soho street. We have also asked Westminster to delay approval of an operational management plan for a new restaurant at 72 Broadwick Street until wider discussions with local residents about night-time management in the area have come to a satisfactory conclusion.

Plans are due for redevelopment of 7 Soho Square, a building which also fronts on Dean Street and currently houses Tesco.

Finally, if you have any problems with construction at the new Sohostel development at 92 Dean Street, please let me know and we will get in touch with the developer.

*Andrew Murray*



# ELECTION REPORT 2022

## THE RED FLAG IS FLYING OVER WESTMINSTER

It wasn't quite the fall of the Berlin Wall but, in local government terms at least, it was pretty close. Thursday, 5 May had been a long time coming for Labour supporters in Westminster (58 years to be precise), as voters finally turned away from the Tories.

In retrospect, it wasn't hard to see why, although the odds were strongly against it. The campaign was hard fought on both sides, but it is difficult to see what individual candidates could have done against the general trend. In power for too long, the Conservative leadership kept making mistakes and finally ran out of road. Resident groups across the borough had highlighted a lack of serious engagement, as the council prioritised business over communities; the £6 million Mound fiasco undermined claims to financial competence; and, in campaigning, the focus on 'clean streets' was an own goal, for example.

And then there was Boris. It was all too easy to connect the attitude of the Prime Minister with the party of Shirley Porter and Robert Davis, and some voters heard the silence from today's Conservative group and decided they wanted a different culture at City Hall. Meanwhile, after making progress in 2018, Labour realised that if they put the effort in they could get still more reward and seriously upped their game again. All these factors contributed to the result in the West End ward.

Hustings held by the Soho Society, with the Marylebone Association and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association were a combative and worthwhile part of the election campaign in the West End, with the chance to talk to candidates afterwards. And then came Election Day, and a quite astonishing night. 31 Labour councillors, 23 for the Conservatives, and we now have a 22 year old Muslim Labour Lord Mayor from a council flat in Lisson Green, Hamza Taouzzale. The times they are a-changin'!

It would be remiss not to appreciate the gracious way in which the defeated candidates - Tim Barnes, Eoghain Murphy and Julie Redmond - conducted themselves after the result, and we should be grateful too to Tim for his diligent service while in office as a West End ward councillor. A word too for Pancho Lewis, standing down as a Labour councillor here, having done a great deal to demonstrate that a Labour vote might not be as risky as some made out. Pancho paved the way for Labour in the West End and was a model for others wider afield in Westminster, judging by their range of successful candidates at this election.

But the future lies with Paul Fisher, Jessica Toale and Patrick Lilley, who has been put forward as the lead member for

Soho. Congratulations to them - but what will they and their colleagues do as they aim to build 'a fairer Westminster'? The Labour manifesto set out an ambitious programme over fifty four pages, but it won't be easy to deliver it and it would be wise not to hope for too much too soon. Problems with Westminster Housing, for instance, have been known for many years, and although there has been some improvement it has seemed painfully slow. How realistic is it to expect change to come quickly now?

Here in the West End there are three particular issues to keep your eye on.

1. The Oxford Street District: ideally, Labour will drop the name out of respect for the communities on either side of Oxford Street. Soho, Mayfair, Marylebone and Fitzrovia already have an identity and don't need to be part-absorbed into another new PR entity (the latest of which is the Outernet District off Charing Cross Road!) But more importantly, will they continue the high-spending approach to infrastructure that the Conservatives swore by? £3 million on Ramillies Street/Place does not look like value for money, and don't forget that the Oxford Street budget was £150 million. A lot of 'everyday' improvements could be carried out with that money. How about resurfacing Poland Street or Carlisle Street, for example?

2. Vision for Soho: there should be a chance to catch your breath on this one, as Labour have promised a 'pause'. That's a relief for those of us who have been frustrated at the way attempts to consider improvements in Soho have been hampered by the 'trust' issue. Too much discussion got bogged down by single-issue arguments which obscured the fact that there was some potential to bring people together if the arguments were handled differently. Let's hope Labour can introduce a fresh approach.

3. Enforcement: there is no doubt that residents have not had sufficient support from the authorities over a long period. The al fresco experience seems to have introduced new elements to the antisocial behaviour that we experience, so this would be a good time to review the overall situation. Not all of this is down to the council - our councillors could encourage the Met to think about the way they police the area. But tackling noise or graffiti, for example, needs a stronger, more co-ordinated approach, and more resources would seem to be justified. 'Zero tolerance' is clearly impossible, but a policy of 'reduced tolerance' with visible results would tell residents that our voices have been heard.

*Andrew Murray*

# LICENSING

Since the last issue of the Clarion, the local elections have taken place and Westminster now has a Labour Council. Amongst their promises is to put residents first, which we all welcome.

Following on from the last edition, the application for the new gaming licence at 147-149 Wardour Street was withdrawn at almost the eleventh hour. No particular reason was given, but there is always the possibility they may apply again. In the meantime there was a collective sigh of relief, and we will of course notify readers if they re-apply.

The main application in the current period is by the Box on Walker's Court, which wants to extend its licensing activities on Monday to Saturday in the basement room only as follows: to serve alcohol until 5.30 am Monday to Saturday, regulated entertainment to 6 am, and late night refreshment to 5 am. The Society is objecting to this application as it is way outside the scope of our licensing policy and also way outside Westminster's own licensing policy. The Box is also inside the Cumulative Impact Zone (as is all Soho). We will update you on the outcome of this in the next Clarion.

There have also been two new applications put forward to licences already issued at the development of Ilona Rose House, the huge development stretching from Charing Cross Road to Greek Street. These premises were granted 1am restaurant licences in 2021 and they are now seeking to combine three restaurants into two. If granted there will be very large numbers of people in that area late at night, and Greek Street is already a street with one of the highest crime rates in Soho.

Another application of note is put forward by Café Espana (La Pastaia) on Old Compton Street. They want to extend their hours for the sale of late night refreshment in the basement to first floor from 12.30 to 2 am, due to a drop in business during the pandemic.

We will continue to update residents on new applications via our monthly newsletter and the Clarion. In the meantime, if you receive an envelope addressed to "The Occupier" of your premises don't ignore it, it could easily be from WCC advising of a planning application or a licensing application, which may affect you adversely. If you want to object to a licence it's very important to do so, as objections carry more weight when supported by residents. Let us know and we will support your objection.

Lastly, as always, we'd like to thank Richard Brown of the Licensing Advice Project, Citizens Advice Westminster, for his help and patience. If you would like his assistance on anything, he can be contacted by email at [licensing@westminstercab.org.uk](mailto:licensing@westminstercab.org.uk). We hope to have an update from him in the next issue.

*The Licensing Committee*



# WARD PANEL UPDATE

## AND OTHER NEWS

Since the last Clarion, Steve Muldoon has left Soho and gone to Licensing at Westminster. Kenny Brown is still with us, though I understand he is moving on, and we also have Matthew Carr, both of whom will be at the next ward panel meeting (see below). We of course have three new ward councillors and Westminster has a Labour Council for the first time in history. The three new councillors are Patrick Lilley, who is the lead for Soho, Paul Fisher and Jessica Toale, who is a champion of women's safety. We look forward to working with them. I would also like to thank Tim Barnes and Pancho Lewis for their help and support over the past four years.

