



SOHO CLARION

The free magazine of the Soho Society

**Oxford Street Closure Proposals:
The road to Nowhere?
Soho Square Surgery under threat**



Christmas 2017 · Issue 169

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SILVER SUNDAY TEA DANCE

Highlights of our annual Silver Sunday Tea Dance at St Anne's Community Hall.

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FROM ST. ANNE'S TOWER

David Evans has completed his four years of thoughtful, kind and generous stewardship of the Soho Society and has bravely passed the baton on. David remains a trustee and the Society will continue to benefit from his wise counsel and participation. We heartily thank him for his past work and look forward to continuing to work with him on the Board and to dine with him at the Academy Club.

Margaret Bloomer remains on the committee and will continue helping us with the money but has handed the formal role of Treasurer to our new trustee, Lyn Blackman. Lyn has a long history with Soho, comes from the world of publishing and, is, conveniently, a member of the Groucho Club. She has already proved herself, amongst other things, a firm but fair collector of debts to the Society. We thank Margaret for her hard work as Treasurer in the past and her continued support and good humour as we continue to work together.

We also welcome Rachel Waddell, a resident of Berwick Street, to the committee to help with our fund-raising work and strategy. Rachel has a background in overseas development and fund raising which is proving useful. She has quickly fallen in to the habits of being a trustee of the Soho Society.

The Society has a legal limit of fifteen trustees and to make room for our new peo-

ple Matthew Bennett has kindly agreed to step down as a formal board member though he will continue to attend all our meetings and continue to chair the planning group. Matthew will therefore continue as he currently has done for decades – at the centre of our community and the Society. Appropriate thanks for Matthew would run to several hundreds of pages and given that he isn't actually going anywhere, would not be timely.

Iona Wolff has resigned as a trustee due to increasing pressure of work but we thank her for her past contribution to the Society and all her lovely photographs. She has said she is happy to continue to volunteer.

David Gleeson remains our vice-chair and head of the Licensing Group and Bob O'Dell remains our secretary.

We also welcome Baroness Lane-Fox as our patron, a new role which we created for her so that she can speak up for the Society and advise us on new technology. It seems right that Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho is now patron of the Soho Society and we can ask her to open things and help us get our message across to a wide range of audiences.

In summary, we have some new faces but our old stalwarts are still with us.

During the past two months we have been refreshing our plans. There are some practical things like having a website we can

quickly update and use for more stuff – like surveys and donations. We are also keen to return to some of the Society's old habits like regular socials, having the office regularly staffed by volunteers and Christmas events. We have new projects planned such as a Loyalty Scheme, greening initiatives and our own manifesto for Soho going into the local elections next year which candidates will be asked to comment on. We will continue with all the planning and licensing work we have done for over 40 years – and we will be particularly concentrating on preserving and supporting our independent businesses in food, fabric, music and film.

My reason for taking on this role at this time is in part a response to the increasing uncertainty in our national and international politics. For me it seemed like a good time to connect with the community and to try to make it easier for all of us to do so. The last few months have confirmed to me that we are all really lucky to be connected to Soho. Have a great Christmas, be grateful for all that we have - and come and volunteer in the New Year.

Tim Lord
 Chair, *The Soho Society*

THE BATTLE FOR SOHO SQUARE GP SURGERY



Three years ago patients, and the local community associations from Soho, Covent Garden and Fitzrovia together with the support of the Chinese and LGBT communities, fought a successful campaign to keep the Soho Square practice open. Patient numbers have increased hugely, from just under 4,000 in January 2016 to over 5,000 patients in September this year. All patients are members of the Patients Participation Group (PPG). A third of patients are Chinese speaking, and the LGBT+ community are also strongly represented among the patient body. A PPG meeting is held on the third Wednesday of alternate months which is open to all patients and attended by senior officers of the Provider. In August last year the NHS awarded the contract to manage the practice to Living Care Medical Services Limited (LCMS). A small working group of officers of the PPG meet with one of their senior administrative people every month (as they did with previous providers). The PPG has supported efforts by LCMS to make the practice more financially viable, by, for example, encouraging the employment of senior nurses and Healthcare Assistants to take on some of the workload as the number of patients increased, and encouraging an increase in patient numbers.

On 20 September 2017, at the end of our regular working group monthly meeting, we were informed, verbally, of significant changes to the practice. These changes, we were told, would be brought in the next three to four months, i.e. December/January.

At the time of writing we have not received anything in writing regarding the changes, but LCMS have confirmed verbally that they will be bringing in a remote triage system and will substantially reduce the number of GP hours at the practice.

Access to all healthcare will in future be by telephoning a triage team at a call centre. This will be staffed by nurses who will make a decision on what treatment the patient requires, including the possibility of seeing a GP or other clinician at the surgery. Patients who do not have adequate English to explain their health concerns (including many of the Chinese speaking community) will be linked in to an online translation service. Our very popular morning clinics, whereby a patient can turn up and wait to see one of the GPs or the nurse, will cease to exist, as will the online facility to book an afternoon appointment with one of the GPs.

Based on the premise that the triage system would greatly reduce the number of patients who need to see a GP, LCMS say they will reduce the number of GP hours from two full time GPs to 40-50 hours per week

(for 5,000 patients). So we may lose one of our two long standing and highly respected GPs, one of whom is of Chinese heritage, and the other who took it upon himself to learn basic Mandarin. LCMS have said that the hours could be shared by two GPs. Our GPs are held in very high regard by patients, many of whom say that, for the first time, they have confidence in the healthcare they receive. This is supported by the over 90% of patients who are recorded on the NHS Choices website saying they would recommend the practice to friends and family and the good CQC inspection report received by the practice in May 2016.

