



ISSUE No 101
SPRING 2021

BOB ROGERS
1947 - 2021

In this **Issue**

Cover image:

Many thanks to Mark Candlin for providing his wonderful photograph of Bob Rogers.

14 A BLIGHT ON A BEAUTIFUL STREET



22 LATEST UPDATE FROM WCC LEADER



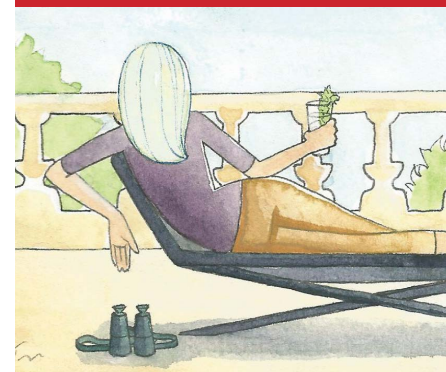
29 AT LAST! EASTBOURNE TERRACE FULLY OPEN



30 BOB ROGERS 1947 - 2021



35 JEREMY ROSE - "ON WESTBOURNE GROVE"



52 "ROADS NOT TAKEN"



82 CYCLE LANES - I LOVE THEM!



114 THE SERPENTINE PAVILION 2021



INTRODUCTION

FROM THE CHAIRMAN	2
FROM THE EDITOR	4

SAFETY VALVE

NATIONAL EXPRESS COACH STOP	6
CLEARING "NO MAN'S LAND"	8
DISMAY AT BUS ROUTE CHANGES	12
QUITE WHITELEY OUTRAGED	13
VIEWS ON MARBLE ARCH HILL	20

AROUND BAYSWATER

GLOUCESTER TERRACE CROSSING	28
SEBRA VERSUS GOLIATH	32
BACK IN TIME TO QUEEN'S ROAD	39
AN ALADDIN'S CORNUCOPIA	40
MELVYN CAPLAN Q&A	44
CRANES, CROSSINGS & CROSSRAIL	49
HYDE PARK ESTATE TRAFFIC ISSUES	62
REFLECTIONS FROM A FRIEND	64
A PIECE OF PORCHESTER HISTORY	66
A TRIBUTE TO JEM SEWELL	70
CYCLE LANES - A BIG MISTAKE?	76
GREEN LIVING IN SEBRALAND	78
ACTION NEEDED ON CYCLING	90
CLIMATE ACTION GROUP NEWS	97
NEW VIEWS OF CHURCHILL	100
POLICING BAYSWATER	102

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

"HEALTHY" LABELS - THE FACTS	104
WHY ARE FEET SO IMPORTANT?	105
PORCHESTER CENTRE NEWS	106

THE ROYAL PARKS

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS	108
SERPENTINE GALLERIES	112

POLITICAL COMMENTARY

KAREN BUCK MP	116
NICKIE AIKEN MP	118
JACK GORDON WRITES	120

CITY HALL NEWS

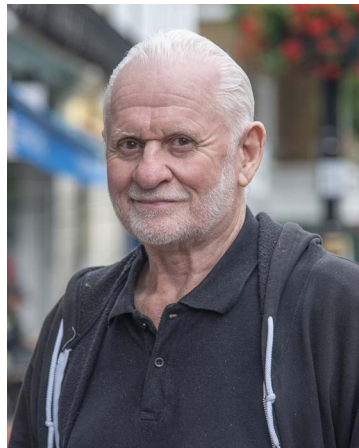
KEEPING TO THE RIGHT	122
KEEPING TO THE LEFT	124
WARD BUDGETS UPDATE	126
YOUR COUNCILLORS WRITE	127

PROPERTY AND LICENSING

CHESTERTONS MARKET NEWS	134
KNIGHT FRANK INSIGHT	135
LICENSING SEBRALAND	138

LETTERS AND ABOUT SEBRA

YOUR LETTERS	140
ABOUT SEBRA	143



From the Chairman

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Despite the ongoing difficulties from COVID-19 I am pleased to say that we have produced another bumper issue of **SEBRA NEWS W2**. From news and politics to planning, transport, green issues and much more, you will find it in these 144 pages. A particular favourite of mine is "On Westbourne Grove", a fictional tale by Jeremy Rose on page 35.

SOME THANKS

I would like to begin though by thanking our contributors and advertisers for all of their efforts and give special thanks to Teresa Stokes and Ian Hesselberg for their photography work which features throughout the magazine.

BOB ROGERS, 1947 - 2021

I know I speak for all readers when I say how sad it was to hear of the death of Bob Rogers. I knew Bob for many years, and I shall greatly miss him. He was truly one of a kind and pages 30 & 31 include an obituary that is a fitting tribute to a man described by John Humphries as "A custodian, a crusader and a truly endearing character".

LIVING UNDER COVID

These have been such strange times, with empty streets and buses, packed out Royal Parks and long queues outside our supermarkets. Times none of us will forget and hope never to return to.

The loss of simple pleasures like shopping trips or visiting pubs, restaurants, cinemas and galleries has hit everyone hard, but I have sensed a big increase in community spirit.

Will we ever see full office blocks again, or has the enforced requirement to work from home made businesses have a rethink? Time will tell of course but it should not be too long now until we can take a holiday and socialise again with our friends and loved ones.

THE WHITELEY LONDON

We know it is grammatical incorrect but believe it or not this is the new marketing name of our beloved Whiteleys.



The change of name has prompted a strong reaction from a number of people and is covered on various pages including "David versus Goliath" on page 32 plus our Star Letter from John King on page 140.

SHOPPING & RESTAURANTS

As all non-essential shops are closed we have not included this popular section, but you can expect a full update when restrictions ease. We do know however that the very popular Cote Brasserie at No 98 Westbourne Grove has closed for good, as has Evan's Cycles a few doors along at No 106.

However, let us hope the majority of our shops and restaurants do reopen soon for business and I know that SEBRA members will be keen to support them.

QUEENSWAY PUBLIC REALM

After a very long battle the works to improve the street scene in Queensway have reached a milestone. The section between Bayswater Road and Porchester Gardens is almost complete with the final stretch of resurfacing the carriageway due to take place at the end of March.



We are however having great difficulty enforcing the new raised loading bays regulations, which prohibit loading and parking after noon. The regulations are being totally abused every day, especially in the evenings and weekends.

The works at the section by Whiteleys will not be completed until late 2022 though, in time for the reopening of "The Whiteley London" (I still can't believe that name!) in the first half of 2023.

SEBRA SUMMER PARTY

During normal times I would be telling everyone about our summer party, but as we go to print things are far too uncertain to be able to make a decision.



Many of you will be disappointed if, as is very likely, we have to postpone for another year. You can rest assured that the 2022 event will be very special.

For now though I wish everyone a good summer and with the success of the vaccination programme I am confident that we are now on a slow but steady road to normality. I am also confident that you will enjoy Issue No 101 of **SEBRA NEWS W2**, it is as ever the result of many weeks of work and a true labour of love.

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Kinleigh Folkard & Hayward

"Letting off Steam"

A BR Standard Class 2 locomotive, pulling a three coach train on the Keighly & Worth Valley Railway. She is no 78022, one of just 65 of the class built and saw service with British Railways from 1954 to 1966.



Photograph by Andrew Southwell.
Visit: bit.ly/sebra-southwell

Safety Valve

We are never short of content for our Safety Valve section and in this edition we seem to cover many modes of transport and transportation. From cycles to buses, to lorries, electric scooters and cars, there are articles that we know will interest readers.

The double-page spread on pages 14&15 picks up on a topic that we covered briefly in Issue No 100 and SEBRA is determined to get to the root of this growing problem. We must put on record our thanks to Teresa Stokes for her photography.

The unlikely but interesting subject of cycle hangars also makes an appearance, with a press release critical of a new design on page 19, accompanied by a response from Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Deputy Leader of Westminster City Council.

We begin though with another method of transport in addition to those mentioned above, coaches. Two readers wrote about the National Express bus stop, currently situated on Bishop's Bridge Road. Both pointed out that space is now available on Eastbourne Terrace, and that a move would provide much-needed relief for the mainly residential Westbourne Terrace.

TIME TO MOVE THE NATIONAL EXPRESS STOP

Steven Greenwood

SEBRA Member, W2

The reopening of the bus stand and bus stops on Eastbourne Terrace offer a couple of great opportunities to move the National Express stop away from Bishop's Bridge Road and onto Eastbourne Terrace.



Eastbourne Terrace. An ideal location?

If the National Express coach stop is not moved, it is clear that all the numerous current and future National Express services will forever use Westbourne Terrace.



These buses are extremely heavy, and the nature of their suspension leads to entire buildings shaking as they pass along 24 hours a day. As such, whenever they can be made to use non-residential roads, it is beneficial to the quality of life of local residents.

Moving the coach stop would have the added advantage of locating it closer to one of the major entrances of Paddington station. The current stop tends to be hard to find for the occasional users, and the limited available space means that the pavement in front of the current Bishop's Bridge coach stop is inevitably blocked.

This issue would be significantly alleviated if the stop was moved to either one of these two areas on Eastbourne Terrace:

1. At the new bus stand for the No 46 buses. This would entail the No 46 buses standing on Bishop's Bridge Road, essentially switching space with the current National Express stop
2. Use Bus stop E.

My photos demonstrate there is ample space to put into place either one of those two solutions. Both offer an opportunity to reduce the National Express blight in W2, and I sincerely hope it can be seized.

KEEPING COACHES ON COMMERCIAL ROADS

Sophie Drisdale

SEBRA Member, W2

The space for a bus stop/stand on Eastbourne Terrace is about to be available and I believe that this would be an opportunity to move the bus stop for the National Express A1 / A2 / A6 from Bishop's Bridge Road to Eastbourne Terrace.

Left: The bus stop on Bishop's Bridge Road bridge. This is currently used by National Express coaches.

This would force National Express to use Eastbourne Terrace instead of Westbourne Terrace. With its services always increasing, it would ensure that the coaches remain on Bayswater's commercial roads.

For National Express, it would also have the advantages of shortening its routes by avoiding a traffic light and of having a stop that users are likely to naturally find easier to locate.

Comment from John Walton
Secretary, PRACT

The main point is that the coaches should always go along existing bus routes. They made a circuit and also had a stop at Marble Arch, at the very eastern end of Bayswater Road. Yes, to a new route by way of Eastbourne Terrace, but where then?

Definitely not just going back to Westbourne Terrace in order to reach Bayswater Road. They should follow the regular bus route by Praed Street to Edgware Road. That means relocating the Marble Arch stop, if it is retained. Traffic there is probably much lower than at Paddington, so the stop is shorter.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

To my mind, the whole of the route is critical and the location of the Paddington stop is secondary. However, it would certainly be an improvement to relocate it from the bridge to one of the two possible positions in Eastbourne Terrace.

Below we have reproduced (with permission) some correspondence between me, Mr Greenwood, and WCC. The first reply is the result of Mr Greenwood asking Simon Morgan of WCC for an update following the meeting of Thursday 11 February.

Dear Mr Greenwood

Following the meeting on 11 February, discussions are still continuing with TfL as Licensing Authority and National Express regarding options. The agreed next steps are:

- Highways officers are monitoring the use of the Bus Stands over the next 4-5 weeks and post this review will be talking to TfL Buses and Coaches about the re-rerouting proposals.
- Given a new routing proposal option to consider, TfL is to undertake an assessment that will include a route test with a c.15m vehicle and will undertake negotiation with TfL London Buses colleagues in respect to potential access to the Bus Stands (that were designed for London Bus services).

The survey and analysis will take up to 4-5 weeks (subject to resourcing), and subject to TfL's assessment being positive to the proposals, we would then seek Councillor approval before TfL and National Express submit an amended LSP license application.

The current national lockdown conditions means that neither commercial services are operating, but in the meantime, if they were to return the existing routing and Bus Stands will remain as the legally licensed service.

*Kind regards,
Simon Morgan
Programme Assurance Manager
Highways and Public Realm, WCC*

Dear Simon

I don't follow. The coaches stop at Paddington to set down and pick up. They do not terminate there, but mostly do a circuit via Marble Arch. Of course, there is an option to transfer the location of the Paddington stop to the new area for bus stands, perhaps better for passengers, but rerouting the coaches via Eastbourne Terrace does not depend on it. The set down/ pick up stop could remain where it is.

I hope that the route tests will include the option of relocating the Marble Arch stop to Edgware Road rather than Bayswater Road, so using a route for passage of the coaches that is already a bus route and avoiding residential streets.