There is to be a ward panel meeting on Wednesday, 15 June, at 6 pm at 01 Hopkins Street, which we hope all the councillors will attend to introduce themselves and, following updates from the police and council, questions can be asked of both the police, the council and then the councillors. If you have a question or a topic you would like to raise, please let me know in advance and I will pass it on to the person best qualified to answer it -

*Jane.Doyle@thesohosociety.org.uk.*

I have been having a look at the crime figures for the past three months and they don't make happy reading. Old Compton Street has the highest number of crimes in Soho (272), and Greek Street is the second highest in Soho (231). This is almost certainly due to the large number of late night licences, and, sadly, is likely to get worse in the Greek Street area when the Ilona Rose House development is fully opened. The majority of crimes take place between 8pm and 4am. The top five crime types are theft and handling, and theft person, robbery, possession of drugs and violence against the person, and common assault, which account for over 1,000 reported crimes, which is a fairly astonishing number.

In other news, the long awaited legislation for pedicabs is getting closer. It will be part of the new Transport Bill to be put before Parliament. Then TfL will start the long awaited process of regulation which will hopefully make

pedicabs safer and unable to rip passengers off, and the playing of loud music, the single biggest menace, will be outlawed. We'll keep you informed of progress.

There still seems to be confusion around reporting. Noise is a council issue and needs reporting on their website or via the noise team on 020 7641 2000. It is worth having a look at their website to see what types of noise they do and do not investigate. Crime is obviously a police matter, ring 999 in an emergency, 101 non-emergency, or via the Metropolitan Police website, or private message them on twitter via [@metcc](https://twitter.com/metcc).

On other news and restaurant openings, one to look out for is Milk Beach, which started in Queen's Park, opening in the Ilona Rose development, Manette Street, later in the summer. There will be a mix of South-East Asian and Mediterranean cuisine on the menu as well as some new BBQ dishes. We are told, being an Aussie restaurant, it will be big on brunch with "Vietnamese curried crab and folded eggs on a house-made crumpet among the treats in store".

Burger and Beyond are due to open in the summer at 10 Old Compton Street. The burgers, allegedly among London's best, are made with Swaledale beef, that has been dry aged for

between 28 and 45 days - sounds good for burger lovers.

Another one to look out for is Bubala, 15 Poland Street, due to open this summer on the premises that were Vasco & Piero's Pavilion, now moved to D'Arblay Street, offering Middle Eastern style vegetarian dishes, such as Halloumi with black seed honey, Yemeni malawach with stracciatella, kalamata olives & smoked aubergine honey.

*Jane Doyle*



# THE SOHO SOCIETY HOUR



**S**oho has exploded back to life in 2022, and it's been wonderful to see that reflected in the range of guests we have interviewed for the Soho Society Hour recently. There have been some truly transporting stories featured, which always make for an interesting start to a Thursday morning.

For example... have you heard the one about Soho resident Martin Kennedy, a composer who had an unexpected number one hit in China... but only found out when someone arrived on his doorstep with a royalties cheque? Or, how about local hairdresser Jean-Marc Vrezil, who first visited London as a tourist from his native France, met a new friend looking for a night out in Soho, remained in communication via postcard, and then promptly moved into his flat when he took the plunge and returned to London? Or what about Laura Doyle, a polyglot Brazilian jazz singer from Liverpool who also works as a football talent manager?

If you're intrigued, they're all there on the Soho Society Hour to be listened back to.

It's not all colourful 'raconteurism' however. We've introduced a new segment on the London culture scene with theatre and art critic, Jim Cooke. His finger is firmly on the pulse, and he also has one of the best radio voices we've come across. With so much going on again – not all of it good – it's worth tuning in for Jim's tips. However, he's going to be away during June but will be back in July.

And of course, we don't neglect the serious side of Soho. Barbara Brownlee from the Soho Housing Association came on to talk about housing issues, Tom Scurr from the Samaritans chatted about mental health and resources available for those in need, and Ivan Farrell from FM Conway filled us in on some of the intricacies of resurfacing roads (amongst other things).

A big thanks to those at Soho Radio for continuing to welcome and assist the Soho Society Hour... couldn't do it without you!

*Cat O'Shea*



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

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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# SOHO FOOD FEAST

Back to celebrate its 10th year anniversary, the Soho Food Feast returns on 18 and 19 June 2022 to St Anne's Gardens. Originally the brain child of Margot Henderson and Anita Moir, who brought in Lesley Lewis of the French House to provide the bar, this fantastic two day event brings the best of Soho restaurants together to raise money for Soho Parish School.

Previously the fundraising objective had been the school playground and supporting their healthy eating kitchen. However times have changed and with growing pupil numbers and a lack of government funding has meant the fundraising is vital to keep the school alive. The sad truth is, without the financial support from the Soho Food Feast, the school would be in a critical state. The happy truth though is that the school is in Soho and we have an incredible community spirit which is evident in the success of the previous years.

This year's line up looks as incredible as ever and sees the return of the wonderful Margot with Rochelle Canteen to help celebrate the tenth year.

Tickets are now on sale and can be bought from our website <http://www.sohofoodfeast.co.uk>

The event could not take place without the generosity of the restaurants and the army of volunteers who help keep the event running. If you are interested in taking part please contact Anna at [anna@sohoparish.co.uk](mailto:anna@sohoparish.co.uk)

*Anna Ashford*



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sugar syrup

Build in a glass over ice, stir well and garnish with a  
slice of orange



# NICKIE AIKEN

CONSERVATIVE MP FOR CITIES OF LONDON & WESTMINSTER



## We're regulating pedicabs.

Firstly, I want to start by congratulating the recently elected new West End councillors. I won't deny that I am disappointed that the Conservatives lost control of Westminster City Council but as many of you will know from my own time as a councillor and now as an MP, I have a strong record of working with politicians from across the political divide. That will certainly remain the case and I look forward to working with all councillors for the benefit of all those we represent.

When I stood for Parliament in 2019, I was determined to secure a pedicab licensing scheme. Having lived in the Two Cities for 25 years and as a former Westminster Council Leader, Cabinet Member for Public Protection & Licensing and Westminster City Councillor, I fully understood the immense challenges a minority of pedicab riders caused with blaring music, rip-off fares and antisocial behaviour.

I am, therefore, delighted that after my campaign, the Government confirmed in the recent Queen's Speech that legislation for a pedicab licensing scheme will be included in the forthcoming Transport Bill.

For too long, rogue pedicab riders have caused nuisance on our roads, blaring out their music and charging rip-off prices. I have heard directly from local people, businesses, residents associations, amenity societies and councillors right across Soho and the Two Cities their awful experiences involving pedicab drivers causing so much noise and anti-social behaviour. It's the blaring music that Soho residents have had no choice but to put up with hour after hour, day after day, night after night. This will now stop under the new licensing scheme.