We called an urgent PPG meeting for 2 October, and asked LCMS to present their plans to patients. Some 160 patients came to the meeting, in spite of the short notice – we had just one week to get out the information about the meeting to patients. We also invited representatives of organizations and community groups such as Healthwatch, a national organization that supports patients. Charles Yeung, from Watson's Pharmacy, Bobby Chan from the Central London Law Centre, and Christine Yau of the Chinese Community Association, all spoke of the special needs of the Chinese-speaking Community, who make up 30% of patients at the practice.

Living Care gave patients a 40 minute lecture about the travails and financial difficulties of the NHS at the present time. During the meeting the PPG Chair and others pleaded with LCMS to “get to the point” and tell patients what they had come to hear. Patients eventually lost patience and we ended up learning little further about the proposed changes to the exceptional healthcare patients have hitherto received from the two doctors and their team. Patients did, however, make it clear at the meeting on 2 October that they were very angry that they stood to lose one of the GPs. Speakers from the Chinese Community also made it clear that they feared that the triage system could make it difficult for the many Chinese patients, who have limited or no English skills, to access the healthcare they need. The PPG leadership group will continue to have conversations with the Central London Clinical Commissioning Group, who will have the final say in whether the changes go ahead; with Healthwatch, and with others with an interest in health care matters in the area, and will continue to argue for the best interests of all the patients.

Situation correct at time of writing (end October 2017). Anyone wishing to get in touch with the PPG is welcome to contact us through the PPG's email address: sohosquareppg@outlook.com

NOTICES



Martha Lane Fox

SOHO SOCIETY PATRON MARTHA LANE-FOX

The Right Honourable Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho, CBE has accepted the position of Patron of the Soho Society

Baroness Lane-Fox said *"I am delighted to accept this honorary position with the Soho Society and look forward to working with the Society and its volunteers in future."*

"I chose Soho because all my best nights out were always there – from Bar Italia to Ronnie Scotts. That's why I opened Lucky Voice on Poland Street."

"Although Soho faces a number of challenges – inappropriate development, loss of live entertainment and LGBT venues, and threats to its independent businesses through rent and rate increases, it has a history of adapting and surviving."

"I'm therefore pleased to support the Soho Society's continuing work on planning and licensing in addition to its new projects, such as its loyalty card scheme bringing members and local businesses together."

Tim Lord, Chair of the Society said *"Soho is a special place at the centre of a great city. There is no better person that Martha to be the patron of this charity. She is the most eloquent of advocates and an enabler that can help the Society build further on its capabilities."*

SOHO LOYALTY SCHEME

Many amenity societies in London run a scheme whereby local businesses offer a discount or special offer to members of the relevant society. It creates a link between the residents and workers and the retail businesses and we have decided to do the same in Soho. If you have a retail, or indeed any other, business in Soho and would like to be included in the Soho Society Loyalty Scheme please complete the form on our website with your contact details. We are in the process of issuing membership cards to all our Soho Society members. We will send businesses a window decal once they are accepted on to the Scheme. There is no fee, but we would be keen for businesses to join the Society as a business member if you want to participate. We can't guarantee to include every business, but the sooner you apply, the better. It's up to the business what they offer. Could be a percentage discount, a lunch offer at quieter time of the week, or a particular product or service that might appeal to people that live and work in Soho. Once we have the information we will publish the offers on our website and in the Clarion.

SOHO SOCIETY CHRISTMAS FAIR

Come and join us at our first ever Christmas Fair to be opened by the Mayor of Soho. The Fair will be the place to buy your Christmas gifts with a range of stalls selling handmade goods from Christmas cards, scarves, beautiful ceramics to gifts, such as jewellery, candles, books and lots more. The local Soho Bakers Club will produce a range of homemade cakes, mince pies and mulled wine.

There will be some classic Soho Fête favourites, Tombola, Raffle prizes and there will also be a 'Guess the weight of the Christmas cake' competition, with the cake as the prize. Not to be missed!

Saturday 9 December 2017 12pm – 5pm
St Anne's Church Hall • 55 Dean Street, Soho W1

POLICING

Since the public meeting held last September things are much improved on our streets. This is primarily due to the hard work of the police and our local safer neighbourhood police team in particular, for which we thank them. Well known crime hotspots such as Tisbury Court, Rupert and Archer Streets now see much less drug-related antisocial behaviour than before. However, a number of the dealers and users feel Soho is their 'spiritual' home and are never far away. Currently they spend a lot of time on the other side of Charing Cross Road, but there are ongoing problems in the Cambridge Circus area (i.e. Romilly Street/Moor Street) at certain times of the day. On any relaxing of vigilance they seem to return, despite the issuing of Criminal Protection Notices (CPNs) and Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs).

There remain ongoing problems at night with gangs who see the area, with its night time economy, as a potential for quick and easy rich pickings. People should be vigilant and are advised to keep to main streets rather than taking short cuts through dimly lit alleys, and should keep their property safe.

Following Westminster City Council's decision to decommission the CCTV cameras in the area last year, it is understood that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are working with the Mayor's Office and WCC on a long term solution to enable a digital CCTV system to be implemented across the Borough. Work is ongoing and locations for the cameras have been carefully identified based on need, to include areas at the greatest risk of criminal offences. There is no specific date as to when the system will be operational, but the plan is to get the new cameras up and running as soon as possible.

Be vigilant: call 999 in an emergency, 101 if not an emergency.

The SNT is also available by email at: SNTCWCD-.soho@met.pnn.police.uk and on 07785 401452 when on duty, and on twitter @mpssoho.

There is also a link to Police.UK which gives crime figures (albeit 2 months out of date) on our website under 'resources'.