*Kind Regards
John Walton
Secretary, PRACT*

Dear Mr Walton

Thank you for your response sent to Simon regarding the above - which is noted

Within the next two months - once a recommended alternative route option(s) and stopping pattern(s) has been identified in respect to the two formally licensed National Express services that serve Paddington Station - this will be recommended to Ward

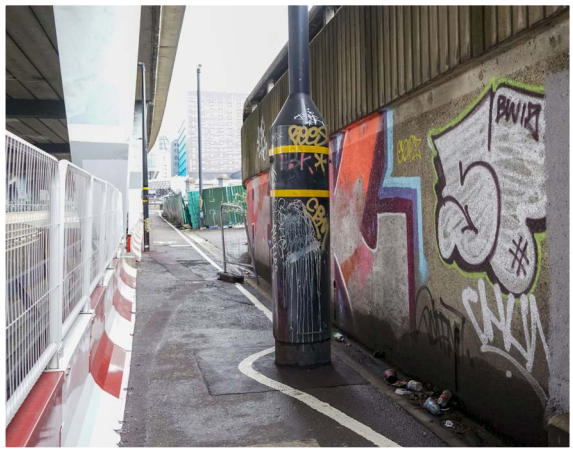
Member then the Cabinet Member for approval. It is expected that Ward Members may wish to consult with local resident associations at that point of engagement

*Kind regards
Hugh Brennan
Transport Programme Manager
Public Realm - City Highways, WCC*

THE CLEARING AND CLEANING OF “NO MAN’S LAND”

As our photographs show, the area along Harrow Road between Lord Hill’s Bridge and Westbourne Bridge was a terrible mess. We do not know who owns the land, but we wanted it tidied up. FM Conway and Veolia stepped up and got the job done and we thank them.

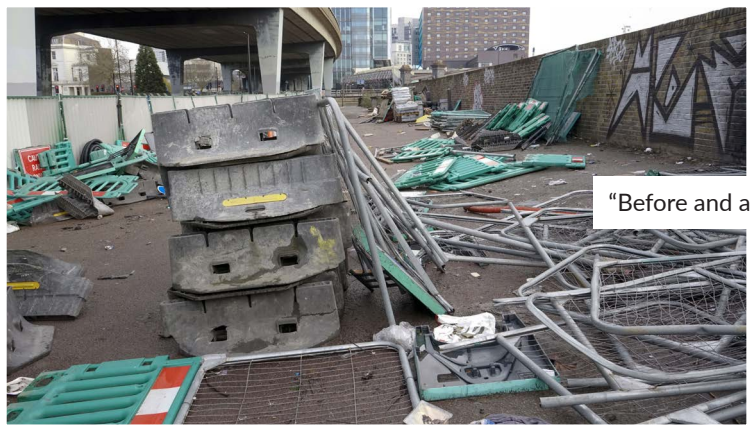
On these page we feature some “before” photographs showing how rubbish has been dumped. The area has been used as a general tipping ground for many years. We also have a small selection of “after” photos. The difference is amazing and the question now is whether “No Man’s Land” can be kept this clean and tidy in the future.



“Before and after” photographs.



Photo from FM Conway of clearing completion.



“Before and after” photographs.



Thank you Ian and Nicky Hessenberg!
Our resident photographer and our regular writer ventured into “No Man’s Land” in freezing conditions to grab these photographs.



A Note on Graffiti
Keeping the walls in “No Man’s Land” and other areas of SEBRALAND free of graffiti is an ongoing battle. The scrawlings shown here have since been removed, but there is little chance of the practice ever ceasing.



WESTBOURNE TERRACE - EDITOR'S NOTE

In the previous issue of SEBRA NEWS **W2** we featured the article shown in the middle of this page about tree root damage to walls in Westbourne Terrace. The article prompted the response below from SEBRA member Brian Newman,

highlighting an even worse example of these eyesores, this time at No. 29 Westbourne Terrace.

In the last issue the Chairman commented "*watch this space*" and we are grateful to Martin Sone, WCC Area Planning Officer for his response below.

AN EYESORE ON WESTBOURNE TERRACE

Brian Newman

Cleveland Terrace, W2

One article from the Autumn 2020 edition of SEBRA NEWS **W2** that particularly piqued my interest was about the walls on Westbourne Terrace that have broken up and have been left without any repairs for many years.

The resulting safety barriers are a real blight on the street, as can be seen in the photo here. Are we really condemned to accept that this situation will only progressively get worse over the coming years, or can something realistically be done about this?

The current situation is extremely sad for what could be a very beautiful SEBRALAND street.



A blight on a beautiful street - Damage caused by roots at No 29 Westbourne Terrace.

Article from SEBRA Member Beth Jones, reproduced from Issue No 100

BROKEN WALLS ARE ALMOST PERMANENT FIXTURES

The walls alongside the Westbourne Terrace pavement have collapsed in a few places as my photographs show. Safety barriers have been installed around these areas, and after approximately ten years, they appear to be permanent fixtures.

After all this time, I wonder if anything can be done about this. Refuse is inevitably regularly dumped

around there, and parts of the wall sometimes fall onto the pavement, obstructing it for weeks at a time. I suspect that these walls are the responsibility of the buildings behind them. If that is the case, wouldn't it be possible to contact the relevant freehold companies to ensure that these finally get repaired?

If nothing gets done, this can only be a situation that will get progressively worse.

Response from Martin Sone
WCC Planning Enforcement Team

Dear SEBRA Members

Thank you for the representations regarding the poor condition of the walls along Westbourne Terrace and for bringing this matter to the attention of the Planning Enforcement Team.

We have reviewed the representations received and have surveyed the walls ourselves and are considering our options in relation to this issue. The position is not straightforward in

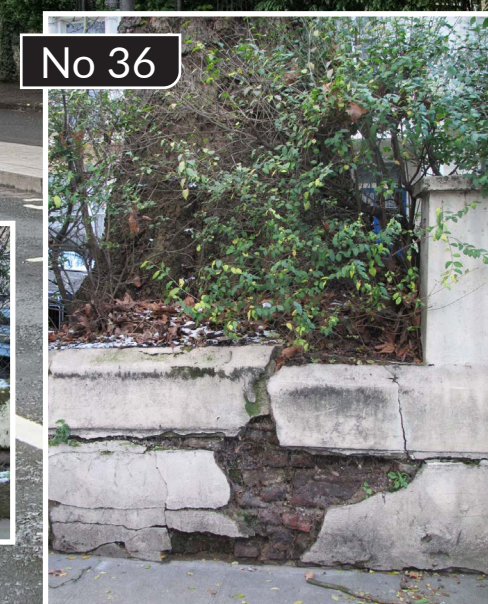
that the ownership of the walls spans multiple landowners and many different properties. It is therefore likely that we will need to seek legal advice on this matter to determine whether there is any action which may be able to be taken under the provisions contained within the Planning Acts. Please rest assured that this matter remains important to the Planning Enforcement Team and that we will do what we can within our legislative powers to remedy the position.

MORE EYESORES ALONG WESTBOURNE TERRACE

The letter on the opposite page, and the one that we have reproduced from the previous issue, prompted a closer look at the walls along Westbourne Terrace.

The worst damage is shown here, and we have more photographs where the damage is less severe.

Many thanks to Teresa Stokes for braving the freezing weather to take these photos during her daily exercise.



VIEWS ON “MARBLE ARCH HILL”

From the Chairman

Many readers will be aware of the proposals to build “Marble Arch Hill” to attract visitors back to central London. The concept of a huge mound overlooking Hyde Park has certainly provoked some response in the media. In that respect it has already succeeded in publicising the reopening

of Oxford Street before a single shovel of earth has been moved. Our thanks go to Neil Wilson for sending us a copy of a letter he sent to local Councillors about the project which he describes as a “*brave gesture*”.

At the bottom of the page we have reproduced, with the authors' permission, a couple of rather amusing emails on the subject.

A HILL FOR MARBLE ARCH?

Neil Wilson

Chair, Planning Committee Marylebone Association

Westminster City Council has unveiled plans to build a 23-metre tall climbable hill overlooking Marble Arch and Hyde Park in a bid to lure shoppers back to Oxford Street once lockdown ends.

Called ‘Marble Arch Hill’, the scaffolding structure is set to be covered with grass, sedum and small trees, and will provide views of Hyde Park. Visitors will be able to climb up the hill, although at this height much of the view may be obscured by the surrounding, higher trees. We have asked the project team to provide a photo montage of the view.

This is an unexpected project and a brave gesture by Westminster to supposedly help draw the crowds back into the Oxford Street area. With 57 of 264 stores on Oxford Street already permanently shut, the reopening of non-essential retail on 12 April after being closed for 14 weeks would probably be enough of an attraction in its own right to draw people back to shops.

However, Westminster Council have decided to spend a sizeable portion of their £150m Oxford Street District funding on the proposed hill.

The scheme is designed by the Dutch Architects MVRDV who proposed something similar back in 2004 in order to cover the Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park. The proposal was to encase the gallery within “a mountain”, with grass-covered slopes over a steel frame. It was eventually abandoned on grounds of cost and health and safety issues.



Artist's impression of “Marble Arch Hill”.

Julia Peyton-Jones, the Serpentine Gallery's director, said: of the original project “*What seemed relatively easy proved not to be*”.

As with other Oxford Street District projects we would be interested to know the projected costs of this project and how the funding is split. We would also much prefer to see the Portman Estate vision for Marble Arch implemented rather than this proposed temporary scheme.

“ Wonders never cease...did you know it takes an architect to design a hill? I thought for a moment that at last we were being presented with an environmentally friendly development - a huge mound with vegetation and mature trees to be installed at Marble Arch! But now I see that all this is only a six month installation. I wonder if the applicants will be asked by WCC to assess the carbon footprint of this ridiculous vanity project?..... ”

“And not only that, but being charged to walk up and down the hill! And how is it going to attract shoppers back to Oxford street? AND a Dutch architectural firm - have our leaders forgotten that we are no longer in Europe and that we have architects here. I bet my nephew could design a good hill! ”

It has got to be the craziest idea yet, maybe Boris is trying to reincarnate our last Olympic games success to boost his ratings! I think the BBC News said it will cost £25m. How well will that go down with the struggling Westminster residents?

I wonder what hope there is for us all with these bonkers ideas being bandied around. ”





Around Bayswater

The main section of our magazine once again covers a really diverse range of subjects, and to coin a phrase, there is certainly "something for everyone". Regular contributors such as Professor Lewis Lesley, Christopher Penfold, Andy Beverley and Mike Somekh have provided some great content, but it is also pleasing to see articles from new contributors to these pages. Sincere thanks must go to Erith, Mace, Veolia, Marble Arch BID and Paddington BID among others, their advertorial features remain of great interest and their support of SEBRA is deeply appreciated.

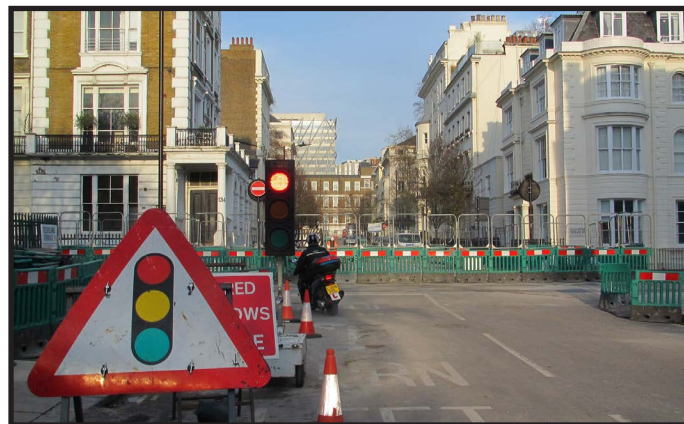
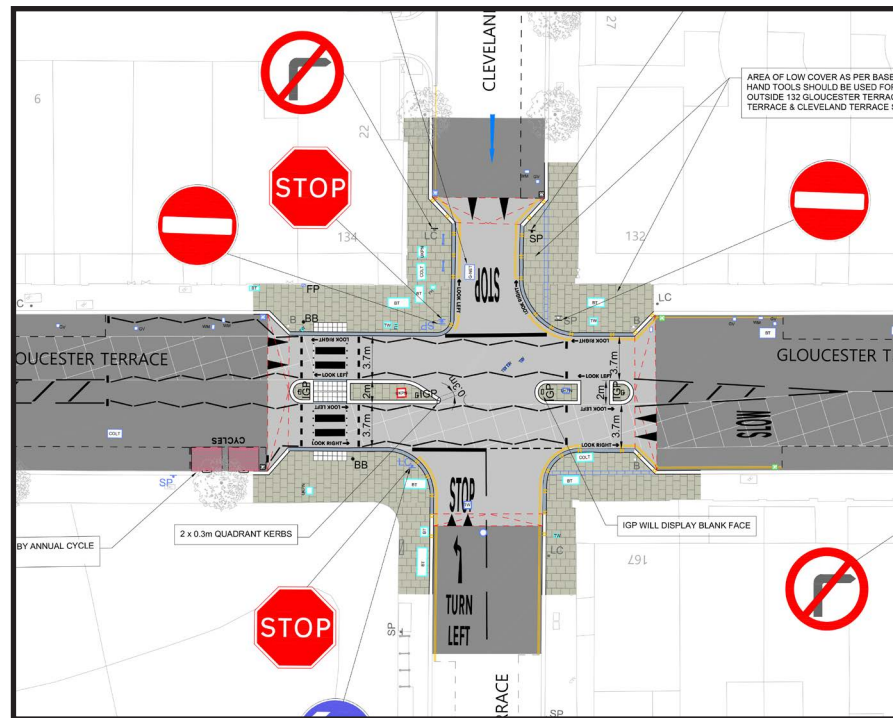
ZEBRA CROSSING FOR GLOUCESTER TERRACE COMPLETE

The long-awaited Zebra crossing at the accident 'black spot' of the Gloucester Terrace junction with Cleveland Terrace has just been completed.