The Soho Society has played a pivotal role in supporting my calls, arming me with evidence ahead of meetings with Ministers and officials and keeping me updated about the on-the-ground reality in Soho and the issues faced by local people. I believe this support has been instrumental in securing Government support for the licensing scheme.

My thanks must also go to the Prime Minister for his personal commitment to giving Government time to secure a pedicab licensing scheme. Answering my question at Prime Minister's Questions in February and in a private meeting with me, Boris Johnson agreed for Government time should my Bill fall. He has seen through that commitment.

With summer drawing ever closer, we will no doubt see even more people visit Soho, particularly during the evening and into the night. I know many of you remain concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour and I will continue to ensure our

Borough Commander puts the resources into the area to keep Soho streets safe for all. I will also continue to work with the Soho Society and the Government on the legislative plans for planning and licensing to ensure they are not detrimental to central London's neighbourhoods.

Lastly, I am here to work for you. If there are any local, national or international issues you think I may be able to help with, please send me an email to [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)

Keep up to date on social media! Follow [@TwoCitiesNickie](https://www.facebook.com/TwoCitiesNickie) on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

## NEW WARD COUNCILLORS



Firstly, thank you for electing us as your new ward councillors. It is a privilege to represent the communities of the West End. We are grateful for the faith you have put in us, and we aim to repay that trust over the next four years.

This election was a sign that the residents of the West End were crying out for a change. After 60-years of one-party rule, it has brought about historic change at the Council. And we expect residents to see a massive culture shift from the top and a significant realignment of its priorities.

We come to these roles with a very clear message: we will put residents first.

Over the course of the campaign, we heard time and time again that residents felt overlooked and about the impacts that Council decisions were having on our communities. We worked hard to get to know these issues and stand alongside residents to face them. We understand the importance of local amenities like Berwick Street Market, the Soho Walk-in Clinic and Mayfair Library. And we felt the same pain when outdoor, late-night dining and poor planning wreaked havoc on the lives of residents.

In putting residents first, we will stand up to vested interests and property developers. We will protect the unique character of the neighbourhoods of the West End. And we will put residents' voices at the heart of our decision-making processes.

We are committed to working together on issues like planning and licensing, protecting Soho's cultural and architectural heritage, revitalising Berwick Street market, and ensuring the area has sufficient amenities such as public conveniences.

As well as being champions for the West End at the Council, we will also be undertaking specific roles within the Labour Group at City Hall. Paul has been appointed Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Licensing and will also sit on the Planning Committee. Jessica has the Deputy Cabinet role for Culture, Heritage and the Arts as well being the Council's Animal Welfare champion. And Patrick will be the Westminster's LGBTQ champion and lead member for Soho.

We are delighted with these roles as they touch so many of the issues that matter to Soho and the wider West End.

The Soho Society is a great champion for residents, and we look forward to working with them as a partner. The West End is truly a special place, and we will work hard to keep it that way.

*Paul Fisher, Jessica Toale, Patrick Lilley*

# PAUL DIMOLDENBERG



“Imagine Socialists running Buckingham Palace, militants lording over Parliament and controlling Downing Streets, left-wing extremists interfering with the daily running of business; a horrible nightmare. It certainly is but it could happen to the City of Westminster.” So wrote Shirley Porter in March 1988 as she took her begging bowl round local business to raise money for her 1990 Council election campaign.

Talking about the 27 Labour Councillors, Porter said: “They are expert at manipulating the press and presenting an apparently respectable face to gain public sympathy. They cannot be underestimated”.

Thirty four years later, and here we are in Labour Westminster. With Boris Johnson, the first occupant of Downing Street to be a constituent of a Labour Council.

Shirley Porter’s prediction has finally come true. But I do have to disappoint you. We have no intention of running Buckingham Palace (although I was there last Wednesday at the Garden Party) or of controlling Downing Street (well, not until Keir Starmer is elected Prime Minister) or interfering with business.

We have already seen an outpouring of goodwill towards the new Labour Council. A Labour Council with a new purpose to change Westminster for the better has captured the imagination of staff across the board. We have even heard

of two members of staff who have withdrawn their retirement requests so they can continue to work for the new Council. It is truly humbling.

Our victory was built on the shoulders of the Labour giants who have come before us and who never gave up in the efforts to build Labour in Westminster and give proper representation to the ‘many’.

It is a great tragedy that Joe Hegarty, a Church Street Councillor for 16 years and Labour Leader from 1981-1987, died last year and cannot join our celebrations. Joe led the Labour Group which came within 106 votes of becoming the largest party in 1986. Joe was best Labour Leader in my years as a Councillor.

As we embark on this journey, one that we have worked so hard for, I close with the words of the late John Smith, ‘The opportunity to serve – that is all we ask’. We now have that opportunity and we will strive hard over the next four years to make life better for Soho and Westminster residents in so many ways.

*Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg*

*Hyde Park Ward*

*Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality*



## Watsons Pharmacy 屈臣氏藥房

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

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E. watsons.sale@hotmail.co.uk

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健康生活諮詢及推廣

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新處方使用跟進服務  
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Supervised Medication Consumption  
藥物使用監管

Chinese Language Access Service  
中文翻譯服務 (只限於藥物翻譯)

### 營業時間

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

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# WORKING TOWARD A SAFER SOHO

JESSICA TOALE



Take a moment to think about your favourite and least favourite streets in Soho. How do they make you feel? And what is it about these places that makes you feel the way you do? Chances are the amount of activity on these streets, the quality of the lighting and the care with which they are looked after all have an impact on your perceptions.

On a rainy night in April this year, I invited a group of local women to meet with an urban design expert and night-time lighting expert to answer these very questions. This came off the back of a survey I ran in November 2021 which aimed to better understand women's feelings about their safety on the streets in Soho. The most shocking finding was that while the vast majority of respondents said they felt very safe or fairly safe in the West End during the day, this dropped to only 45% of respondents at night.

When asked about what would improve safety in the area two things came to the fore: better policing and better lighting.

As a result, I have been engaging with local police teams to ensure that the information provided to me via the survey and in discussion with local residents was included in their information reports. This will help them to better allocate their personnel and resources. The Met Police has now also launched a new pilot service called StreetSafe for anyone to anonymously report public places that have made them feel unsafe because of the lack of lighting, abandoned buildings or because of the behaviour of others around.

Concern with the lighting situation in places like St Anne's Court, Green's Court and Hopkins Street, amongst others, formed a major part of the conversation during our walk with the lighting expert in April.

We learned that traditional street lighting was designed

with vehicles in mind, not pedestrians, so a much more appropriate solution for pedestrians is ensuring lit surfaces as opposed to spotlights, which aim to light the ground rather than the surrounding area. We also learned that brighter lighting isn't always the best solution. Our eyes adjust to contrast, so bright lighting can make the surrounding areas appear darker to us.

As we walked around Soho, one of the greatest contrasts for me was the way residents talked about St Anne's Court and Meard Street. Residents reported avoiding the former's narrow alleyway in favour of the more open and well-kept latter. While the latter benefited from lighting emanating from shop fronts, restaurants and homes, making it feel more lived in and overlooked, the former's uneven shuttered shop fronts created blind spots that enhanced a feeling of insecurity.