THE FUTURE OF OXFORD STREET – PART I

The meeting with the Council

On 27 November the Board of the Society received a presentation from Westminster City Council on the proposed removal of vehicles from Oxford Street. The full presentation is available on the Society's website.

Their key points are:-

Of itself the closure of Oxford Street won't reduce pollution. What pollution there is will be moved to the residential streets north and south of Oxford Street. Over the last year the Government has taken on the pollution issue and pollution from vehicles has already been significantly reduced and will be reduced yet further by a reduction in bus services and people changing mode to the underground. So the closure is neither necessary nor particularly helpful from a pollution perspective.

There has already been a significant reduction in the east west bus traffic on Oxford Street. It was 188 busses per hour at its peak (which did cause congestion), is now 75 busses per hour (which seems to be working) and the proposal is for 18 busses per hour along Wigmore Street (which, in our view, won't be enough).

Currently, stopping traffic on Oxford Street is separated from other vehicles that move more quickly on the routes to the north and south of Oxford Street. As evidence we know that Oxford Street has 10,000 vehicles per day whereas Wigmore Street carries 20,000 vehicles per day. Closing Oxford Street will move all of the slower traffic on to what were previously the faster routes. Further, the proposal includes a number of new pedestrian crossings on the northern east west route (13 in total) so, best guess, is that this route will be gridlocked. The congested traffic will adversely affect the residents in Marylebone and Fitzrovia who are, predictably, up in arms about it. It is unlikely to help with Soho's traffic problems either.

TfL are very keen on everyone moving to the underground and believe that this solves everything. Residents from Hyde Park, Paddington and beyond are not so happy. There are many people that can't take the underground e.g. people with strollers, the elderly and the disabled and also people who don't want to pay for the tube rather than the bus. These people won't be able to access Oxford Street at all. We think it's important that a city works for all its residents - this proposal will exclude a significant group of them.

The closure is now proposed to be 24 hours. There is no plan on how to manage the newly created large open spaces at night. WCC and

TfL have finally realised it's a problem but neither have a solution nor any funding to pay for any solution they may eventually come up with. We think it will end up being colonised by the frontages for late night drinking.

As many buses will now stop at either end of Oxford Street and turn round, Marble Arch will become a bus depot as will Cavendish Square.

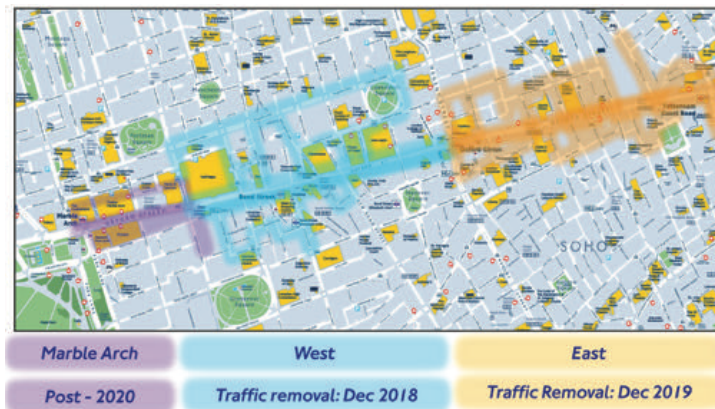


Diagram from Transport For London's *Oxford Street Transformation* presentation.

Bus passengers will have to change buses to get across London, sometimes more than once.

Although grateful for the presentation our Board was underwhelmed by the proposals with one board member asking in exasperation why WCC are doing this. No convincing answer was forthcoming.

We have contacted two of our councillors for a view. Councillor Jonathan Glanz, Member for West One Ward said as follows:-

"This is not a Westminster scheme but is being imposed on the West End by the Mayor and TfL. We accept there is room for improvement in Oxford Street, particularly in relation to air-quality and traffic fatalities but are also very concerned that it could make things worse. We do not believe that the Mayor has sufficiently addressed the issues of displacement of traffic, particularly servicing traffic, and pollution into nearby streets to the north and south of Oxford Street, nor properly addressed the issues of disabled access, north-south connectivity and counter terrorist security requirements. We have major concerns about long-term management of the pedestrianised space, especially if it were to be traffic free for 24 hours a day. We do not wish to see it become a haven for buskers, beggars, pickpockets etc, and without proper management and enforcement (for which the Mayor and TfL have yet to offer financial support) it could easily do so. Simply relocating polluting vehicles into parallel and side streets, hoping to share the limited roadside space with taxis, presumably pedicabs, and servicing, whilst providing adequate disabled access, is a challenge which we do not feel the current proposals properly address. We are continuing to engage with the Mayor and TfL

to ensure that these problems are addressed rather than allowing them to impose a scheme which takes no cognizance of the adverse effect on local businesses and residents whilst they strive to pursue the Labour Mayor's Manifesto commitment to deliver pedestrianisation."

Paul Dimoldenburg for Queen's Park Ward provided the following:-

"The opening of the Elizabeth Line at the end of 2018 will bring millions of new visitors to Oxford Street to shop, to work and to visit. The current state of Oxford Street with narrow, broken and cracked pavements, increasing pollution, a very high pedestrian accident record and an unattractive environment is not acceptable. Doing nothing is, therefore, not an option.

But this certainly does not mean that local residents and businesses should simply accept what the Council and TfL propose without questioning it

thoroughly and very carefully. Residents are those who will be most affected by the changes and so residents need to be put first. Residents' concerns about displaced traffic and increased pollution on residential streets must be answered. No ifs, not buts. The Council and TfL must show that these concerns are being addressed and ensure that the plans do not lead to the disruption, congestion, pollution and daily inconvenience that many residents fear.