Despite a 20MPH limit this major road in SEBRALAND has sadly attracted speeding motorists for many years, and there have been a number of accidents at this junction.

The new installation will be an additional safety feature and of course be invaluable to the many pedestrians who use the junction every day.

Our photographs show the works nearing completion and the plan of the junction involved.



AT LAST! EASTBOURNE TERRACE FULLY REOPENED

John Walton
Secretary, PRACT

We expect that by the time you read this, or soon after, buses going into town will be stopping - for the first time in nearly ten years - at a bus stop on the far side of Eastbourne Terrace.

First, the pavement on its far side would be made fully open. There will be a new pedestrian crossing, from near to the junction with Chilworth Street, to reach it. Hopefully there will also be a route to walk down from there and into the mainline station. This would add to the good news, by improving our access to the tube and underground and to the shops in the Station's concourse.

However, the new station for the Elizabeth Line (aka Crossrail), which is beneath Eastbourne Terrace, will not



Buses soon to be stopping on both sides of Eastbourne Terrace.

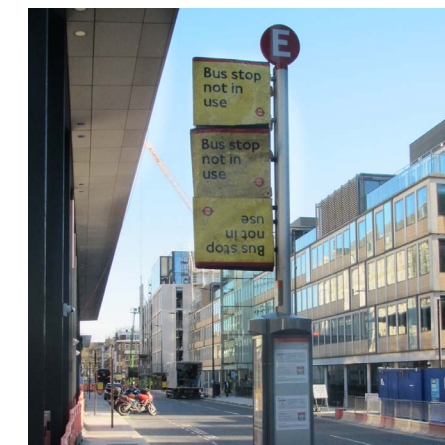
be brought into use until trains start running on the central section of the Line. Its opening is now planned for the first half of 2022, but this may slip.

BUSES IN EASTBOURNE TERRACE

Buses going in the other direction continue to stop on the side nearest to us, at the existing stop near to No. 10, which is close to the junction with Cleveland Terrace..

A new area for buses to stand at the end of their route has already been brought into use. It is alongside Eastbourne Terrace on its far side and near to its northern end.

Transport for London decided to curtail the route of single decker bus No. 46 at Paddington, without advance notice, and to use this new stand. Previously the bus ran on to Lancaster Gate Station, and now there is no longer any link from there to the many points on its route. Now, the final set



But stop ready to open soon.

down point is on Bishop's Bridge; after leaving its new stand, the bus makes a long circuit and its first pick up point is at the stop near to No. 10 Eastbourne Terrace.

SEBRA has written to TfL to contest this decision. For an example of the difficulty this has caused, please refer to page 12.

We do not yet know when the stand for route No 205 will move from Cleveland Terrace to this new stand area, if at all. The use of the same area as the stop for the National Express coaches to Stansted Airport when they move to Eastbourne Terrace, instead of their previous stop on Bishops Bridge, is also being considered, see page 7.

We have been told that Transport for London may well wish to make further changes to bus routes serving Paddington Station once the Elizabeth Line opens. Let's hope that there will be consultation beforehand!



No 46 bus at it new start point.

Graham King 'A Giant of a Man'

Sadly for us, Graham's 48 years of service in Local Government will come to an end in the late Spring. John Zamit and I wish him well in other activities, and we would like to record our thanks for his positive and constructive responses to our numerous requests for help and information over the years.

We could always expect a concise reply, usually by return. A 'giant of a man' with an amazing fund of knowledge and yet a pleasant quiet nature.

For long he has been our main point of contact with Officers at the City Council on Crossrail and on the impact of the many other changes in and around Paddington Station.

His remit was the overall effect upon both businesses and the local community of the major schemes both at Paddington and at Victoria, including traffic and all forms of public transport.

He represented the Council during passage of the Crossrail Act in Parliament. He chaired the Liaison Committee, on the impact of constructing its station beneath Eastbourne Terrace, with great wit, and sarcasm where appropriate.

He was instrumental in many other major events over the years: some that come to mind, for instance, are the closure of Bishop's Bridge for its rebuilding; the big development at 'Paddington Square' with its improved access to the main-line and Bakerloo Line stations; the recent threat of a coach terminal at Royal Oak; and changes to bus routes between us and the West End.

He always came to our Summer parties, and to our AGMs, to support our Councillors there. We hope we may see him again at a SEBRA summer party in the near future.

Bob Rogers

1947 - 2021

Bob Rogers has died, aged 73. He was one of London's most photographed characters, a man recognised by millions, but well-known by few - the carrier of the placard It's Going to Get Worse. However, SEBRA NEWS W2 readers were regularly treated in his magazine column to his specific views about the locality, its past links, present problems and future outlook.

Robert Vincent Rogers (1947 - 2021) was an unofficial custodian and historian of Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park. Although not an orator himself, he usually drew a small crowd of fellow-enthusiasts to his pitch. He had heard the orators and hecklers for the first time as a boy of 16, loved the experience and, subsequently, enjoyed the company of such speakers as Norman Schlund and Michael 'Lord' Barker.

Born in Watford on 6 May 1947 to Harold and Annie (née Downie) Rogers, he attended Victoria Secondary Modern Boys' School and became an insurance assessor for Royal & Sun Alliance. His many enthusiasms included visiting Germany; cultivating friendships both there and in London's German community; local historical and public transport societies; classical music as well as church bell-ringing.

He assiduously maintained contacts with businesses where he had long-standing connections - such as the Archive Bookstore in Bell Street, Simmons Bakers in Croyley Green, Fish Bone fish & chip shop in Cleveland Street, Hoxton Pie & Mash shop, Beck's Café in Holborn's Red Lion Street, the Wong Kei restaurant in China Town, Regent Dry Cleaners in Praed Street, Sainsbury's in Ladbroke Grove.

He crusaded for Speakers' Corner, the Royal Parks, London Transport and its buses, together with the provision of toilet facilities, the maintenance of public drainage and the elimination of graffiti, as well as, of course, to support his fears that surveillance cameras would ensure that life would only get worse. His placard, promoting this view, was a centre of attention.



Photograph © Si Barber

Bob Rogers - A custodian, a crusader and a truly endearing character.

Here was a man seen by countless residents of, and visitors to, London, described in books about the capital and featured by manufacturers of greetings cards, badges and fridge magnets. He was known by some as 'Bob Doom', although there was a paradox in his holding of pessimistic views inevitably resulting in good humour, cheerfulness and a sense of engagement with those he met.

This is what Bob wrote of a significant moment in his life - *'It was the winter of 1991 when British Rail reported "The Wrong Kind of Snow on the Line" and that became an Evening Standard headline. The next day, I saw It's Going to Get Worse on the newsstand as I went through Piccadilly on a bus. So I jumped off, took the paper from the billboard and put it in my bag because I like the prose style of newspaper headlines.'*

Then I came to Speakers' Corner one Sunday in February of that year and everyone looked so miserable that I took the newsstand notice out of my bag, held it up and made many smile. It caught on to such an extent that I am pictured wearing it in guidebooks to London.'

That's exactly 30 years ago, a moment when his now almost 60-year association with a national centre of opinions, both vocal and visual, became established. Here is an endearing character who is much missed by friends and acquaintances, residents and readers, alike.

Bob Rogers, who was unmarried, died from COVID-19 with high blood pressure at his home in Orsett Terrace. The official date of his death is Friday 15 January 2021 and his body was directly cremated at the West London Crematorium, Kensal Green, on Wednesday 24 February.

John Humphries

Fond Tributes from the Chairman

For many years I was fortunate enough to count Bob Rogers as a close friend, and like so many others am greatly saddened by the death of this lovable man.

We spoke most days and whenever we met up I found his company to be engaging and uplifting, despite his "Bob Doom" moniker. In fact, I had been referring to Bob as "The Prophet of Doom" for a number of years before his more famous nickname was ever used.

Bob was the epitome of the "unsung hero". He would carry around a little book noting graffiti, broken lamp columns, potholes, blocked drains and much more. Bob would notify the Council of his findings and took great pleasure in calling me late at night to tell me what he had reported. Invariably those reports were swiftly attended to, meaning that SEBRALAND looked better and worked better for countless years thanks to Bob.

Even in his later years, when he needed to use a walking stick, Bob spent many happy hours strolling through our Royal Parks and the surrounding roads. His famous black beret often giving rise to calls of "Alright Benny" from van drivers. It was of course a reference to Benny Hill, which always made Bob smile.

He was also a very willing volunteer when it came to magazine deliveries, finding particular pleasure in Bayswater's many mews. Everywhere he went, SEBRA members recognised him.

The page opposite provides a wonderful commentary on someone who, without question, was one of London's great characters. Our capital city has lost a great citizen and I know that Bob will be missed by many, many people.

Bob - Thanks for memories.

Above: I love this photograph. It was taken in 2014 when Eastbourne Terrace reopened to buses following major works. Stood between Bob and me is Sir Peter Hendry, who was Commissioner of TfL at the time. He owns the Routemaster bus.

Below: Enjoying a drink with Bob on my surprise 70th birthday at The Mitre on Craven Terrace. His look suggests he doesn't approve of my Arsenal shirt!

Left: With friends at the 2011 SEBRA Summer Party.



Some Thoughts from the Editor

Having only met Bob on a few occasions, most notably during an excellent lunch at Taormina on Craven Terrace back in 2016, there is little I would wish to add to the words already written about this charming man.

What I will mention though is that with fifteen editions of SEBRA NEWS W2 under my belt, I was always pleased to receive another contribution for "Bob Rogers' Corner". When each email arrived, courtesy of Teresa Stokes, I knew to expect some musings on a sprinkling of topics that I was certain readers would enjoy.

One such example was that two of England's finest parks border SEBRALAND, but despite their splendour and history, Bob wrote about the bins and benches to be found along their walkways. He brought real interest to subjects that others might have considered mundane.

I think Bob's writings about buses continue this theme too and he was clearly an expert on this mode of transport. For the very finest example of this hop over to Page 43 of Issue No 92 (Spring 2018) and read "Magical Mystery Tours on London Buses". It is a simply lovely piece.



Bob will be sadly missed by a lot of people and I count myself very fortunate to have spent a little time in his company.



GREEN MAN CROSSING - WORKS ALMOST COMPLETE AT JUNCTION OF EDGWARE ROAD AND PRAED STREET

Left: The works will provide a safer crossing point for pedestrians at the Praed Street junction with Edgware Road.

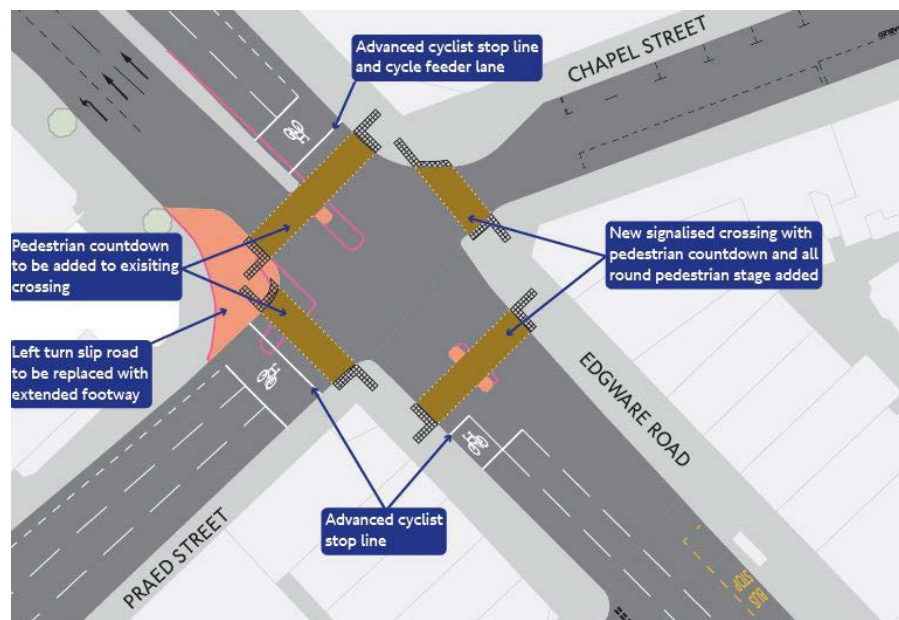
Below: Plans for the works. Visit bit.ly/PraedCrossing for details.