There must be no 'no-go' areas for residents in Soho, and some simple public realm and lighting interventions could improve people's feeling of safety in the neighbourhood. Safety on the streets is an issue that affects anyone who lives, works and visits Soho. We need sustainable solutions that benefit all residents and visitors to Soho.

- If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this article and want to report a crime, call 101 or report it online. If you are ever in immediate danger call 999.
- Victim Support can also help you deal with and report crime. It is a free and confidential service - 0845 3030 900 - [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk).



# IT'S SHOWTIME!

RICHARD PIERCY

**R**oll up roll up and welcome to the 47th Annual Soho Fete.

An afternoon of fun and entertainment awaits you – a quintessential English summer village fete right here in the heart of Soho, brought to you as always by the Soho Society

For your pleasure and delight, we have assembled a line-up of musicians of immense talent that will be performing throughout the afternoon. To add to the fun, they'll be joined by a number of equally talented performance artists and dancers, including Morris dancing troupe The Belles of London. Elvis Presley will stroll amongst you on his seven foot high stilts, whilst Nina Bubbles blows giant bubbles to enthrall and amaze the kids. Rumour has it that there'll also be a pearly king and queen!

So without further ado, allow us to introduce you to the rest of the gang...

### Peter Cliffe - Comperer

We are once again eternally grateful to the unflappable Peter Cliffe who will be providing his exceptional compering skills at the event.

### The New Sticky

It is with great excitement that we welcome The New Sticky to the stage for their Soho Fete debut. This hugely entertaining London based four-piece band promise a show jam packed with tropical theatrics and pop and rock clichés with a fun and funky execution. Their debut single 'Freaky' drops next month, so a great time to be seeing them play. We've heard they're quite simply, the hottest band in the world.

### Bianca

Another debutant to the fete stage. This

talented Soho based artist, performer and burlesque dancer is probably familiar to many of you from her glamorous street performances of fan dancing on a giant holographic shoe during the lockdown. Bianca has produced and performed shows all over the world and more locally at Madame JoJo's and Café de Paris and we're honoured she'll be treating us to her show at the fete.



### Ray and Johnny

Firm Soho Fete favourites Ray and Johnny are once again on the bill having first appeared in 2015 alongside Ruby Venezuela. They modestly describe themselves as 'two old banjo-ukulele plonkers keeping alive the memory of



George Formby and other old time acts, happy to put on a bit of show for any good cause'. In our opinion, they certainly put on more than a 'bit of a show' for this very good cause. But the question on our lips is what outfits will they be wearing on stage this year? Will they be appearing as two of the cast from Hi-de-Hi or maybe they'll be wearing 1940's British Army battle dress – it's a fete secret, you'll have to be there to find out!

### The Fabulous Lounge Swingers

This stylish retro-fabulous three-piece vocal group deliver a dynamic mix of cool swing, fantastically funny party tunes and magical mash ups, guaranteed to raise your knees and spirits in equal measures. The band have played at some



amazing events over the years including festivals such as Glastonbury and Bestival. They were



the original Big Brother House Band playing live on TV and were chosen as one of the official bands at the London Olympics and Paralympics performing at the Official Torch Relay. We're thrilled to be having them perform for us.

**The Red Stripe Band**

Led by Soho resident Neil Drinkwater, The Red Stripe Band never fail to wow the crowd. During their 25 years in the business they've played at virtually every jazz and blues festival in the UK and Europe including a memorable show at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival. Expect to be entertained with

both original songs and other boogie woogie, swing and rock n roll classics in an engaging, ever moving and comical show. "Imagine a smaller version of the Jools Holland Orchestra without the annoying

front man!" is how Time Out magazine described them. High praise indeed – we're looking forward to the show!



**Ray Gelato – 'The King of Swing'**

Every year we bring you a different headline act and this year is no exception. It is with immense pride that we welcome for the first time the 'King of Swing' Ray Gelato. Ray considers Soho to be his spiritual home and regularly appears at Ronnie Scott's and The 100 Club. This giant of the swing scene has also played at jazz clubs throughout the world during his 40 year career, including The Blue Note, Carnegie Hall and the Lincoln Centre in New York, The Montreal Jazz Festival, and



Umbria Jazz in Italy. Other career highlights include opening for Robbie Williams at The Royal Albert Hall and playing at Sir Paul McCartney's wedding. He's also performed twice for HM The Queen, so it's amazing to have Ray join us in this jubilee year!



**EbbonKnee and Minnie Diamond – The Finale**

Entering stage right, in an explosion of glitter, sequins and feather boas with the odd pearl necklace thrown in, we'll be welcoming back EbbonKnee and Minnie Diamond. These two icons of the Soho drag scene will raise the roof and bring down the curtain on the 47th Soho Fete. You'll be treated to an array of songs sung in their own inimitable style and everyone is expected to join in with the final number, their version of Frank Sinatra's New York, New York. So get busy practising your singing and see you in the St Anne's Church Gardens on July 10th!



# THE FRONT RUNNERS

LUCY HAINE

The cream of Soho hospitality will be racing through Soho streets on Sunday, 10 July. The Clarion team spoke to some of the racers to talk tactics and prep for the iconic Soho Waiters' Race.

Runners will be under starter, Lesley Lewis's orders, at 3.30pm, running up Dean Street, round Soho Square back down Frith Street, sharp right turn down Romilly street, back to the French. Waiters must work in Soho and rules are strict; running whilst balancing a tray with Champagne/Glass/Ashtray (for ballast) without dropping your order, or holding on. Entry costs £20 for the business and first prize is £100 and a trophy. The Soho Waiters' Race is the main event at The Soho Fete on Sunday, 10 July.

Photos by Jason Fisher-Jones



**Peter, 31**

**My Place Soho**

Experience: None

Training Regime: Will practice in the bar but not started yet

Tactics: Win at all costs!

Worked in Soho: 4 years

Fave place in Soho: My Place, of course.



**Mark, 60**

**Soho's Karma Sanctum Hotel**

Experience: I might have done it, but might have been too drunk to remember!

Tactics: Cause carnage, as I do in real life.

Worked in Soho: 35 years

Fave place in Soho: Randall & Aubin



**Gabriella, 26**

**Soho's Karma Sanctum Hotel**

Experience: None

Tactics: Breathing, start slow and speed up!

Worked in Soho: 5 years

Fave place in Soho: The Ivy, Soho



**Sherene, 40**

**Soho's Karma Sanctum Hotel**

Experience: None

Tactics: Practice, I will run along the river.

Worked in Soho: 5 years

Fave place in Soho: York



**Nathaniel, 23**

**The Queens Head**

Experience: This will be my first race.

Tactics: I will watch the Princess Diaries again and work in zigzagging, to confuse people!

Worked in Soho: 11 months

Fave place in Soho: Trisha's



**Justyna, 35**

**Randall & Aubin**

Experience: None, but Randall & Aubin won last year!

Tactics: Wear comfortable shoes, stay focused and use small fast steps.

Worked in Soho: 4.5 years

Fave place in Soho: Bar Termini, Cafe Boheme or Trisha's



**Endri, 29**

**Dean Street Townhouse**

Experience: I am reigning champion, ran and won first time last year and feeling confident.