It is for that reason that we have met TfL to insist that residents' questions are answered. We will keep asking these questions until we get answers.

We have called for a street-by-street plan of the changes so that residents and businesses can see how they will be affected. We want a big reduction in traffic, including buses. We want to see a dedicated transport service for the disabled and elderly so that they, too, can enjoy the new Oxford Street. And we want to see a plan for Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place which shows how buses can be accommodated without causing problems.

Our priority is to make the transformation of Oxford Street work for everyone - for residents, for businesses, for shoppers and for visitors. We also want more public toilets and more use of quieter, electric delivery vehicles. As ever, the 'devil is in the detail' and we look forward to seeing a practical and common sense plan that works. Until then, we will keep fighting to get the best deal for local residents and businesses."

You have until 17 December to comment on the proposals. If you care about London, the West End and Soho, we strongly suggest you do so.

TFL CONSULTATION — THE TRANSFORMATION OF OXFORD STREET — PART 2

How will pedestrianisation of Oxford Street affect Soho?

Both main candidates to be London Mayor promised to pedestrianise Oxford Street. A popular move perhaps with Londoners as a whole and Sadiq Kahn certainly wants to deliver. You can argue that Oxford Street needs an upgrade because it struggles to be a pleasant place when shoppers are out in force. For locals north and south of the street is where does all the displaced traffic go – through our areas probably!

TfL and WCC say they recognise that such displacement is unacceptable and that they want to look at things on an area basis and try to reduce overall traffic. Whilst TfL can reduce the number of buses and they already have by 40% there are still taxis, private hire vehicles (PHVs) and freight. To really reduce traffic so that there is no overall increase is difficult and will take time. This part of the process should in the opinion of the Soho Society have started first so that any displaced traffic will not have an adverse impact. Things like delivery service plans, kerbside management and freight and waste consolidation are all key, as would be some limit on PHVs which have rocketed

from 50,000 to 120,000 in recent years with the advent of Uber and the like, constantly circling the streets waiting for their next fare. But the Mayor wants to forge ahead by the time Crossrail opens next December.

Worst of all from the perspective of residents the scheme has morphed from a proposal to pedestrianise during the busy shopping hours to a proposal to close the street every day at all times.

At present after 7.00pm when other traffic is allowed to use the streets as many as 500 vehicles an hour from Notting Hill and points west head in along Oxford Street to the West End with the heaviest traffic around midnight. There seems no justifiable reason for diverting this much traffic through our residential areas. The reasoning seems to be that with recent terrorist attacks using vehicles the street has to be ‘made safe’ and that in doing so it would be ‘unsafe’ to let traffic back in at night. Besides the obvious question of where do you stop in trying to make all the busy streets ‘safe’ there are the other issues. How do you deliver stock and maintain the shops and buildings if they can’t be accessed? Will

the side streets become ever noisier with clanking lorry tail gates and rattling metal roll cages? Won’t 2km of pedestrianised street become a magnet for buskers, beggars and anti-social behaviour? Why would a council that clearly hasn’t got enough enforcement capacity to streets clear of such activity now want to take on an even bigger management task and cost?

For Soho the impacts are uncertain because there are no west to east routes through Soho so there is no obvious alternative route that traffic will take through the area. Much of it will probably take routes to the north of Oxford Street itself as will the few remaining bus routes which is really bad news for Marylebone and Fitzrovia and we support their concerns.

This article was penned before our meeting with WCC on the 27 November (see opposite) which did nothing to allay our fears.

If you have views on all this and want to express your views go to www.tfl.gov.uk/oxford-street where TfL are running a consultation. But act quickly as it is only open until 17th December.

THE SOHO SOCIETY AND ST ANNE’S CHURCH SILVER SUNDAY TEA DANCE

For the fourth year in a row we had a full house at our Silver Sunday tea dance that was held on 1 October in St Anne’s Community Hall. The Mayor of Westminster and Councillor Christabel Flight attended the event with both joining our guests on the dance floor and thoroughly getting into the spirit of this wonderful afternoon.

We would like to offer our thanks to the band led by Anthony Winter, the Bees Knees dancers and all our guests who attended the tea dance. We would also like to thank all our volunteers and all of the staff from both St Anne’s Church and The Soho Society.

Guests enjoyed the many wonderful cakes that were generously donated by many Soho bakeries and patisseries including Maison Bertaux, The Two Shuks (@thetwoshuks) and Choccywoccydoodah along with donations from many other friends in Soho.

This event was made possible with a grant from Westminster Amalgamated Charities to whom we would like to offer our thanks.

Photography: Richard Piercy





◀ Kettner's the restaurant and champagne bar at 29 Romilly St. was founded in 1867 by Auguste Kettner. On 30 January 2016, after 149 years Kettner's closed but is to re-open in January 2018 and renamed, Kettner's Townhouse after a major redevelopment by Soho House/Soho Estates. In 1980 entrepreneur, Peter Boizot who founded Pizza Express bought Kettner's, His first restaurant opened at 29 Wardour St. in 1965.

ARCHITECTURE AND MORALITY

Back in the 1970's architectural student, Robert Stallard was living in Gerrard Pl. "Living in Soho, a sq mile still barely touched by modern development, one became very aware of its cosmopolitan character, its sizeable community living and working in affordable accommodation, its smells, its network of ancient streets and buildings - everything that was uniquely the 'village' of Soho.