An extensive programme to improve junctions along Edgware Road has now reached SEBRALAND, with construction of a "Green Man" crossing at the junction with Praed Street.

A main feature of the works is the removal of the slip road as indicated on the map, and this will now become an extended footway.

To add further to pedestrian safety a 20MPH speed limit will be introduced along Edgware Road, north of Praed Street and south to Marble Arch.

You can view the map in greater detail by visiting the Marble Arch BID website at bit.ly/PraedCrossing and there is further information on page 93.



POLICE WARRANTS SUCCESSFULLY ISSUED

PC Zach Ali

Dedicated Ward Officer, Lancaster Gate

MOSCOW ROAD

Officers from the Lancaster Gate Safer Neighbourhood Team based under the Central West Command Unit executed a warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act at a commercial venue on Moscow Road W2 on 13 January 2021.

A quantity of drugs, cash and firearms ammunition was recovered. Two people were arrested on suspicion of drug offences and possession of firearm ammunition. They were released under investigation.

A licensing hearing was held on Wednesday, 10 February following an application by the Met for the revocation of the venue's license which was granted. An investigation continues, led by the Central West Command Unit CID.

HALLFIELD ESTATE

Officers from the Lancaster Gate Safer Neighbourhood Team based under the Central West Command Unit



executed a warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act at a residential venue on the Hallfield Estate on 3 February 2021.

A quantity of drugs and approximately 100 mobile devices were recovered. One person was arrested on suspicion of drug offences and Handling Stolen Goods. They were released under investigation. The SNT are working closely with Westminster City Housing to explore the appropriate tenancy

Drugs seized in Moscow Road. Cash and firearms were also recovered.

action. An investigation continues, led by the Lancaster Gate Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

Both drug warrants are examples of the importance in having strong links and bonds within our communities now more than ever.

On Westbourne Grove

Jeremy Rose was a Barrister for thirty five years. He is the author of a number of books for young adults. He has lived on Squares off Westbourne Grove for forty years. He is married to Sir Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum.

In Issue No 100 of SEBRA NEWS W2, Jeremy George Rose told us of his 40 years spent in W2. In the first of a series of fictional stories entitled "On Westbourne Grove", Jeremy tells us a tale of Lady Fairweather grappling with modern times against a the backdrop of a pandemic.



Lady Fairweather stood on her balcony overlooking the square with her first espresso of the day. There were, even in COVID times, so many deliveries. Flowers irrespectively and food parcels from Panzers, Selfridges, The Hummingbird and Daylesford amongst others. The square teemed with vans.

In the evening London's best restaurants supplied wives, mistresses, husbands and lovers who might also have been Mothers and Fathers with their necessary repasts. Lady Fairweather had views on this. Modernity and conveniences even in pandemic times could offer too much. Parcels had arrived on her doorstep without names. She had taken them in, chosen some foodstuffs, then taken the rest to the church along Westbourne Grove which offered breakfast each morning to those poorer than herself. In 2020 COVID caused anxiety about driving BUT Lady Fairweather to avoid the throngs sunbathing already in the square, unable to reach their second homes in the country or third homes in Europe or elsewhere, drove for an excursion nevertheless, avoiding shouting neighbours moving unattractive installation projects outside. Reason was not always reasonably present.

Lady Fairweather banned her children from Facetime, Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp regarding herself. They could do it on birthdays but over communication by these traffics in her building and in her square was contemptuous. Once her daughter in law related how SHE LOVED Lady Fairweather. She replied about: nonsense messages that were untrue. She had little time for superficiality especially from her grandson's third wife who put photographs of the new born baby online everywhere. She worried he would yet be successfully kidnapped.

Depositing the remnants of the Selfridges food parcel Lady Fairweather masked, parked the car and went into Waitrose, climbing upwards the escalator broken again. By the time she emerged queues for its entrance had begun. There was plenty of hand gel.

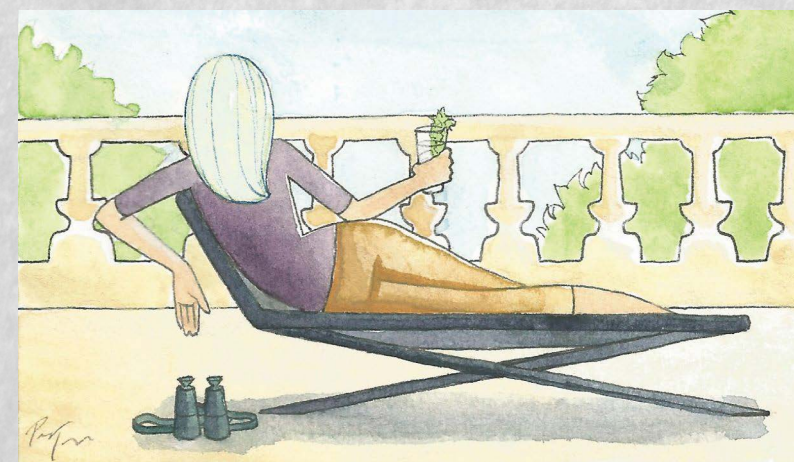
When she returned home there was an hysterical email from the Garden Committee referable to a planning application for a glass extension on someone's roof. This must be fought as if it were a war, was related but scrolling through she thought the plans charming. Lady Fairweather, whatever this usual hysteria of what would inevitably become the planning committee of the square, would not oppose the application. She looked out of her window and Dorothy Dominguez was starting her yoga on her mat with Lydia Cohen-Goldenberg (the surnames of her

two divorced husbands with many children by each) similarly doing a handstand the other side of the tree. Whether it was a routine of tai chi she remained unsure. She made herself her second espresso of the day. It was only ten thirty.

There was a telephone call. A neighbour related that the front door downstairs was stuck. This happened in extreme cold and extreme warmth. It was already a climate warming hot April day. Lady Fairweather related about buying WD40 from Queensway. She didn't like him. Tall, slim, twenty, a furloughed acrobat with Cirque du Soleil he was apparently often groggy in the day OR found trapezing up one of the trees in the square, swinging much to the joy of the ladies beneath. Cocaine was explained to her. She was horrified about anyone in the building using drugs. She rejected any assertion of naivety on her part. Someone came by on a bicycle, whistled and threw a package upstairs through his deliberately opened window. NO, you go and buy it. She was not going over to the pound shop in Portobello Road for the WD40. Anyway she had had her daily excursion.

Lady Fairweather missed her late elderly neighbours even when they were disagreeable. Now there were the wealthy from all over the world with extreme materialism and inexplicable tastes or the artistic children of wealthy parents, arrogant, insistent, doing unnecessary courses such as the History of Art which ought to be banned as science was far more necessarily. She ought to feel SORRY for them zooming tutorials and not at university but she was hesitant. London children from private schools were particularly dreadful. Indeed one child failed at Oxbridge for the one hundredth time was cast into the square one cold night as a severe punishment. The child died of hypothermia.

It was suddenly noon. Lady Fairweather poured herself a very long G&T. She then lay on her lounge. Her view out into the square was perfect. She did not even need binoculars.



Readers will be familiar with Professor Lewis Lesley, author of this article, as he regularly contributes his "Blue Plaques" features to SEBRA NEWS W2.

Here though he has provided some interesting commentary on a few of the subjects which featured in Issue No 100 of our magazine.



"Another Aladdin's Cornucopia of Wonderful Material"

Lewis Lesley

From my hideaway in the North, I am jealous of the high level of investment taking place in Bayswater. Many northern towns would be transformed by the 'crumbs' from Bayswater's table!

I thought I would share some of my thoughts on Issue No 100 with SEBRA members.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS

As a six year old I vividly remember standing behind the horse trough on Great Western Road near the corner with Westbourne Park Road in June 1953 with my school (St. Stephen's) to see the (new) Queen and Prince Philip drive slowly down in a large black open top limousine.

The horse trough restricted the view but was still then used by the many working horses in London.

HALLFIELD ESTATE

I can remember this being transformed from a bomb site to a modern Municipal Housing Estate.

We Paddingtonians were proud of our progressive Council, although there were still many bomb sites as informal 'playgrounds'. Unlike Council Estates built in the 1960's it had stood the test of time and now is a 'desres'!



WHITELEYS

This was the big magnet in the area. The third floor had the toy department and Father Christmas, what a treat that was as a small child, even if we could not afford most of the toys. Later as a teenager, I bought LP's there from the ground floor Record Department and still have them with the original price label 'Whiteleys £1-10s'.

Often I would first borrow the LP from Paddington Library in Porchester Road before buying my own version (needed to save up pocket money). Let's hope the rebuilding will do justice to an important street, and not be too detracted by the redevelopment opposite?

THE ROYAL PARKS

In the 1950's and 60's cycling was forbidden in Kensington Garden, and only allowed on Hyde Park carriageways, if you could face the traffic.

So it is good to see cycle routes and to get healthy exercise with a breath of fresh air away from traffic.

THE COW

Formerly known as the "Railway Tavern". This was named in honour of the large Great Western Goods yard across Westbourne Park Road. As teenagers we would sneak in, and on Friday buy a copy of "War Cry" from the Salvation Army.

Next door was a half shop run by a very elderly couple, as St. Stephen's School tuck shop. There a half penny worth of sweets could be bought.

THE RED LION PUB

Fell victim to another progressive trend with the building of Westway, which even got a BBC World Service Soap Opera named after it! In many other places such elevated highways are being demolished, both to reclaim the land, but also to improve the living conditions of people living around.

This is the big philosophical question; "Are the rights of residents to have a healthy environment more important than the rights of other people to drive their cars and degrade the environment?"

A JOB WELL DONE AND A LITTLE LOCAL HISTORY

Mike Somekh

Barrie House, Lancaster Gate, W2

This last year has seen much activity taking place in Lancaster Gate thanks to SEBRA and the wonderful efforts by John Zamit.



The 2020 Service of Remembrance, once again taking place at the Lancaster Gate War Memorial.

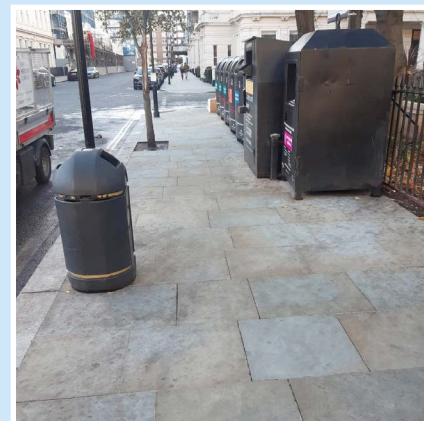
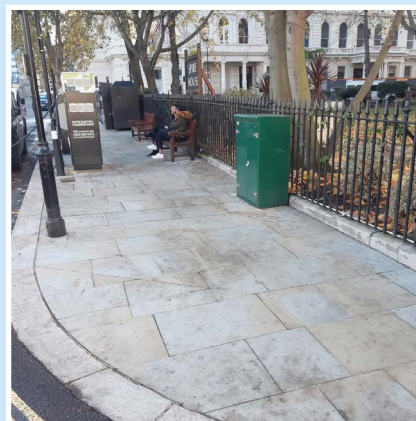
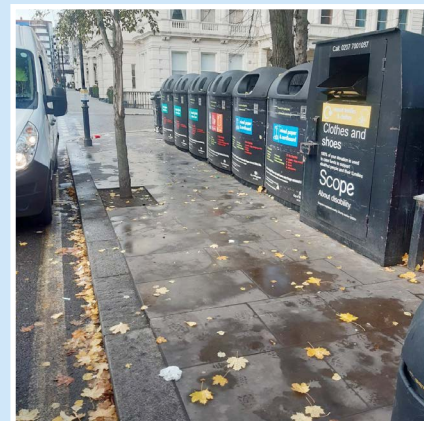
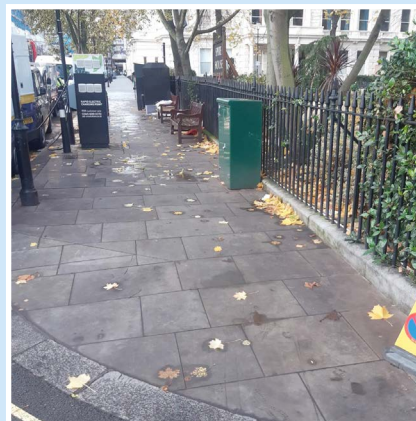
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Most importantly, the memorial service, now in its 18th year in front of the War Memorial, went ahead keeping up the tradition since November 2002.