Tactics: Start fast, explosive to gain metres ahead and stay focused. I used to run 100 m and I was a footballer when I was younger.

Worked in Soho: 3 Years

Fave place in Soho: The Crown and Two Chairman



**Sylvia, 23**

**Soho House, 40 Greek Street**

Experience: I've raced before, but not with a tray.

Tactics: Start slow then run like hell!

Worked in Soho: 12 months

Fave place in Soho: Burger & Lobster



**Francisco, 27**

**Old Compton Brasserie**

Experience: None

Tactics: Start slowly and wait for people to drop things then speed up, I know how to run fast with a tray.

Worked in Soho: 3.5 Years

Fave place in Soho: Pepe



Thank you to our Sponsors...



**Shaftesbury**



It's what we do

# THE LIFE OF BRIAN

Forget the Grand National, Ascot or Cheltenham, Snail Racing has become an increasingly popular addition to the Race Calendar.

Archachatina marginata or Brian for short, is the odds on favourite in the Great Snail Race again this year at the Soho Fête on Sunday, 10 July, held as always in St Anne's Gardens, Wardour Street. Brian has even been known to carry some of the other runners in the field on his back: a true gent. Not for him the tyranny of any Stewards' Enquiry. And, forget trying to fix the race with lettuce or carrots on sticks, he prefers celery. He hates garlic butter and parsley though...

Hatched in the beautiful countryside in the outskirts of Brazzaville, his long-winded journey from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, via Dalston market, the 38 bus and into Soho, my bathtub, and St Anne's Gardens, has been an arduous and somewhat undignified one. It took quite a



long time. Undeterred by numerous obstacles, his favourite snacks en route were bananas and peanuts and it has been excellent training.

Rumour has it that Greek Street's L'Escargot, a Soho stalwart, back in the day used to breed their own snails - Brian's diminutive cousins - in the basement until 'elf and safety got the better of them. Nevertheless, their chocolate snails as prizes for race winners are the order of the day.

After Brian's rip-roaring successes at last year's Fête, he has been put out to stud in a secluded paddock in a Covent Garden design studio where he continues to inspire. His successor (also called Brian), following in his slime-tracks, will grace the race track once again this year where he will put a new crop of his English garden brethren through their paces.

*Margaret Bloomer*



# THE FRENCH HOUSE BAR

The Bar will this year, once again, be organised and run by Lesley Lewis, landlady extraordinaire, of the French House, and her amazing team of volunteers. Lesley, of course, needs no introduction having been presiding over the French House for 33 years - Bastille Day, 14 July, will be her 33rd anniversary, and as usual this will be celebrated in true French House style.

One of the stars of the Bar, and indeed an unsung hero to my mind, is Hugues Brisset, aka Mr Meteor of London, who mans the pumps without a break, no mean feat, from 12 to 6 - see picture of him with Lesley. He takes great pride in making sure everything is in smooth working order and at the right



temperature! Such has been the demand in the past that this year there will be two lots of kegs.

On offer at the bar this year there will also be Pimm's by the jug and the glass, alongside Prosecco, red, white and rose wine (by the glass and by the bottle), gin and tonic (courtesy of West End Drinks), Breton Cidre, and a selection of soft drinks. As a newcomer to this year's fete there will also be a separate stall selling Aperol Spritz.

I think we're catering for every taste! We thank each and every one of the volunteers, without whom this would not work.

*Jane Doyle*

# CSR AND THE HUMAN FRUIT MACHINE

**D**id you know the activities of The Soho Society are entirely run by Volunteers?

All that campaigning, producing and distributing the Soho Clarion across Soho, getting involved in planning and licensing, the glorious Soho Fete, the recent Soho Hustings, The Soho Waiters Race, 20th Century House, Social Media mutterings, membership databases and more is all created, fought for, looked after and cared for by volunteers.

You don't have to live in Soho to volunteer for The Soho Society. You just need a love of all things Soho, a passion to get involved and persistence to keep asking what needs doing! Sometimes we can't see the wood for the trees at Soho Society HQ.

Many companies include volunteer days, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility ('CSR') policy. Employees get paid by their company to volunteer for registered charities of their choice. According to Forbes 2021, "Corporate Social Responsibility is not simply ethical, but also a Modern Business Tool". It enables companies to support and entrench themselves in the local community, extending their global reach via "soft power" marketing and is important for improving employee loyalty and trust. The concept of a social contract for big business has existed since the 1970's but it gained traction in the 1980's becoming pretty much an essential tool of Modern Business Strategy in the 2020's.

Volunteer days are provided by companies of all sizes, you don't have to be a big corporate to provide your teams with volunteer days. As an example, Soho florist, and Soho Society member, Storm Flowers London gives their freelance team, 2 paid days per annum to volunteer, as part

of their CSR Policy. The Soho Society is in discussions with the ops team at MCC Saatchi about their CSR. The Soho Society is a registered Charity No. 1146589. Please do ask the organisation you work for about your allowance and contact us to volunteer.

We are absolutely indebted to our Fete volunteers, who work tirelessly, to set-up and close-down the fete, run the Soho Society stalls including the tombola, snail racing and human fruit machine and without whom the Soho Waiters Race could not happen. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you to the Co-op, Berwick Street, who provide our volunteers with food and water.

We need loads of volunteers at the fete on Sunday, 10 July, including 100 people to marshal the Soho Waiters' race at 3pm. Soho Fete Committee members, Alice & Nic are in the process of organising a volunteers meeting - with Wine and Pizza - at St Anne's Churchyard on Wednesday, 6 July at 6pm, if you can help, please come along, and ask your boss about your company's CSR policy.

Sign up as a Fete volunteer/ Soho Race Marshal via the QR code below, or to Volunteer for anything non-fete related email [admin@thesohosociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@thesohosociety.org.uk)

Lucy Haine



# 25 YEARS OF CARNABY

Shaftesbury acquired the majority of the Carnaby area, comprising the world famous Carnaby Street and its 13 surrounding streets.

Going back to 1997, when Shaftesbury was on the verge of making its offer, Carnaby Street was quite a different place to what it is today. In fact, it was a tatty version of its former self, filled with tourist shops, having once been the epicentre of fashion and the birthplace of ‘Swinging London’ in the 1960s.

In the late 1970s and early 80s the area became something of a Mod hangout, retaining some element of cool before its slippery slope into a tourist trap. It was Shaftesbury, headed by Executive Director, Simon Quayle, who had a vision to return the area to its former glory, with a new strategy

focusing on attracting new up-and-coming businesses and designers, independents and concept stores with a point of difference, as well as UK firsts for international fashion brands.

Carnaby is the place to go to buy products that you cannot get anywhere else with many of the stores selling exclusive

products or services. The Rolling Stones global flagship store, RS No.9, is a real experience for fans of the band, with lots of exclusive products and collaborations with fashion brands – the latest one being with rock ‘n’ roll jewellers The Great Frog, who have had a store in Carnaby for 50 years this year.

Many independent businesses are located in the Newburgh Quarter such as Annie’s Ibiza, Kloris, Lazy Oaf and Mark Powell who has had his tailoring business in Carnaby for 35 years.