Robert decided to document Soho for his final dissertation. "In 1972 the area had been described by the Chairman of Westminster Planning Committee as a 'down-at-heel-neon-lit-slum'!" The photographs (over 250) were taken during February 1973. Courtesy of the Mary Evans Picture Library.

www.maryevans.com

The museum of Soho • www.mosoho.org.uk



◀ The Nosh Bar was a salt beef bar at 42 Gt Windmill St It opened 1944 and closed in the late 1980s. "the other thing my deja vu took me back to was the Nosh Bar on Windmill Street, which sold fantastic pastrami on rye with Dutch pickles and lemon tea. It was staffed by ancient rude men with sad eyes and brilliant hair, who wore white coats. The walls had posters for old East End boxers. It was heaven... and it's gone, along with all edible Jewish food in London. Food critic, AA Gill. Sophie's Steakhouse is due to open at 41-44 Gt Windmill St which was the old Moulin Classic cinema.



▲ Sid Siger's Barber Shop at 7 Archer St, opened in 1928 and closed in 1975. It was popular with many of the acts from the Windmill Theatre, regular customers included, Harry Secombe, Arthur English, Dick Emery and Marty Feldman and from the world of sport Jack Solomon. It is now Gelupo a traditional Italian gelateria

► Mario and Franco's trattoria La Terrazza - . 'In London with a beautiful girl, you must show her to Mario at La Terrazza.' From the 1961 classic spy novel, The Ipcress File by Len Deighton. "the Trat", as it was known in the "Swinging 60s" was the place to go. Customers, included the actors Terence Stamp, Albert Finney and Peter O'Toole; and the photographers Terence Donovan, Brian Duffy, David Bailey and Terry O'Neill. It is now Le Relais de Venise L'Entrecôte at 50 Dean St. The museum of Soho. www.mosoho.org.uk



WE'RE WATCHING

PLANNING

Among the more than 160 applications seen by the Society's Planning and Environment Committee over the last four months a number stand out. One of the most important ones is the rebuilding at 72 Broadwick Street of the block which includes the large Electricity substation with a rather ugly blank concrete wall fronting Marshall Street. Thankfully it is proposed that this is replaced with a green wall. Less positively, the existing eleven residential flats, some with interesting external garden balconies, are to be moved to the first and second floors, where there will be just nine units and they will lose their external balconies and be much closer to noises coming up from the street. Above them new 4th, 5th and 6th floors of offices are proposed but with some photovoltaic panels on the new roof. The Society opposed the scheme because of the reduction in amenity for the residential element.

At 23 Meard Street an application to change the use from office to retail was granted to allow the existing Ben and Jerry's ice cream shop to extend. We had opposed this application because of the way retail is slowly encroaching on this lovely and largely listed residential street. We supported WCC's opposition to a whole host of new telephone boxes across the West End which are simply advertising hoardings with a telephone box tacked on the other side. The trend to increase the provision of tables and chairs on the pavement appears to have intensified and we wonder what will happen when Crossrail opens and the extra thousands of pedestrians try to get by. Perhaps the council will then review its policy but at present the solution for many at busy times is simply to walk in the street!

Other trends are towards more roof terraces at the rear of premises, many probably just to allow smoking breaks but with the potential to increase overlooking into people's homes but the possible impact of this is very difficult to judge from online plans.

Another interesting application is by Land Securities at 4-6 Glasshouse Street. They have consent for a large development of the whole block from Piccadilly Circus to Denman Street. But after that permission was granted English Heritage listed the old Westminster Bank Building. The solution proposed is to remove the bank stone by stone and store it carefully, allow the overall scheme to proceed and then reconstruct the bank building both externally and internally in its original condition. Not an easy process and perhaps an indication of the value that such huge schemes create if Land Securities are prepared to go to these lengths to make it happen. Another notable proposal is to remodel the façade and parts of 33 Broadwick Street from a glaring post-modern one to something much more restrained and attractive. Finally, at 46 Shaftesbury Avenue the entrance to the long established dance club is being moved to Rupert Street and will be replaced with the entrance to the massive new hotel that is being built above the Trocadero.

**Matthew Bennett,
Chair of Soho Society Planning
and Environment Group**

LICENSING

A recent application by G-A-Y to remain open until 4.30am presented us with a dilemma. G-A-Y is an iconic venue that has maintained Soho's reputation as both a home for minorities and a great place for a good time. Already licensed until 3.30am, they had been presented with a hefty rent increase, like so many commercial premises here, and the extra hour would presumably help them cover this extra cost.

However, their location in Goslett Yard cul-de-sac means that customers entering and leaving the premises pass by a residential block on the other side of Charing Cross Road. The noise of patrons leaving would then be extended later, depriving these residents of peace for a further hour into the night/early morning.

We therefore objected to the later hour for which G-A-Y were applying as per our mandate. But this was done with a somewhat heavy heart – we do not wish to be seen as threatening the survival by objecting to their licence application. Given that many LGBT venues are closing and the city's famous commercial gay economy is disappearing, G-A-Y had support from the Mayor of London, Amy Lamé (the Mayor's nighttime Czar) and Peter Tatchell.

Clearly, the problem here is not the venue wanting later operating hours, nor the Soho Society for following policy and objecting to potential loss of residential amenity, but rather landlords aggressively raising rents. As this continues, and unique commercial premises that define Soho are driven out and replaced by rich, bland chains, the things that define our neighbourhood disappear.

**David Gleeson, Chair of the Soho
Society Licensing Group**

We hope you like our Christmas nativity scene. It features a true "Sohoite" Brooke Bailey (Mary) who was born and raised in the heart of Soho and has lived here for 36 years. Her parents were both leading lights in the creative industries during the 1970's, 80's and 90's. Brooke studied at Central Saint Martins and now works in the advertising industry in Golden Square. She lives with her partner Felix (Joseph), a composer, who works locally in a post production house, and their 17 month old son, Rufus (the baby Jesus). We are also featuring David Gleeson (our vice-chair), Bob O'Dell (our secretary) and Anton Gill (an author that lives in Marshall Street) - as the three wise men. Thanks go to Spencer Harvey at Broadwick Silks for the loan of fabric, Father Simon Buckley for the use of the entrance of St Anne's, our photographer, Adrian Houston and Javier Omenaca who was our stylist.