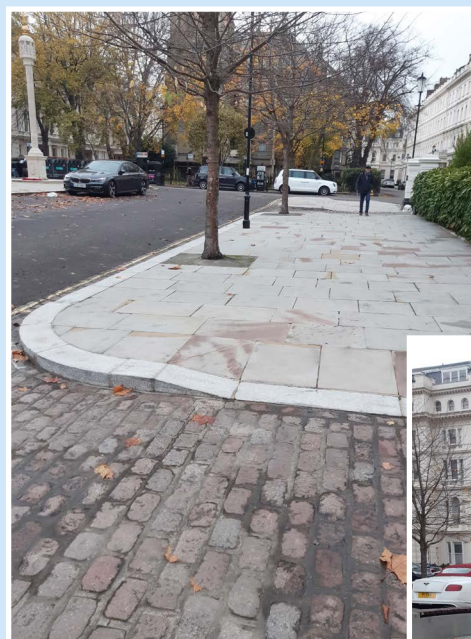


A smaller gathering than usual due to COVID. Social distancing was suitably adhered to.

This materialised on the back of SEBRA's persistence and a four year crusade by John establishing the event as a permanent fixture on the calendar. It is always well supported by residents, onlookers, clergy and rabbinate (there's a double page article relating to this on page 70 of the Autumn 2020 edition of SEBRA NEWS W2).



Above: Photos taken by Mike Somekh, show how Veolia's deep cleaning efforts have brought the York stone slabs back to life.



SEBRA's thanks go to Natalia Nogues-Cosentini, Operations Supervisor from Veolia for doing such a great job in arranging the deep clean.



The Lancaster Gate War Memorial (right) was restored as SEBRA's Millennium project and unveiled on 11 November 2002.

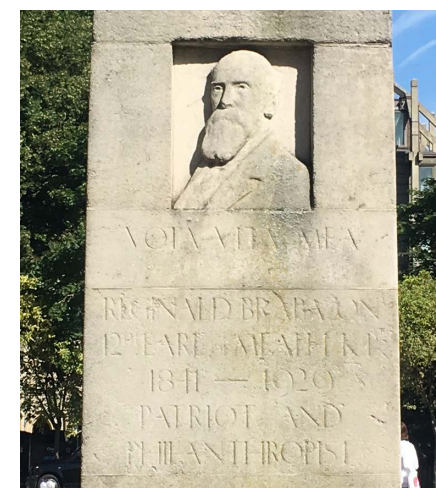
LOCAL HISTORY: ORPHAN BOY STATUE

As can be seen on the facing page, our friends at Veolia successfully conducted a deep clean of the square's York stone and pavement inscriptions.



Orphan Boy statue at Lancaster Gate.

Veolia also restored the orphan boy statue which was funded by Sir Reginald Brabazon (Earl of Brabazon from Ireland) in recognition of an orphanage which was located in Lancaster Gate at the time. The statue, which was erected in 1934, is grade II listed and was designed by English sculptor Joseph Hermon Cawthra.



Sir Reginald Brabazon "Patriot and Philanthropist".

Nothing seems easy any more but through numerous conversations and emails to the Council supported by SEBRA, we were able to have this cleaning work completed in time for the memorial service.



Spire House, once nicknamed "The thousand pound church."

LOCAL HISTORY: SPIRE HOUSE

For those who have wondered about how Spire House became a residential block, Christ Church as it was known, was nicknamed '**the thousand pound church**' due to the large sums collected by wealthy Bayswater congregants each Sunday.

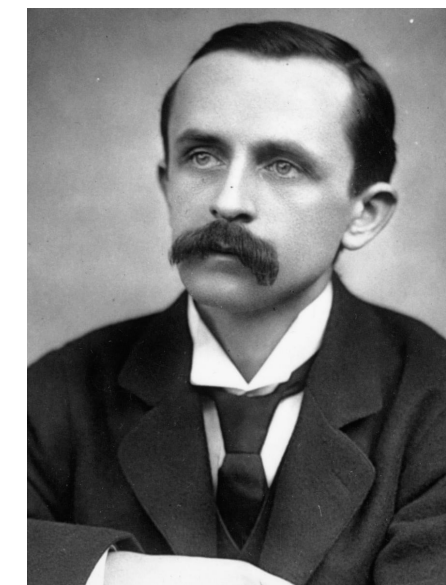
Contrary to popular belief that the church was hit by a bomb in WWII, it was actually dry rot in the roof that caused its demise (although three bombs were dropped in and around Lancaster Gate itself). The last service took place in March 1977 and demolition of the main body took place later that year. The spire remained though and is now attached to an ecclesiastical looking block of flats which were constructed in 1983.



Barrie House - Named after Lancaster Gate's most famous resident.

LOCAL HISTORY: BARRIE HOUSE

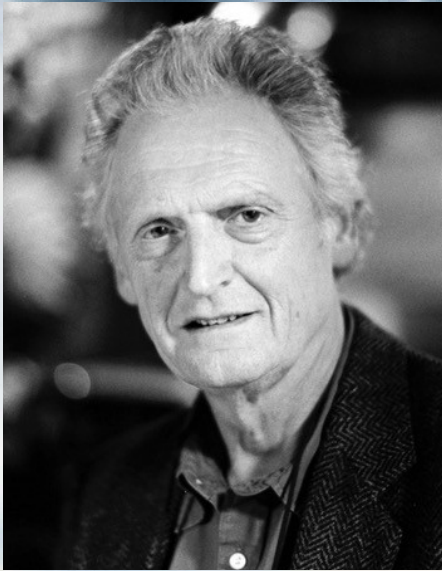
Our most famous local resident, James Matthew Barrie, author of the famous book Peter Pan, lived at 100 Bayswater Road with his actress wife Mary Ansell. He moved into the house in 1900 and gave permission for our building, Barrie House at 93/94 Lancaster Gate, to be named after him.



JM Barrie. Read about him on page 49 of our Spring 2018 edition.

THANK YOU!

Along with all my neighbours, we are indebted to John and SEBRA, Westminster City Council and Veolia for taking such great care of our area. The constant sweeping, rubbish removal and cleaning around the refuse bins ensures our area maintains its charm and reputation as a wonderful place to live and work, especially in these unprecedented times.



The author has previously written for SEBRA NEWS W2's "Health & Wellbeing" section in his former capacity as Co-Chair of the Garway Road Medical Practice Patient Group. Here though we present a thought-provoking article better suited to this main section of our magazine.

Roads not Taken

Christopher Penfold

Robert Frost's famous poem places its author on the horns of a dilemma:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.

Exactly what the difference was, the poet doesn't say but he presents the act of making a decision as mere whimsy and we know from their correspondence that the poem was written in gentle mockery of his friend and fellow poet, Edward Thomas, whose periods of clinical depression rendered him preternaturally indecisive.

But whereas decision making in the case of choosing between two almost but not quite identical roads through the woods may be driven by mere whimsy, and where the consequences of such decisions may be limited to the point of insignificance, there are other moments of decision in the conduct of human affairs where the decision does make all the difference – between consequences that prove to be either fortunate or catastrophic – for the individual or for the whole of the human race.

In totalitarian states tyrannical rulers appropriate the most significant decision making to themselves by means of an authority purloined by coup. But in surviving liberal democracies, the "people" vote for leaders who they hope and expect will take the "right" decisions on their behalf and in their interests.

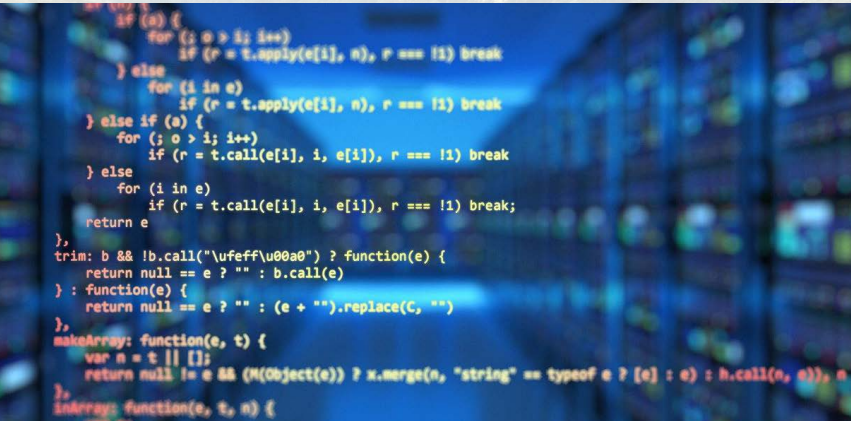
BURIDAN'S ASS

So, what actually happens in the mind when a decision is required between two nearly but not quite identical bits of information? For the hypothetical ass proposed by 14th century French philosopher, Jean Buridan, there were occasions when decision was a theoretical impossibility.



Buridan's Ass
"Crippled by indecision".

When brought home to the stables after a hard day's labour in the field, the keeper of Buridan's hungry ass prepares two identical bowls of oats



Computer systems manage critical aspects of our everyday lives - might they too sometimes be unable to reach a decision?

and puts them down in two positions that are equidistant from the ass's nose. The ass cannot decide which bowl to go to first and, crippled by indecision, it eventually dies of starvation.

So it is in the digital systems which increasingly manage more and more of the decision-making in our complex lives. To each and every question binary logic offers only one of two possible answers: nought or one, yes or no. But might there be the remotest possibility of a maybe? Nano particles of silicon and pico second speeds may be ever smaller and faster but the basic architecture of the hardware remains unchanged.

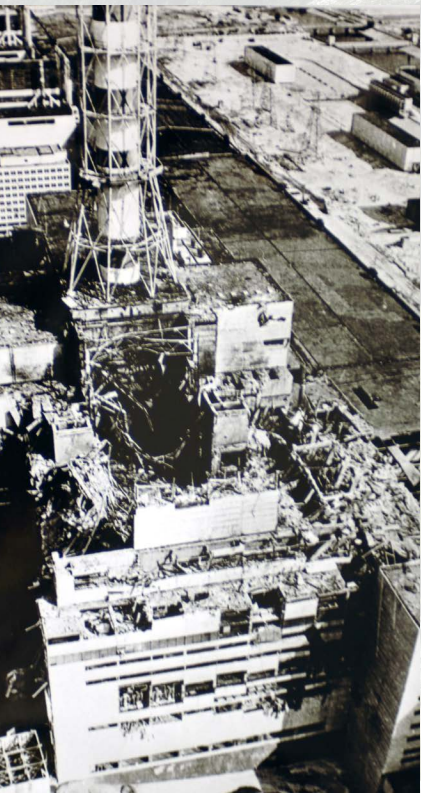
So, is it conceivable that when the flip-flop receives from the software nearly but not quite identical bits of information at nearly but not quite the same time that it might fibrillate, vacillate and be unable to come to a decision?

SYSTEM FAILURE

When computer scientist Ivor Catt identified that remotest of possibilities in the 1960s (which would, of course render a logic system illogical and therefore unreliable) he called it a "glitch" and warned of the danger that such an event might well occur in sensitive systems like nuclear power plants to cause meltdown, or in fly-by-wire aircraft to cause them to crash – utterly catastrophic results.

In the collectively sub-conscious cause of deceiving ourselves and allaying anxiety, the term "glitch" has become neutralised in common parlance by widespread misapplication to describe any kind of system malfunction. And although the architecture of the hardware is unchanged, the software that informs its decision-making process remains perpetually subject to human fallibility.

No amount of self-delusion can entirely prevent disaster as evidenced by events like the near melt-down at Three Mile Island in 1979, the actual meltdown at Chernobyl in 1986, Fukushima in 2011 or the crashes of Boeing 737 Max aircraft in 2018 and also 2019.



The Chernobyl meltdown of 1986.

When the sophisticated systems we have built to take decisions on our behalf prove to be occasionally fallible, and when humanity itself is confronted by a fork in the road, we have only our own very fallible human nature to rely on to make the right choice. Whether or not we choose to take the road less traveled, the choice itself will most certainly make all the difference.



Jean Paul Sartre
"No such thing as decision".

As though to underscore our fallibility still further, the 20th century existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre asserts that there is no such thing as a decision – only the inexorable onset of inevitability.

We are impotent as well as fallible. So here we are, living on a heavenly body that is rapidly dying by our own hands, and we find ourselves all at sea and quite incapable of taking the decisions that might lead to the survival of the Blue Planet and of our human race.

In our liberal democracies, we like to describe such vital decision-making moments in the conduct of human affairs as turning points – as moments when the "leaders" we have voted into office find themselves at an historic fork in the road and they take an important decision on our behalf. Even when in possession of all the essential facts or data, the decision they take will make all the difference and the outcome is either progress or regression, joy or despair, hope or desperation, peace or war.

HISTORY DECIDES

When the war to end all wars finally came to an end in 1918 the decision makers of the moment assembled in Paris to deliberate, to negotiate and to decide the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in what historian Margaret Macmillan describes as "six months that changed the world".

Making those decisions were the French and British Prime Ministers, Georges Clemenceau and David Lloyd George and American president Woodrow Wilson.