It is fitting that the Stones have a store on Carnaby Street, as they used to get kitted out at the likes of John Stephen and Lord John on the street back in the 60s. A time when Don Arden, who was the manager of the Small Faces, used to have his office on Carnaby Street too. Carnaby

has amazing music heritage as visitors can discover on the walking tour app Carnaby Echoes.

The story continues with recent store openings include fashion brands NICCE, Mallet and IKKS Paris as well as piercing and jewellery brand Metal Morphosis. Third Man Records opened on Marshall Street and is owned by Jack White, lead singer of The White Stripes.

Carnaby is now also an exciting dining destination, with over 60 food and drink venues that include a choice of more than 30 cuisines. Kingly Court is home to 25 restaurants with its open-air courtyard and communal seating. Recent openings include Istanbulite cuisine at Zahter on Newburgh Street and Nightjar in Kingly Court, reintroducing live jazz performances to add to the

long established and legendary Blues Bar in Kingly Street.

Carnaby Street is very much the backbone, but it’s also about all the other streets that all have their unique character with the likes of Newburgh Street, Ganton Street and Marshall Street. Carnaby is one of the most people friendly places in the West

End with traffic free streets, and Shaftesbury works closely with the council to keep the area clean and green. There are more than 740 bee friendly flower boxes, 26 green roofs and with 4 beehives (160,000 bees) on the roof tops of Ganton Street so this part of the West End can even make its own honey!

This is the best part of the best city in the world, and we look forward to the next chapter in Carnaby.

*Lydia Clarkson*

[www.carnaby.co.uk](http://www.carnaby.co.uk) / [@CarnabyLondon](https://twitter.com/CarnabyLondon)



# TIME FOR MORE GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN NURSERIES

**Greg Stewart Lane**

**Manager at Soho Nursery & Pre-School (LEYF)**

**S**oho prides itself on being inclusive. A place where all sorts of people and all sorts of families can work and live as a community. At Soho Nursery and Pre-School we play an essential role in supporting those families who establish their life here. The nursery is part of the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) which is a social enterprise of 39 nurseries, set up to provide the best education and care for London's children – whatever their background or their parents' income. Soho Nursery & Pre-School works with a diverse mix of people and institutions to help champion its social vision of full inclusivity – from the National Gallery to the nearby shopkeepers; Drag Queens (and their Story Times) and the community in Brewer Street - the list goes on.

But there is one group we still struggle to reach, and that's men. In fact, we still only employ two male teachers in Soho and this is a problem across the sector.

More widely, here at LEYF we do quite well. 7.6% of our entire workforce identify as male. The national average is just under 3%.

So, you may ask why does it matter? We want children to

recognise and fulfil their potential and thrive. There's little doubt that children learn from what they see and hear, not necessarily what they are taught or told. Role models really do matter. When children interact with all the skills and experiences of a diverse workforce they have a much more enriched view of the world.

LEYF has been campaigning for over ten years to increase the number of men in childcare and has implemented several measures to try and encourage more men to join the Early Years workforce.

One of the initiatives is an all-male apprenticeship programme as well as a 'Buddy' scheme to support and mentor our male teachers, challenge stereotypes and debunking myths about why men shouldn't work with children in the wider society.

But how can we truly represent the neighbourhood of Soho when roughly half the population (i.e. the male half) is missing? Very young children don't see gender or class. But they do spot opportunity, kindness and authenticity.

For those of us who live and work here, we know that Soho is a special place because of its people, which is why we continue our mission to be as representative as we can.

For anyone interested in joining our team, please contact [apply@leyf.org.uk](mailto:apply@leyf.org.uk)



# PICCADILLY

CLIVE JENNINGS

Piccadilly, London's mile long western approach, was originally known for its busy coaching inns and magnificent palaces, and latterly for its internationally renowned department stores, theatres and hotels. In this book, historian Stephen Hoare explores and explains how and why the 'Dilly' has always been a haunt for pleasure seekers, from its aristocratic origins right through to its hedonistic heyday, when Bright Young Things rubbed shoulders with royalty, film stars, gangsters, pimps and prostitutes.

It once marked the western extent of London and acquired its name from the word 'piccadill', the ruff adjoining the collar of an Elizabethan gentleman's coat. Briefly re-named 'Portugal Street' - in honour of Charles II's consort, Catherine of Braganza - it was also known as the Reading Road. As recently as 1870, the White Bear coaching inn, built in the seventeenth century, occupied the site where the Criterion Theatre now stands at Piccadilly Circus. As late as the early 1900s, the West End was dominated by horse-drawn traffic, and the average speed of traffic was just 5mph.

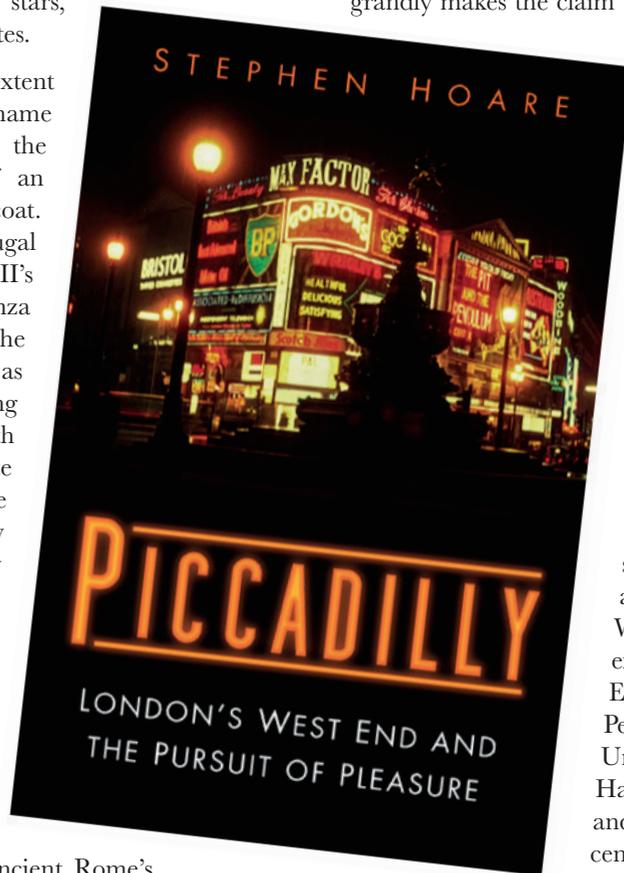
Piccadilly Circus was originally to be the southernmost of three large circular roundabouts or 'Circuses' (named after ancient Rome's 'Circus Maximus') planned to be built where Regent Street cut across existing roads. In the event, Regent's Circus was only half completed and became a crescent, and Oxford Circus was shrunk in size so that today it appears as a simple road junction. Regency architect John Nash widened Regent Street to create the new 'circus', and in introducing the rule that horse-drawn traffic could only move clockwise around the new Piccadilly Circus, to avoid arguments over rights of way, effectively invented the traffic roundabout and the one-way system, later adopted throughout the country.