The Clarion
The Free Magazine
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SOHO SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS LIST 2017

We thought we would do our Christmas List early this year. So we decided to ask Father Christmas for the following:-

1. TFL, Westminster City Council and The Mayor announce withdrawal of the Oxford Street pedestrianisation scheme following consultation with local residents and businesses.

2. The Mayor announces an alternative scheme to renew Oxford Street - the planting of 1,000 trees and other greening initiatives, the installation of attended underground public toilet facilities, water fountains, mobile phone charging points, improvements to adjacent parks and squares, seating, clearing of the pavement of tables and chairs for better pedestrian and wheelchair access, signposted pedestrian routes, a scheme to improve disabled access by bus and taxi.

3. An anonymous donor contributes a sum to the Soho Parish School so that it can pay off its deficit in one go. The bells of Saint Anne's are rung in celebration.

4. The NHS confirms that it will transfer the old hospital site in Soho Square to the community so that the community can have no concerns about it being sold off and that it can be used for providing med-

ical care to the community as originally intended - in perpetuity.

5. NHS changes how it manages the procurement of GP services so that patients are properly consulted and their wishes taken into account. Patients make series of suggestions on how new technology and greater community involvement can be used to reduce the costs of providing GP and hospital care. These initiatives are quickly and cheerfully adopted.

6. The newly formed Soho Clubs and Restaurants Association announces its summer festival of live music in Soho to include all its members' venues and a number of public locations.

7. Westminster City Council introduces a special policy area in Soho to protect the historical uses and activities of tailoring, fabric selling, film making, speciality food and music equipment and instruments.

8. The pubs and clubs in Soho all sign up to the Soho Society's Good Neighbour Scheme in which they acknowledge that Soho is a residential area, endeavour to minimise noise from their premises, from deliveries and customers after 11pm and before 7am, provide a 24 hour phone number for complaints and promise to tell

residents in advance of events that might cause a disturbance.

9. A butcher, bakery and fishmongers open in Berwick Street, adjacent to the food market. Shaftesbury plc says they are happy to take a lower rent given the value to the community as a whole (and to their other investments) of having speciality food shops in Soho.

10. Westminster City Council installs underground refuse storage units so that rubbish is no longer left out on the street.

11. The streets of Soho are closed on the day of the Royal Wedding and set with tables for a community celebration in which all the restaurants, businesses and residents of Soho contribute and participate. Nuns in drag roller skate though Soho for no particular reason.

12. The Soho Society announces its 2,000th member who is given the Keys to Soho. Leslie and Wendy Hardcastle gently fall asleep in Great Pulteney Street, their furrowed brows soothed.

Tim Lord

SOHO NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Plan for Soho, Soho's Neighbourhood Planning forum, has been gathering speed over the past few months.

For all new readers, the goal of neighbourhood planning is to give more powers to local people to help determine what happens, in planning terms, in their local area.

We have been working across the past few years to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and importantly, consult with people who live, work and visit Soho. Last year we surveyed almost 1000 people in Soho, who told us that housing, the environment and, heads and shoulders above all else, looking after the 'spirit of Soho' that makes Soho the special place we all love, were the key areas for us to work on. Using this feedback, we have been working on ideas, in Policy Development Teams, to draft policies for our final plan. Each team focused on a specific area, (Housing, the Environment and Culture, Heritage and Commerce).

In April we opened a new public consultation that gathered over 540 responses on the aspirations for our developing policies, opening up our ideas to Soho's community of workers, residents and visitors. All questions received 'good' scoring indicating a strong level of support for each aspiration. Additionally the survey received over 3000 responses. You can read the full results of the consultation on our website (<https://planforsoho.org/category/news/>).

Currently the Soho Neighbourhood Forum's three policy development teams focusing on Soho's environment, housing, culture, commerce and heritage are developing policies using the feedback from public consultation.

You can read more about our organization, what we do, who we are and how to get involved by visiting our website (<https://planforsoho.org/>) and you can keep up to date with our work through signing up to our

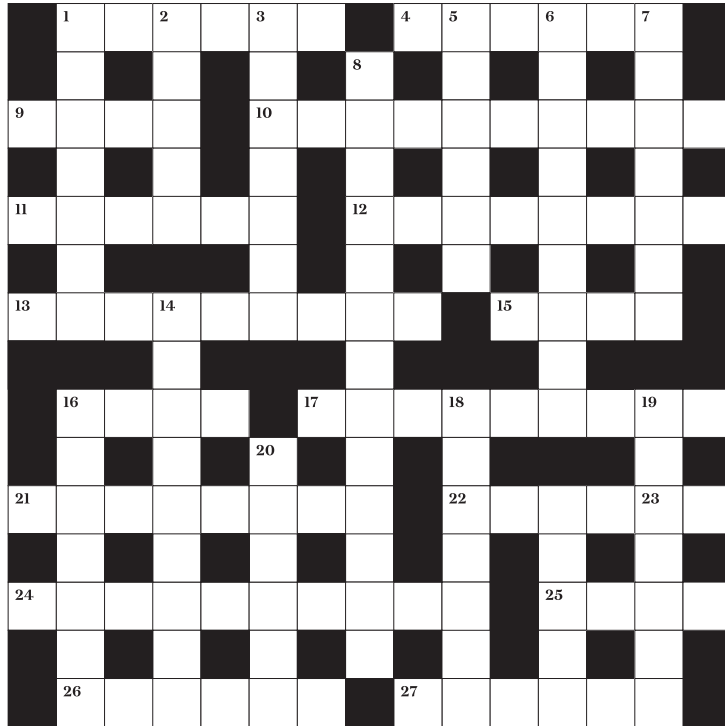
e-newsletter and following us on facebook and twitter.