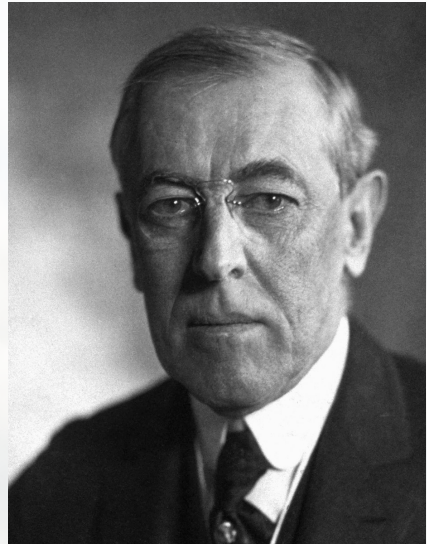
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"The war to end all wars" - The Treaty of Versailles resulted in Woodrow Wilson's dream of The League of Nations.

continued from overleaf...

But when the visionary Wilson returned to America with his dream of a League of Nations that would prevent future wars finally approved by the peace conference, did he have any idea how that dream from the moral high road might be undermined by decisions taken by Clemenceau and supported by Lloyd George?



Woodrow Wilson.
His League of Nations dream was ultimately undermined, leading to the Second World War.

Did Wilson not see how the French prime minister's determination to take the low road to protect France from yet more German aggression by crippling the defeated nation with both territorial losses and demands for reparation would stoke yet again the undying embers of European conflict?

Was it not clear as crystal that Lloyd George's determination to buttress the already crumbling British Empire with the spoils of war was a recipe for



World War II - How did peacemakers decide on the "low road to perdition"?



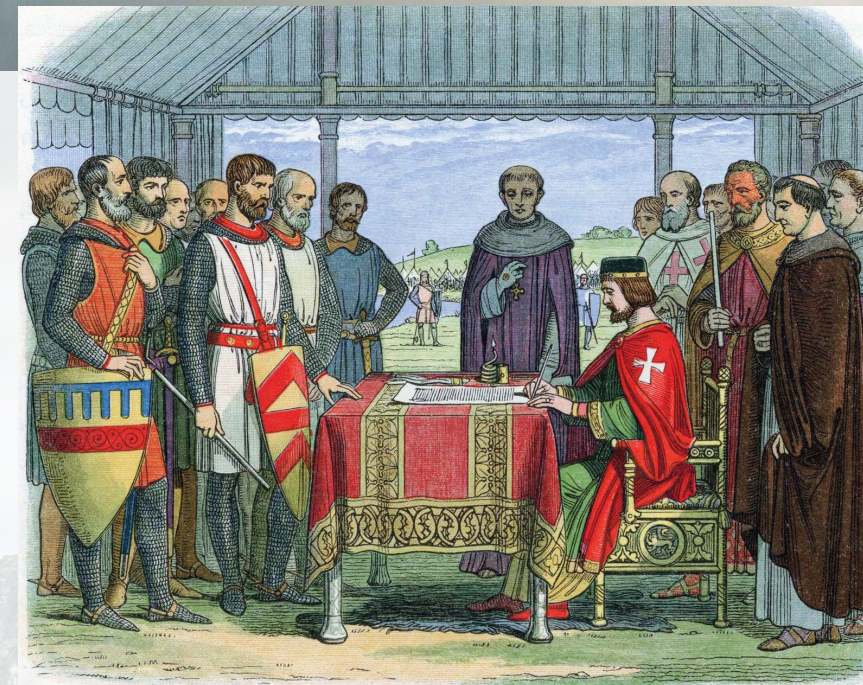
The attacks of 9/11 - Could and should a moral high ground have been taken?

the disaster, just 20 years later, of the Second World War? How was it that, when the whole world was exhausted and devastated by war and they faced a perfect opportunity to take the high road to a just peace, did the so-called peacemakers decide to take the low road to perdition?

When the tragically wounded parents of a brutally abused and murdered child howl in rage and demand the death penalty for the perpetrator we understand their desire, their need, their thirst for revenge even to the extent of identifying with them and muttering to ourselves "there but for the grace of God go I". But we rely on the better angels of our civilized human community to save us from that ultimately self-destructive

revenge by ruling collectively against the barbarism of capital punishment. So when the most powerful nation on Earth was brutally wounded in its very heart by the desperate, indoctrinated and deluded suicide bombers of 9/11, was there a moment when the leaders who had been elected to take decisions on that great nation's behalf found themselves at a fork in the road — a fork where the low road led to the emotional imperative for revenge leading to the perpetuation of conflict between West and East, and where the road not taken might have led to the moral high ground and a very different twenty-first century for our world?

How was it that, with the great accumulation of lessons from history at their disposal and with the better angels of Abraham Lincoln's forgiving and unifying nature to guide them did they choose the road that led to where we are now? Was it the inexorable onset of inevitability? Were they, like Buridan's ass, faced with almost but not quite identical roads through Robert Frost's woods and were paralysed by indecision? Was it mere whimsy or human fallibility that led them to choose the road most traveled by?



The signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 curtailed King John's tyranny.

DOWN TO US

All of that is about them and we judge their decisions harshly with the benefit of hindsight. But democracy is all about us, we the people. So, what is the process by which we, the people, come to make our decisions about how we will vote for them?

One of the persistent threads that runs through the cloak of British exceptionalism in which we tend spuriously to wrap ourselves is that this island nation is the cradle of modern democracy. We celebrate Magna Carta as the defining moment in 1215 when a bunch of robber barons got together to strongarm King John into curtailing his tyrannical entitlement in what was arguably the first power-sharing deal of the post-classical era.

Since then, the franchise of those entitled to vote for members of the Parliament that was established by Magna Carta has been gradually prised open by popular demand from the initial handful of landowners and placeholders to include all men and women over the age of 18. And there is a crescendo of contemporary calls for the age limit to be reduced to 16.

"Will they even know what they are voting for?" has been the predictable cry of those already privileged with the vote when faced with demands from others to be included in their "universal" suffrage. The democratic ideal is that every voter will be informed about the issues and the

character of the representative or president for whom they will be voting and will be quite capable of making their own decision at the ballot box. As the franchise has been extended, so has society provided the means by which voters can acquire the necessary information on which to base their decision: universal education, public libraries, a free press, public service broadcasting, independent radio and television and, in our internet age, social media.



Can we hope to find truth inside "a thickening blizzard of lies?"

Within each and every one of those facilities there is scope for difference of opinion, bias, prejudice, propaganda, lies, indoctrination — and fake news. Can we, as a democratic society, do any better than having to depend on pious hope that a healthy majority of our universal franchise will base their decision on the sound information they will be able to sift from the thickening blizzard of lies?

The "leaders" who drew up the Treaty of Versailles which unintentionally led to the Second World War; those who responded to the outrage of 9/11 by launching the War on Terror; and the one who recently declared war on American democracy itself by inciting his followers — his voters — to ransack the Capitol; they were all empowered to do what they did by us, by we the people, by you and me.



Riots at the US Capitol building, the very heart of US democracy.

It was by virtue of our hard-won democratic privilege that we did so when we stood where two or more roads in the wood diverged at the ballot box. Did we, like Sartre, merely countenance the inexorable onset of inevitability? Were we, like Buridan's ass, paralysed by indecision? Or did we take the road less traveled by knowing that it would require us to do the necessary research to become responsibly well-informed and knowing that it would make all the difference?

Decision making in a healthy democracy is damned hard work and John F. Kennedy, who had invited Frost to read at his inauguration sixty years ago on January 20 1961, was fond of quoting him to make the point. Where the two roads diverged in a wood, the road less traveled led to another poem of Frost's that the president was fond of quoting:

***The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.***

Being the **best neighbours**

whilst delivering 50 Eastbourne Terrace

McLAREN



“We are delighted to be working with YardNine to deliver the major redevelopment of 50 Eastbourne Terrace. With the project being located in the heart of Paddington and surrounded by residential, retail and commercial buildings, this has created some very complex logistical challenges. However, with a combination of utilising modern construction methods, innovative thinking and

our can do attitude, we continue to deliver the project on programme whilst minimising the impact to local businesses and communities.”



Neil Smith

Operations Director - McLaren

E: neil.smith@mcclarengroup.com

About the project

YardNine have appointed McLaren to undertake the construction works to 50 Eastbourne Terrace.

Upon completion in late 2021, 50 Eastbourne Terrace will provide 75,000 sq ft of Grade A office accommodation, 10,000 sq ft of retail space and a terrace of seven mews houses.

Located directly opposite London Paddington station, tenants will benefit from multiple roof terraces, as well as close proximity to national and local travel links, the leisure, retail and dining options of Paddington Basin and the West End, and the green space of Hyde Park.

About McLaren

As one of the UK's most successful private companies, we build outstanding new workplaces that are highly efficient and flexible around today's agile businesses. Working closely with customers and end-users, we create cutting-edge offices whilst minimising disruption to local people during the construction process.

Led by operations director Neil Smith, at 50 Eastbourne Terrace we build upon experience of delivering over 10 million square foot of office space in the Capital so far.

Progress continues on site...

The project has recently reached some key milestones and achievements. Our two tower cranes have been removed from site which now allows us to achieve full water tightness in the commercial building. The MEP risers are nearing completion and the lift installation has commenced. The envelopes of the residential houses are substantially complete with window installation commencing imminently. The internal fit out works have commenced to both the commercial and residential buildings.

An extremely positive aspect of the project to date has been our open dialogue with the community, compliments continue to be received from both Westminster City Council and the local residents for our continued communication and engagement. The wider community have been kept updated on our progress through weekly emails as well as monthly newsletters and Community Liaison Group meetings chaired by McLaren's Community Liaison Coordinator.

Minimising disruption in the local area

We plan and programme our works to minimise disruption to the vicinity. Completing the commercial building rear envelope that overlooks Chilworth Mews and building the terrace mews houses first has proven a successful measure to reduce disruption to neighbouring residents.

External hoists have been entirely avoided on this project as a measure to further reduce noise and vibration, alongside the introduction of a robust Quality Control Procedure.



Here to inform and support you any time of the day

I will continue leading on all community matters, answering all queries relating to the project and ensuring all members of the community are communicated to with updates and relevant information in a timely manner.



Alex Talks

Community Liaison Officer

E: alex.talks@mcclarengroup.com

T: 03330 161 581

A PIECE OF PORCHESTER HISTORY

The Porchester Centre has been part of Bayswater for almost 100 years and we are most grateful to the current General Manager, Simon Plummer, for sending us a copy of the original souvenir brochure for the "Paddington Central Baths".

The brochure dates from 1925, with the official opening performed by Alderman William G. Perring J.P. M.P. on 26 June.

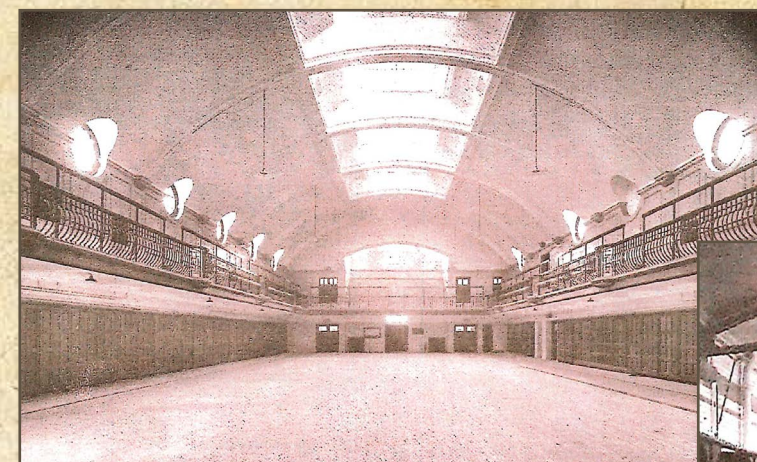
Here we have reproduced the introductory copy and some of the images and original captions from the brochure, which we are sure will be of interest to our readers.



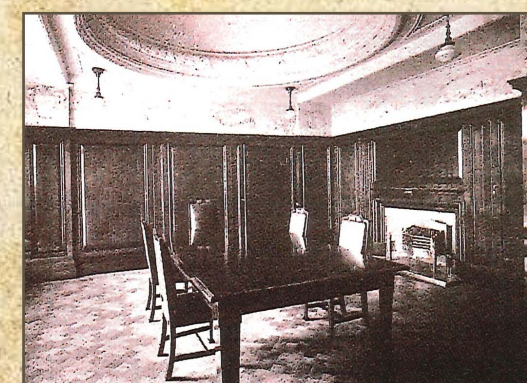
INTRODUCTORY

THE original Baths and Washhouses in Queen's Road, Bayswater, erected in 1874, were in the early part of the present century becoming old-fashioned and incapable of improvement on modern lines. The buildings occupied a site between premises owned by William Whiteley, Ltd., Queen's Road. In 1906, the Company approached the Council with the view to the purchase of the site and buildings, the sale being completed in 1910 for the sum of £82,000.