The iconic 'Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain', known popularly as 'Eros' (though actually representing his

brother 'Anteros' god of selfless love) was cast in aluminium - very exotic and expensive at the time - and erected in 1893. Hoare opines that this was "the moment when Piccadilly and its traffic circus, with its famous statue, came to symbolise Britain's capital city with all its confidence and charisma. It became one of the great streets of the world, like New York's Times Square, Paris's Champs-Élysées, Rome's Via del Corso and Berlin's Unter den Linden." He grandly makes the claim that: "Piccadilly is the centre of

London's bustling West End - an entertainment and shopping district ... and is "dead centre of London ... of England ... of the United Kingdom ... possibly of the World? It is a curious blend of the international scene, and a small village where everyone knows everyone else."

This fascinating book looks at the places and the characters found in the environs of Piccadilly - Mayfair, St James and, of course Soho - in a series of short essays. There are lots of engaging stories: Winstanley's Water Theatre, in existence from 1696 to 1720; Egyptologist Thomas 'Mummy' Pettigrew, famed for his 'Mummy Unwrappings'; The Egyptian Hall, 'England's Home of Magic and Mystery' in the nineteenth century and in 1893, one of the first public showings of a motion picture in London. Tales of famous louche names from Oscar Wilde to Paul Raymond and nightclubs from Ivor Novello's Fifty-Fifty Club in Wardour Street in the 1920s to Murrays Cabaret Club in the 1960s. All excellent and compelling reading for Sohoites.



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# TEENAGE RUNAWAY TO ONE HIT WONDER - IN CHINA

As a small child in the 1960s I heard only classical music because my father was obsessed with it and pop music was banned in his house. My childhood immersion in the classical canon seemed to detonate my response as a teenager when I defied the ban and became obsessed with the bands and musicians of the 1970s.

This didn't go down well (to say the least) and I soon escaped from The Midlands and headed down the M1 in a wrecked van with a bass guitar and twelve pounds to London to make my fortune as a pop star.

When I arrived the punks were in full cry snarling with revolutionary zeal, but they were soon ousted in a counter-revolution by the New Romantics who frightened them off with an overplus of hair and make-up before disappearing themselves in a cloud of Max Factor finishing powder to be replaced with whatever the next thing was. Unhappily in the midst of all this mayhem no-one was interested in my songs which I played anywhere and everywhere I could in bars, clubs, hotels etc. in London and Germany.

I made a couple of albums in the late 1980s, one with producer Nick Magnus and one in my studio at home. I promoted them madly for a year or two but still didn't get anywhere and I more or less gave up. Until....one morning many years later in 1995 there was a knock at the door. It was a FedEx package from Hong Kong containing a letter from Polygram and a CD of an album by Chinese pop star Priscilla Chan. The letter said she had recorded one of my songs; that it was the single from the album; that it was at number one in the charts and so was the album.

I thought this must be a mistake until I played the CD and was stunned to hear that it was my song Lullabye. Somehow

one of my albums from all those years earlier had found its way to Hong Kong. They had heard a song they liked, put a Cantonese lyric on it and recorded and released it.



Apparently it was in Chinese communities all over the world so, living in Soho over the road from Chinatown, I went to see if it was in the shops there – and it was. The shopkeepers clearly knew who Priscilla Chan was and I bought a couple of copies but was too sheepish to tell them I had written one of her most successful songs. I assumed they would think I was a nutter.

It ended up being covered and re-released all over the place, Germany, Israel, South Korea and almost everywhere in the Far East. I Google it from time to time and have found versions from massive stadium concerts to buskers, hotel bands, karaoke bars etc., YouTube videos on how to play the music and bowdlerised versions of the original English lyric.

Sadly I never made it as a pop star but one or two other songs from my albums have been covered over the years (and possibly some I don't know anything about) but never anything as dramatic as what happened with Lullabye. I don't quite know why but the Chinese musical sensibility seems to have gone for my melody like catnip and apparently still does to this day and I am always

amused and delighted whenever I think about it or find yet another version on YouTube. Better a one-hit-wonder than a no hit wonder!

*Martin Kennedy*



# THEATRES, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

## FROM LONDON LIVING LARGE

### WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION ★★★★★

London County Hall | Until Sep 25, 2022

Tue - Sat: 7:30 pm, Thu & Sat: 2:30 pm, Sun: 3 pm



Enter Agatha Christie's world of devotion and deceit, murder and mystery, in the grandeur and majesty of London County Hall. The setting is the perfect venue for the ultimate courtroom drama. Sitting at the old council desks and faced with the judge's imposing dais, the audience absorbs all the awe and terror induced by proceedings at the Old Bailey before the play even begins. This is arguably

**Enough twists and turns to induce vertigo in the most hardened amateur sleuth**

Christie's most accomplished drama with enough twists and turns to induce vertigo in the most hardened amateur sleuth. In this production it gets a flawless presentation and all of the cast do a fine job no matter how small the part. Particularly strong is Jonathan Firth as defence counsel, Sir Wilfrid Robarts, Q.C. He gets the confidence and competitive nature of his character across beautifully

and sets up the audience and himself for a comeuppance. Joe McNamara creates a wonderfully vulnerable and naïve Leonard Vole, while Emer McDaid is suitably unsympathetic as his wife, Romaine. Kudos also to Yvonne Gidden, Teddy Kempner and Miles Richardson. All in all, this is a thoroughly entertaining theatrical experience in a bijou setting. It deserves to run as long as that other famous Agatha Christie play that's been in the West End since the 1950's.

Reviewed by J.C.

Photo by Ellie Kurtz.

### LEGALLY BLONDE

Regent's Park Open Air Theatre: May 13 - Jul 2, 2022

Time to get "Serious" with this always-fun show! We expect Courtney Bowman as Elle to knock it out of Regent's Park.

### SUMMER EXHIBITION 2022

Royal Academy of Arts: Jun 21 - Aug 21, 2022

It must be summer! In its 254th iteration this delightful annual event promises to be a highlight of the year.

### WALTER SICKERT ★★★★★

Tate Britain | Apr 28 - Sep 18, 2022

Mon - Sun: 10 am - 4:30 pm



Walter Sickert (1860-1942) is an artist whose notoriety often overshadows his art. Patricia Cornwell's 2002 book which proposes that Sickert was, in fact, Jack the Ripper has led to endless speculation about the artist's psychology, but this beautifully curated exhibition seeks to bring the focus back to the art. With more than 150 works from over 70 public and private collections, this is a comprehensive look at the development, influences, and inspirations of Sickert's artistic output. The eight galleries start by presenting his self-portraits in which he often adopts other personae and then reflect upon the influence that Whistler and Degas had on his methods and style. The show then traces his fascination with the music hall and displays pieces depicting urban environments which almost seem like stage sets. The controversial nudes and *The Camden Town Murder* series lead into his narrative pieces and his later use of press cuttings as a source to create studies of celebrities. The unifying theme of much of the work seems to be a fascination with performance. Sickert presents himself and others in various guises and even when there is an apparently obvious narrative, one is left questioning what might be behind the façade of appearances and apparent meaning. The painting, *Ennui* (c.1914), may simply represent a claustrophobic domestic reality, but the bell jar in the background containing stuffed birds gives a more sinister tone to this set piece. All in all, this is a first class retrospective that, while spotlighting Sickert's mastery of his craft, offers an intriguing opportunity to ponder the enigma of his inspiration.