To sign up as a member, or if you have any questions please do email contact@planforsoho.org.

We are also looking for volunteers to support our work. To find out more please email contact@planforsoho.org.

Anna Doyle

CROSSWORD



The Vintage House of 42 Old Compton Street has generously donated a bottle of Champagne as the prize for this competition. The first correct entry to be pulled from a hat will win the prize. For the answers please visit thesohosociety.org.uk

Across

- 1. Knock out on this? (6)
- 4. Key to one's come-down? (6)
- 9. Everything happens after Hamlet's first entrance (4)
- 10. Strangely enthrone two kings, one from Yorkshire perhaps (10)
- 11. Shut up near to the beginning (6)
- 12. Wrongly misspelt the easiest word (8)
- 13. Affirmed first of endives and so on in vegetables (9)
- 15. Might generous offer of drinks be a burden? (4)
- 16. Reject dull poet? (4)
- 17. With small inside, fat is very apparent (6,3)
- 21. Chafing underwear worn by a Welsh girl (8)
- 22. First indication of tobacco smoke coming back is awful (6)
- 24. Confused bloke's role as a retailer (10)
- 25. Robin and ducks seen in high definition (4)
- 26. Seated haphazardly, but calm (6)
- 27. Rarely confused models (6)

Down

- 1. Lacking depth, demonstrate about everything (7)
- 2. Turns and takes lead from online bullies (5)
- 3. Incite disorder after a thousand are on the move (7)
- 5. Seem confused about church plot (6)
- 6. Transport in case pair plan escape (9)
- 7. Prepares garments? (7)
- 8. Measure of decay maybe when insect circles annoyingly? (13)
- 14. Attention to old currency journalist noted (9)
- 16. Monkeys disapprove of being held in bars (7)
- 18. Nutter goes crazy about nothing? A lie! (3,4)
- 19. Not changing a distinctive habit (7)
- 20. Best get home after convulsion is cut short (6)
- 23. Pest took cover after father came back (5)

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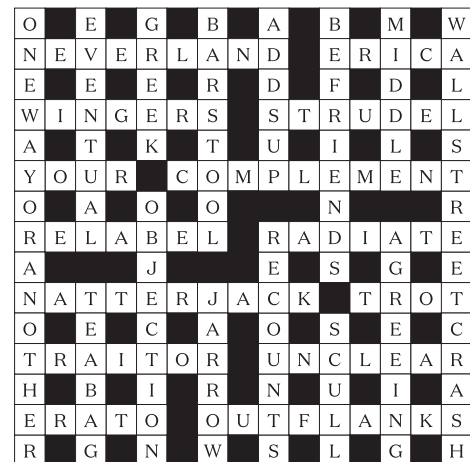
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Date



Answers to issue 168 crossword

OBITUARY

JOHN EDWARDS

by Leslie Hardcastle

John Edwards, a leading documentary film maker who received the first John Grierson Award set up to commemorate the pioneering Scottish documentary filmmaker John Grierson, the man widely regarded as the father of the documentary film, has died after a long struggle with ill-health. John won this prestigious award in 1971 for his film *The Wind in the Wires* (his film company was Buff Films).

John was a familiar sight in Soho, always in a hat, black in the winter – accompanied by a long black coat – and white in the summer, often making his way to his favourite drinking hole, *The French*, and more recently enjoying watching the world go by at a table outside *Zedel's*. John had lived in Soho for many years and since the early '70s as a tenant of the Soho Housing Association. His long term partner Avie said he loved the sense of community in Soho, and its diversity. He loved that he could one minute be quietly watching one of his favourite sports, cricket, on the television, then step out on to the street and become part of the hurly burly and bustle of Soho.

We will miss him dreadfully, and send our thoughts and love to Avie and to his sons (Avie's stepsons), and grandchildren, who live in America.

VIRGIL HOWE

by Soho Radio

It deeply saddens us to hear the tragic news of the passing of our brother of funk Virgil Howe.

An incredible human being who would always brighten up our Sunday's with his *Hidden Level* radio show. The drummer's drummer, the DJ's DJ, and most of all a brilliant friend. Rest in peace Virgil. We will be

playing his radio shows on Soho Radio in the coming weeks. All of his shows are archived onto Mixcloud if you would like to listen back.

Our thoughts are with his friends and family.

We salute you x

BERNIE KATZ

by Hilary Penn

Bernie and I were born on the same day. We met whilst working in the same place, and then on the same street, doing very similar jobs, his in *Grouchos* where I had worked only a couple of years beforehand. But NO ONE could ever be even remotely the same as Bernie, he was a total one-off.

He devoted over twenty years of his too short life to *Grouchos*, where he lit up *Dean Street* like a mirror ball. He was as naughty as hell, but possessed a kindness and duty of care that was exemplary, not just to the stars but also to the far less fortunate. On a rare daylight sighting over a decade ago, he told me he was leaving Soho to take up teaching aerobics to octogenarians in an old folks home. I think sometimes he may have got a bit fed up with all the *Ashtray* yoga in the *Alcoholistic Centre*, although he never let on. And he had always had a thing about *Lycra!*

Bernie, we will all miss your fabulous blend of charm, uniqueness, nerve and talent. Soho will not be the same without you.

ANTONIETTA MELCHIORI (TONI)

by Maristella Melchiori

Toni was born in Fiera di Primero (Trento, Italy) in a little town with beautiful mountains and lots of nature. She was the fifth child of a big family of six sisters and four brothers.