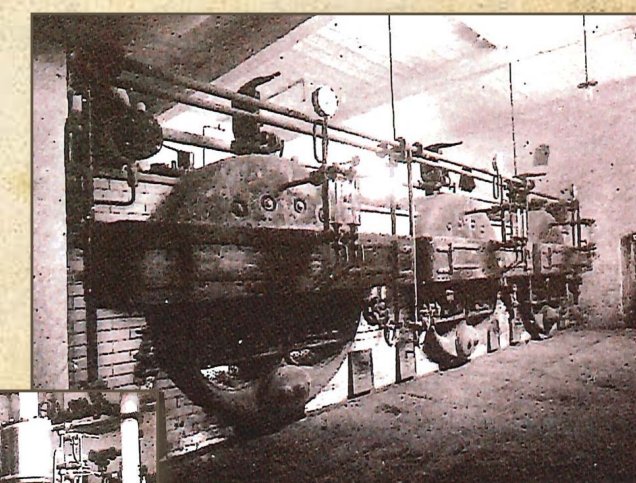
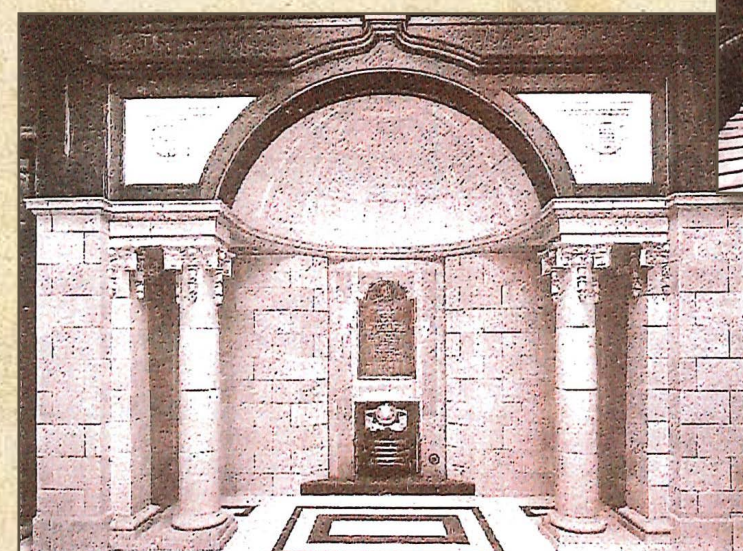
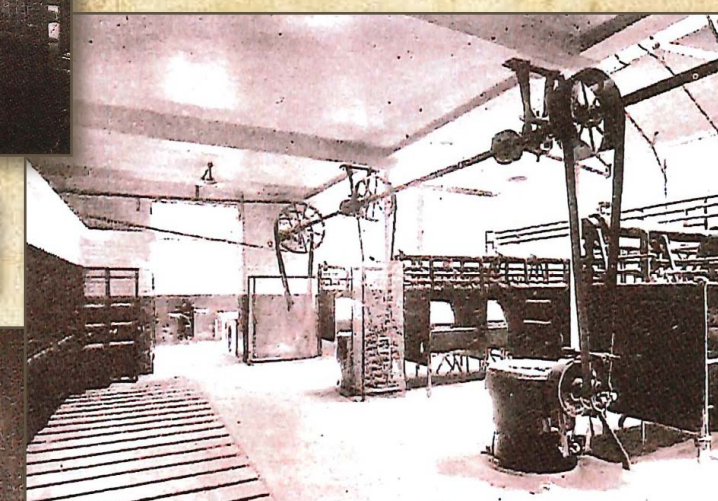
- The site of the present buildings, including the frontage in Porchester Road upon which it is proposed to erect a public hall and shops, was acquired in 1913 for the sum of £20,000.
- A scheme was prepared for the erection of Baths and Washhouses on the whole of the site and tenders were obtained; but the Great War necessitated the postponement of further progress.
- Upon the conclusion of hostilities, the abnormal conditions prevailing and the high building costs rendered it essential that a less ambitious scheme should be formulated. Accordingly, the Council decided to develop the frontage in Porchester Road on a revenue-producing basis, and the necessary Parliamentary powers were obtained in 1922 for the erection of a public hall and shops.
- The present scheme was adopted in December, 1921, with the object of providing buildings of a less expensive character, whilst at the same time supplying the accommodation necessary for the needs of the Borough.
- On the 27th February, 1923, tenders of Messrs. PERRY & Co. (Bow), Ltd., of £84,999 for the building works and of Messrs. Z. D. BERRY & Sons of £24,160 : 12 : 10 for the engineering works were accepted.
- Work was commenced on the 15th May, 1923, and on the 24th November, 1923, the foundation stone was laid by the Mayor, Alderman H. V. KENYON, J.P., together with a companion stone by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Alderman W. G. PERRING, J.P., M.P., and Alderman Lt.-Col. Sir GEO. HANDOVER, O.B.E.
- The Opening took place on Friday, 26th June, 1925, the Mayor, Councillor Colin STANLEY CROSSE, J.P., being in the Chair. The Ceremony was performed by the Chairman of the of the Baths and Washhouses Committee, Alderman W. G. PERRING, J.P., M.P.



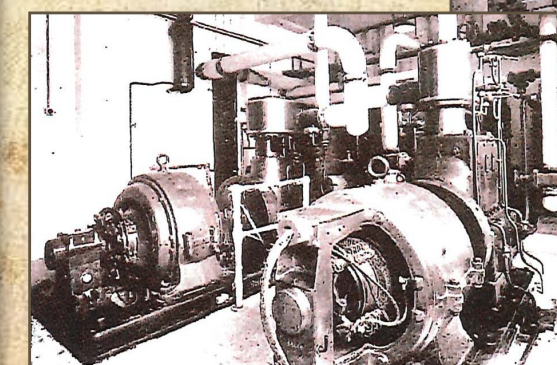
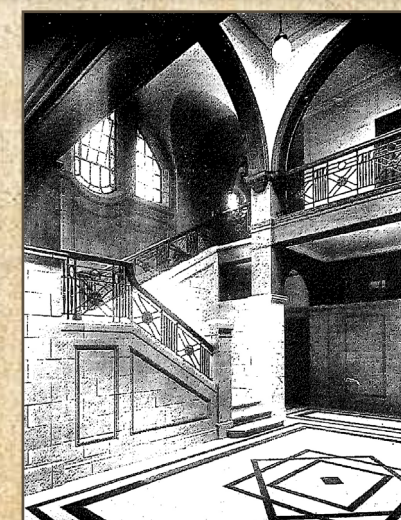
Left: "First Class Swimming Pond with flooring for Winter use." and below "Second Class Swimming Pond".



Above: "Committee Room", right "Public Laundry" and below "Commemorative Tablet over Fireplace in Entrance Hall".



Above: "Boiler House", left "Generating Plant" and far left "Main Entrance Hall".



On these pages Christopher continues his pair of articles, focusing here on the East-West Cycle Superhighway, which he first wrote about in the Spring 2014 edition of this publication.

When I took over as Editor of the SEBRA Newsletter from David Brewin in 2006 I lived in Bayswater, but my wife Janet and I moved away to Somerset, where we now live, in January 2010. Thanks to the Internet, I was able to carry on until I stepped down in late 2016.

While still Editor, I became more and more uncomfortable about the ambitious plans for dedicated Cycle Superhighways right across London, and said so in SEBRA NEWS for Spring 2014, in an article (unusually signed with my name, and reproduced below) in the first ever A4 issue of the magazine. I said then, in a 'Safety Valve' article entitled 'Beware the Boris Cycling Steamroller', that I was worried '... that the interests of other road users—especially the hard-pressed private motorist—will be ground down by the mayoral steamroller. Let's hope that we're wrong, but I report here on aspects of the presentation of the Mayor's "Vision" which make me more than a bit suspicious.'

CYCLE SUPERHIGHWAYS - A BIG (AND VERY EXPENSIVE) MISTAKE?

Christopher Tanous
Ilminster, Somerset



Traffic "choking" - Bayswater Road looking west along an unused cycle lane.

It now appears that my 2014 concerns were well founded. Quite recently I read an interesting article in a leading magazine in which the author reported

that he had studied London-bound vehicles in a stretch of road of which the new Cycleway had taken up half the previous two-lane highway.

Below: SEBRA NEWS - Spring 2014 Edition. The author, then Editor of this magazine wrote "The basic idea is a good one.... so commuting cyclists can pedal in safety..." but questioned whether the Mayor or city planners could be trusted not to steamroller the interests of other road users, particularly the "hard pressed private motorist". Seven years later it would seem that these concerns were fully justified.



Above: The London Mayor at the time, Boris Johnson, playfully depicted riding a pedal-driven steamroller. Readers can view the page shown here and read what is a most interesting article at: bit.ly/SEBRAsteamroller



Looking east along Bayswater Road - The cycle lanes are very rarely used, but they have a huge impact on traffic flow.

In an hour he counted well over 1,000 cars and other motor vehicles queuing towards Central London, but only a handful of cycles using their dedicated lane in the same direction.

It seems to me that these observations are a powerful indictment of the original idea, but the stretch of road observed was somewhere in the outer-London suburbs. I have asked that a survey be conducted of suitable roads in or near SEBRALAND but the reduced traffic levels due to COVID-19 mean that it is not worth conducting such a survey in time for the Spring 2021 issue, but watch this space!

Since I published that article in 2014 much has happened. Some permanent Cycleways have indeed been constructed, some—especially those near Lancaster Gate—causing long delays to ordinary motorists. I understand that the ambitious plan of constructing a

Cycle Super Highway along the stretch of the A40 (once a Motorway) between White City and Paddington has been dropped, but that the very lightly-used dedicated cycle lanes at the lower end of Westbourne Terrace do cause motorists all sorts of problems in that road and in Sussex Gardens.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE OF THE LONGER-TERM EFFECTS

My wife and I have been back to Bayswater quite a few times since we moved away from London in early 2010, and regular readers may recall my complaint, on page seven of the Spring 2017 issue of SEBRA NEWS W2 about the expensive delays we suffered one late morning to a westbound taxi journey from the West End to visit SEBRALAND, due to the then new cycleways constructed in the narrow section of Bayswater Road between Victoria Gate and Lancaster Gate.



The Cycle Superhighway at the southern end of Westbourne Street.



AN ONGOING TOPIC
The Cycle Superhighway has been featured here since 2013.



GREEN LIVING IN SEBRALAND

We live in a great location, although our streets are congested and despite being close to the A40, we are lucky to have easy access to several green areas.

There is an increased awareness of the environmental impacts on the way we live and many London Councils (including Westminster City Council) have announced a climate emergency and are developing action plans to improve the environment we live in.

POLLUTION DANGER

There is also an increasing awareness of the health implications of both air and noise pollution which impacts us all, but has a particularly severe impact on vulnerable members of our community such as children, the elderly and the sick. The air we breathe, for example, is heavily polluted and affects our health whether we sit in a private car or a bus, walk or cycle around our area, as well as when we go for a stroll or a run in Hyde Park.

CHANGE IS NEEDED

Inge Lyngborg



Something has to change and we therefore thought it would be useful to have a look at what we as residents and businesses can do to protect the environment and our health. The idea is to create a green forum in our area (**#greenBAYSWATER** perhaps), where we share ideas and try ways to live in a more green way. We have also spoken to Westminster City Council who have agreed that we can be a test area for trying new green initiatives.

Our thinking is that this would be an ongoing initiative, which we build on over time. We will be publishing a feature in each issue of **SEBRA NEWS W2** to keep the momentum going. We have also been given a page on the SEBRA website to provide links and additional information as the initiative hopefully expands.



Making a START

In order to make a start we thought we would create a list of improvements that we can all consider to help us live and work in a more environmentally friendly way. Some of the items on the list are relevant to all of us, some depend on what type of building you live in, and others depend on whether you have flexibility to choose your own suppliers.

As with any change, what matters is to make a start. So please just look at the list and perhaps choose one or two actions you can take now.

Although, we can affect a lot of change ourselves, there are a number of initiatives that we can only succeed in if Westminster Council is willing to support us. The good news is that the Council is committed for Westminster to be carbon neutral by 2040 and to achieve this, we need to start making real progress as soon as possible.



Food composting - every little helps.

ENERGY SUPPLY

- Purchase energy on green tariffs
- Install green power generation at home

GREEN SHOPPING HABITS

- Choose products with a long shelf life
- Buy locally produced products/seasonal produce
- Choose to buy products with less packaging
- Use 'Click and Collect' whenever possible

GREEN SUPPLIERS

Ask workers at your property to confirm that they will act in an environmentally friendly manner (e.g. avoid idling their motors, recycling where possible and disposing of their packaging in the appropriate way)

GREEN TRANSPORT

- Travel actively (walk, run or cycle...)
- Choose electric/hybrid cars and if you are buying a new car look for the least polluting vehicle
- Switch your car engine off when you are stationary
- Reduce the number of times that you fly

MAKE YOUR HOME GREENER

- Get a smart meter
- Look for an opportunity to install double glazing
- Make sure your home is fully insulated
- If you have a suitable location get a compost bin

LIVE GREENER

- Reduce your personal energy use
- Switch off your electronic devices such as computers and laptops when you aren't using them
- Take shorter showers and fewer baths
- Reduce food waste
- Repair rather than replace whenever possible
- Share items with neighbours
- Dispose of items responsibly
- Buy second-hand clothes and goods



Smart meters are a smart choice.