Reviewed by J.C.

Image: Walter Richard Sickert *Brighton Pierrots* 1915. Tate

For more reviews and ratings visit:

[www.londonlivinglarge.com](http://www.londonlivinglarge.com) | Twitter: @LondonLivingUK

# JUBILEE QUEEN OF PUDDINGS

SUSAN FLEMING

In January 2022, a competition was launched to find a dessert worthy of dedicating to the Queen for her Platinum Jubilee by Fortnum & Mason (the royal warrant holder to HM The Queen for Grocers and Provision Merchants). The winner's recipe will feature in the many formal and less formal feasts and festivals that will mark the anniversary.

It won't be the first time a monarch has been celebrated by a recipe. There are several dedicated to George I, the 'pudding-eating monarch' who, once sugar had become more readily available, delighted in rich, often rather indigestible, desserts. Later, Queen Charlotte was honoured with Apple Charlotte, and there were many royal cakes, possets, pancakes and other delights. Queen Victoria had numerous puddings named after her, including the eponymous sponge, and the Queen of Puddings here. Jubilees and other celebrations were also memorialised in recipes: the great Savoy chef, Escoffier, invented Cherries Jubilee to celebrate Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (as well as Peach Melba for the Australian soprano Nellie Melba), and Coronation Chicken was created for Elizabeth II in 1953.

Victoria's 60 years on the throne marked the first in history. Our own Queen's 70 years surpasses that, for which we wish her many congratulations.



*Serves 4*

- 600ml milk
- 2 large strips lemon rind
- a pinch of salt
- 100g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 50g butter, plus extra for greasing
- 50g caster sugar, plus extra for the meringue
- 2 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons raspberry or apricot jam

Pour the milk into a saucepan and add the lemon rind and salt. Bring very gently to the boil, then remove from the heat. Add the breadcrumbs, measured butter and sugar to the hot milk, and stir until the butter melts. Leave, covered with some foil, for about 10 minutes. Remove the lemon rind.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/160° fan/Gas 4, and use a little extra butter to grease an ovenproof pie or soufflé dish (about 900ml). Spread 2 tablespoons of the jam across the bottom of the dish. Have ready a roasting tin half full of hot water into which the dish will fit.

Separate the eggs, putting the whites in an immaculately clean bowl, and adding the yolks to the breadcrumb mixture. Stir these in, and then pour the bread mixture on to the jam in the buttered dish. Place the dish into the hot water in the roasting tin, and then into the preheated oven. Bake for 20-30 minutes, or until the pudding feels quite firm to the touch.

When the pudding is nearly ready, whip the egg whites to a fairly stiff meringue texture, beating in a little sugar (to taste) slowly and gradually. Spread the remaining jam over the top of the pudding, then swirl the meringue on, covering the whole surface. Return to the oven and bake for a further 10-15 minutes or so until the meringue is lightly set and browned. Eat warm.

# THE RECTOR WRITES



Many churches have found that after the pandemic and lockdowns the numbers coming to church have been down from what they would have been in 2019. Whilst some secularists will of course rejoice in this news, it's not good news for the church or for the wider communities they serve. At St Anne's for some indefinable reason numbers have increased on Sunday mornings by around 20% on an 'ordinary' Sunday, not including those who watch or worship online via the livestream of our Sunday Service on Facebook, YouTube and our website. Now there's a sentence that would need explaining to Bishop Henry Compton who consecrated St Anne's back in 1686!

I'm not bragging - we are still a pretty small affair - but although we have lost some people for diverse reasons in the last two years, we have attracted more diverse others from within Soho and without, baptised the first babies in years (twins!) and started new initiatives which support Soho Parish School, The Employment Academy at the House of St Barnabas and charities locally and further afield. St Anne's survival and growth is good news for everyone.

The latest addition to the 'extended congregation' who won't appear in any C of E attendance statistics is Bella who joined me at St Anne's in the middle of May through the dog rescue charity All Dogs Matter. Three or four months of adorable and exhaustingly energetic cocker spaniel, she will no doubt increase my visibility around Soho, 18 months on from the death of sweet little Betty, my Jack Russell, who ensured I was out and about - especially as with such short legs (hers and mine) we meandered rather slowly.



Even without a dog, I've still enjoyed some good conversations with Soho's residents and workers in recent months, one of whom commented that whilst lots of people in Soho know each other well, there are others who remain surprisingly disconnected with our community, and wondered whether there was anything that could be done about that. Obviously if you're reading this you fall into the 'connected' category, and if you are also a member of the Soho Society then the 'committed' category (I'll say nothing about the 'ought to have been committed years ago' category!). But as the Church which has 'serving the community' engraved on its doors we do try to be a conduit for connection and neighbourliness within the community through the various activities that happen at St Anne's, whether put on by us directly or others who use our space.

The monthly Tuesday Teas is open to everyone on the first

Tuesday of the month from 3-4.30 and gives people not only a free cuppa and cake, but the chance to meet not only neighbours, but at times councillors and coppers. Not only free, but also step free throughout and with spacious layout, it's the perfect place to bring a mum with a baby buggy or a carer who has a client who uses a wheelchair. Over the summer we will spill out into the Vestry Garden at St Anne's, the charming courtyard maintained by Soho's own Storm Flowers London, and with so many Sohoites living in flats what could be better than a cuppa outdoors in a tranquil private garden?

Our Thursday 'Soho Seniors' lunch was started decades ago by Janet Vance (of Clarion House and Blessed Memory). It now, by accident not design, mostly attracts older gay men, but it is open to anyone over 60 and provides a hot 'cooked-on-the-premises' three course meal followed by tea and coffee for just £4. Prior booking is essential, and we'd be pleased to hear

from anyone who, once a week, would like to eat a hot fresh meal, in company and not need to do the washing up.

In addition, Resonate Arts run a monthly creative workshop for people with dementia, The West End Community Trust hold a very jolly free monthly evening event with food and entertainment, and we are hoping to start a 'Grief Café' to provide a space for those who are suffering bereavement, whether recently or from the death

of a loved one years ago. By the time you read this you'll have missed the Jubilee Tea with live band, where you would have won a prize if you'd turned up in a tiara!

Details of regular events and activities should be on our website [www.stannes-soho.org.uk](http://www.stannes-soho.org.uk), the noticeboard inside church, and listed in our newsletter. If it's easiest, just call the Parish Office (020 7437 8039).

Having a new dog is a great way for me to meet new people (though sometimes greeting people whilst scooping you-know-what into a plastic bag isn't terribly elegant!), so do say 'hello' if you see me and Bella around Soho. But if you don't see us, the other way to meet new people is simply by joining in some of the activities at St Anne's (of which coming 'to church' is also an option I'm bound to highly recommend!).

In a community like ours, no one should feel disconnected, and St Anne's is here to help bring us closer together.

*Rev'd Simon Buckley*

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Fruit

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Snails



Cabaret

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