Toni left Italy in 1958 when she was only 18 years old. She went to Basingstoke where her sister lived with her English husband. She left her daughter in Italy with her mother and trained as a nurse. After a couple of years she moved to London's Old Compton Street. In 1964 she finally had her own flat and was then able to bring her daughter Maristella from Italy to live with her.

After a year she met her husband, (her real love) Carlo De Marco, and moved to Saint James Residences on Brewer Street where Maristella grew up with Toni and Carlo who although not my real Dad he was a gentleman who loved her like his own daughter. They tried to have their own children but Toni sadly suffered five miscarriages. She was a very bright and clever woman who enjoyed needlework and cooking. She was also a very smart lady who would never go out until she had done her hair, put on a smart dress, lipstick, earrings and perfume. Toni had a beautiful voice, when my Mum used to sing the house was always full of joy. At family parties in Italy everyone always wanted her to sing.

The years passed by and in 1974 when I was grown up I went to live in Italy to have my own family. Toni and Carlo loved my two sons so much and they gave them a reason to come to Italy every year to stay with us. My Mum and Dad were the first to help if anybody needed help. They had a lot of friends who remember the big hearts that they had.

Carlo passed away in 2011, for Toni from that moment life didn't have any meaning. It was heart breaking to see. Her beautiful eyes stopped shining, they would only light up when we would speak of her beloved Carlo.

For the last two years I tried to convince my Mum to come and live in Italy but Toni did not want to leave London because there in that flat were all mem-

ories of her life with the man she loved. She sadly passed away on Friday 1st September 2017.

Her daughter Maristella, grandson's Gianpietro and Demis and grandchild Valeria will keep her in their hearts.

MICHAEL SIEFERT

by Leslie Hardcastle

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of Michael Siefert. Lawyer, and campaigner against injustice, Michael was a good friend of Soho and the Soho Society and gave wise counsel on many occasions. In the early 70s he advised us on how to confront the developers who were threatening many of us with eviction, both residents and small businesses, in order to redevelop the properties. "Residents have rights", he said, "but little money. Businesses have few rights but have the wherewithal to fund a campaign. Together you have the means to fight". And we did fight, and we won, as our delaying tactics meant that in the ensuing property crash the developers went bust or vanished.

Michael operated on a world stage, supporting many causes he felt were unjustly under attack, from striking miners to ANC (African National Congress) leaders in exile, to Friends of the Earth and many more, giving countless hours of his time without charge. One of his proudest memories was being invited by Nelson Mandela to his inauguration as President of South Africa.

Michael was a joy to meet, always witty and outspoken, but also with great warmth [and concern]. Latterly Michael worked at the offices of Simons Muirhead & Burton, Frith Street, who have followed Michael in supporting the Soho Society and have similarly embraced our community. His wise counsel and love of life with be sorely missed.

REVIEW

FILM

Battle of Soho

Directed by Aro Korol

Reviewed by Sam Baker

The Battle of Soho is not your ordinary tale of gentrification. From the beginning, this new documentary takes the viewer by the hand, as if showing a friend around the neighbourhood, sparing no Soho flare or glitter along the way.

The voice of the late Soho artist Johnny Deluxe opens the film, explaining the area's glamorously seedy history in the style of an old timer circus ringmaster. The outsider's view quickly shifts to an insider's perspective as the upbeat soundtrack accompanies the viewer around Soho's colourful streets.

"Everyone has a Soho story," says actor Stephen Fry. The film's interviewees certainly prove his point. Bohemia invites you in.

Details of battles over iconic bars and venues ring familiar. The film even ties in similar stories of development pushing out locals in Brixton and Camden. However, the use of the word "sanitisation" by Soho person-

ality Philip Sallon embodies the feel of this particular takeover, harkening to the fate of Manhattan's once vibrant artistic and LGBT communities, now expensive and dully commercial.

While the visual appeal of street protests is apparent, interviewees' discussion of what actions actually halt gentrification was a far more poignant takeaway from this film. From talking to councillors to getting a space protected as an asset of community value, I appreciated these suggestions (and their success stories) that stretch beyond the easy-to-ignore clicktivism of our internet age.

The film was not without blind spots. One female viewer pointedly remarked on its lack of lesbian voices and the loss of lesbian venues that Soho has suffered. These could have easily replaced the long and extraneous seaside dance piece towards the film's end.

On the whole, The Battle of Soho is one of the more absorbing accounts of gentrification in recent memory. I left wondering if it will be remembered as a rallying cry for one of London's most eccentric corners or simply become a nostalgic time capsule.

www.battleofsoho.com

The film is also available on OurScreen which is effectively 'People Powered Cinema' where audiences can set up their own screenings of films at their local cinemas (provided they're available). They then need to sell a minimum number of tickets for the screening to go ahead. <https://www.ourscreen.com/film/battle-of-soho>



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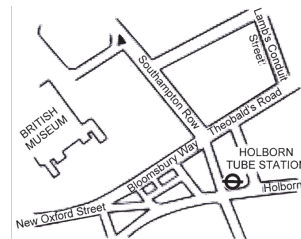
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營業時間

星期一	上午九時正 至 下午六時三十分
星期二	上午九時正 至 下午六時三十分
星期三	上午九時正 至 下午六時三十分
星期四	上午九時正 至 下午六時三十分
星期五	上午九時正 至 下午六時三十分
星期六	上午十時正 至 下午四時正
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Stir briskly all ingredients with ice and strain into a chilled Martini glass. Garnish with a twist of orange.

Check out our website www.thesohosociety.org.uk for our insiders' guide to Soho – where to eat, drink and be merry and use this map to find what you are looking for.