CITY COUNCIL MATTERS

Some of the things that we need Westminster City Council to do:

- *Implement and enforce initiatives that stop engine idling among the Council suppliers and contractors, among businesses such as construction companies operating within the Council and among the public.*
- *Install even more electrical charging points (and ensure that there is a common standard for the charging points).*
- *Let residents have double glazing in all properties, including buildings in conservation areas and listed buildings.*
- *Extend the food waste scheme to Bayswater - You will find links and details on the SEBRA website.*
- *Actively support South East Bayswater in becoming a Clean Air Village so our businesses can appear in the London-wide clean air business directory and benefit from the support available.*
- *Help us develop real practical examples of how different types of buildings in our area can become more environmentally friendly. What may work for a housing estate or a mansion block (e.g. the installation of solar panels), may not work for a flat in a Victorian terraced property or vice-versa. We want to work with the Council on developing this view.*
- *Protect green outdoor spaces and the people using them, by formally adopting the World Health Organisation upper limits for air quality and noise or being even more ambitious.*



Electric vehicles are green and clean.



Did you know?

You can apply for an allotment to grow your own vegetables! Hop over to our page on the SEBRA website and follow the link provided.



Government initiative: THE GREEN HOMES GRANT

If you're a homeowner or residential landlord you can apply for a Green Homes Grant voucher towards the cost of installing energy efficient improvements to your home.

Improvements could include insulating your home to reduce your energy use or installing low-carbon heating to lower the amount of carbon dioxide your home produces.

Green Homes Grant vouchers must be redeemed, and the works completed, by 31 March 2022.

Just follow the link on the SEBRA website.

Solar panel installation - just one example of what Government grants can be used for.



Web Links

We have covered just a few subjects and ideas on these two pages, but there is a wealth of information online. The links mentioned here, and many more, can be found on the SEBRA website at:

www.sebra.org.uk/greenbayswater

WCC CLIMATE EMERGENCY WEBSITE

Why not take a look at Westminster City Council's new Climate Emergency website. You can provide them with information on what action you are taking and what action you would like them to take on climate change in areas such as business, workplaces, homes and communities, low-carbon energy, travel and transport and waste - **Link on the SEBRA website.**





CYCLING: INACTION ISN'T AN OPTION

Flora McFarlane
Westminster Cycling Campaign

INTRODUCTION

It's no wonder transport policy gets emotions running so high and stirs up such debate; whether we like it or not, we are affected by street design and its impact on our daily lives whenever we step outside our front door.

That can mean being stuck in a traffic jam at rush-hour taking the children to school, or (pre-Covid) squashed up against a stranger on the tube, or braving busy streets on a bike on the way home from work; how our streets are designed makes a material impact on our wellbeing, health and comfort.

DOES WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL DESIGN STREETS FOR PEOPLE - OR VEHICLES?

Although around two thirds of Westminster's households **don't have access to a car**, the majority of its road space and investment is allocated to motor vehicles. Our streets are shared public spaces, yet most of that space is given over to moving or parked vehicles, with precious little left over for walking, cycling or simply occupying.

ROAD DANGER

I'm not alone in thinking that a street should be safe for anyone aged from 8 to 80 to walk or cycle, but currently Westminster's roads are a long way from that standard.

In fact, in 2019, Westminster had the **highest number of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured** of all London boroughs: 102 pedestrians and 70 cyclists, well above that of all other boroughs. It has held this dubious honour for most of the last ten years.

TIME FOR CHANGE ON OUR STREETS

These shocking numbers should be enough cause for the Council to act. However, it wasn't until 2020 and the realities of a global pandemic that we saw any meaningful change towards safety for active travel on our roads. Last year saw rapid change over the course of a few weeks, in particular for cycling. Four-lane roads such as Bayswater Road, which previously had very limited space allocated to cycling at all, were given wide cycle lanes in either direction.

BUT WHY ISN'T THE COUNCIL ACTING QUICKLY ON AN EVEN BIGGER CRISIS - THE CLIMATE?

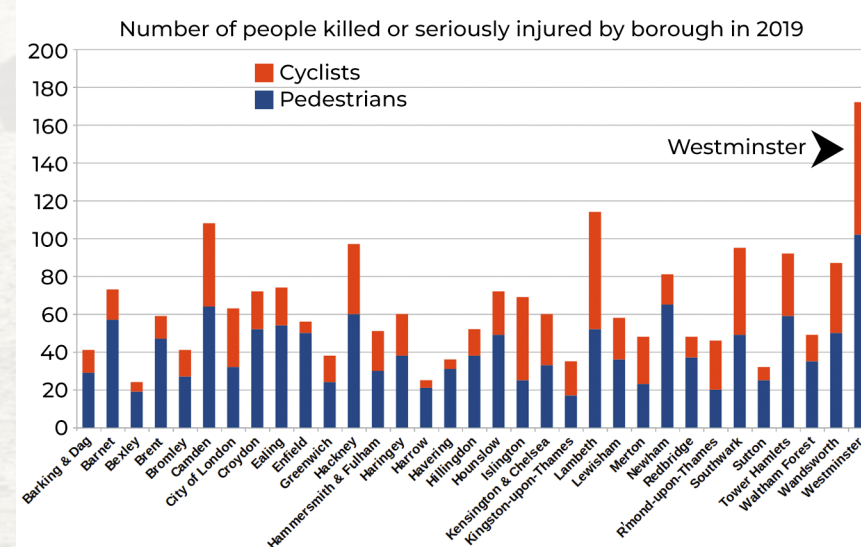
The Council acted this quickly for a public health pandemic. The question is: why hasn't it acted as urgently for the biggest environmental crisis of our lifetimes?

Transport is now the UK's number one source of carbon emissions. As other industries have steadily reduced their emissions, transport has remained stubbornly high

and has barely registered any reduction. With 95% of London's roads controlled by boroughs, why is Westminster not addressing this aggressively as part of its climate emergency?

It seems that Westminster's only solution is electric vehicle infrastructure. Electric vehicles can and will help but they are not the most effective form of investment. They still need energy at source, they still require a huge carbon investment to manufacture, and they still have half the particulate emissions of combustion engines. Not only that, but they occupy a larger amount of space on the roads than any other form of 'clean' transport, leading to greater inequalities in road space allocation. Should the Council, under its 'City for All' mandate, really be prioritising transport that's only available to a minority? Many experts agree that we don't just need cleaner vehicles, we need far fewer of them:

"If Climate Safe targets are to be met, overall traffic levels must reduce substantially... provisional work has found that even if



The number of pedestrians and cyclists killed and seriously injured is far higher in Westminster than other boroughs.

all new cars were ULEVs by 2035 (80% battery electric, 20% plug-in hybrids), a 58% reduction in car mileage between 2016 and 2035 would be needed for car carbon dioxide emissions to be in line with a 'well below 2°C' pathway."

(Climate Safe Streets: Delivering Zero Carbon Roads in London by 2030 by London Cycling Campaign).

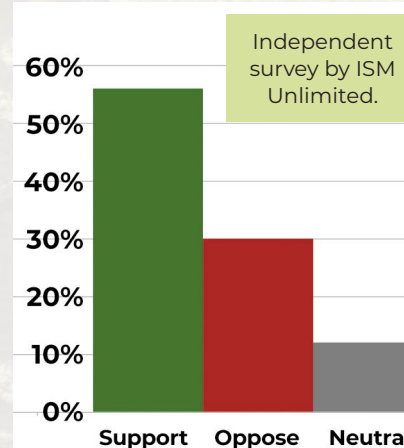
There needs to be a massive shift towards walking, cycling and public transport for the majority of journeys to make our streets 'climate safe'.

ACTIVE TRAVEL IS A BIG PART OF THE SOLUTION, BUT WE DON'T FEEL SAFE TO CYCLE

Imperial College recently backed this up with a study showing that even switching from car to bike one day a week makes a significant impact on our personal carbon footprint. So why don't more of us cycle?

To answer this question, think about a trip you take often; perhaps to the shops, work or school, or, before COVID-19 struck, to a pub. Now think about what the most comfortable option is for you... Odds are that you wouldn't feel safe making that journey by bike.

You wouldn't be alone. In the National Travel Attitudes Study, two-thirds of adults agreed that "it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads", with women more likely than men to agree (71% to 61%).



Support levels among local residents for the Kensington High Street cycle lane.



All ages can cycle when lanes are protected.

Feeling safe while cycling requires physical protection from larger, faster moving vehicles. That can be as simple as 'wands', slim plastic bollards bolted down at intervals along the bike lane. Physical protection, however, has been distinctly lacking from any Westminster Council cycling scheme - during COVID or before (Westminster's segregated cycle routes are on Transport for London roads).

Considering one third of all car trips in London are less than 2km, making it safer to switch to a bike would have a dramatic impact on our environment, mental and physical health.

WHEN IT *IS* SAFE, PEOPLE START CYCLING

Take the controversial High Street Kensington cycle lane that was recently removed. Thanks to providing physical separation

from traffic, the number of people cycling doubled. Doubled! And this is all while congestion levels stayed the same. The scheme was also popular: the only independent survey showed that almost double the number of local residents supported the scheme than opposed it.

If you can't even begin to imagine a reality where it truly is easier to get around by bike, try to recall the streets during lockdown in March 2020. Where you could walk into the road safely without fear of speeding cars, electric or otherwise.

THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO ACT NOW

Westminster City Council needs to start on the journey now of reallocating resources to a future that is beneficial for the majority of its residents and the planet before it's too late.

TAKE ACTION!

Do you agree that more needs to be done to address these issues? How can you help make sure the majority of residents - not the most visible - are provided for?

• Join our group!

As the Westminster branch of London Cycling Campaign, we'll be launching a new campaign soon to lobby the Council on these issues. We need your help - please email cyclist@westminstercyclists.org.uk

• Use your vote!

Mayoral and GLA elections are taking place soon. Candidates have very different opinions on whether to progress or regress provision for safe cycling. Have a look at candidates' policies before voting.



In this latest instalment of our "Blue Plaques" series Professor Lewis Lesley points his spyglass at two people who spent time living in SEBRALAND. There's a strong family connection and two very interesting tales to tell. Once again we thank Professor Lesley for this regular feature which is very popular amongst our members.

Professor Lewis Lesley

With a Prime Minister who thinks he is a latter day Winston Churchill, some thoughts from others about the subject are revealing. Also revealing is how two people from the elite of British Society took very different stands about needs and national policy. And we cannot ignore the difference between male and female aspirations.

This article looks at two people born in the 19th Century only 32 years apart, one leading a rather dissolute life and living only 45 years, the other 82 years during which campaigns for social justice were the driving force.



**LORD RANDOLPH HENRY SPENCER CHURCHILL
1849 - 1895**

First up is Sir Winston Churchill's father, Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill, who was born on 13 February 1849, the son of John Spencer Churchill, 7th Duke of



Lord Randolph Churchill lived at No 2 Connaught Place, W2.

Marlborough, and Frances, Duchess of Marlborough. Once an adult he was part of the 19th Century 'Jet-Set' and a good friend of the Prince of Wales, no doubt sharing many interests and some pleasures in common. His intellect, quick wit and cutting sarcasm led to his rapid rise in politics after being elected an MP in 1874 for the Woodstock Constituency, having first taken the precaution of marrying the beautiful Jennie Jerome the daughter of rich Americans from New York. In the same year his son Winston was born. Randolph was certainly in a hurry.

His political career enjoyed a meteoric rise to be Chancellor of the Exchequer during which time he coined the phrase 'Tory democracy'. It crashed after he resigned in the 1880s. Picking up the pieces he set out to see the world, visiting South Africa, Germany and Russia where he enjoyed using medical spas. In 1894 he and Lady Randolph set off on a world tour, even

though his Doctor advised against it, but it was cut short when he was taken ill and they rushed back to Britain in late 1894. He was described as being weak and like a child.

Various explanations for this have been advanced but his health was certainly not improved by very heavy smoking and drinking, nor by periods of intensive work followed by exhaustion and depression. His health continued to worsen with speech difficulties and dizziness. In his last speech in the House of Lords his speech was so slurred that many could not understand what he was saying and one of the Lords (Rosebery) commented that **"He was the chief mourner at his own protracted funeral, a public pageant of gloomy years"**.

His son Winston also became Chancellor of the Exchequer and was his biographer but was unable to specify the cause of his father's early death aged only 45. Many commentators speculated that it was a venereal disease but his wife did not have this, nor were their children born with any infections that might have been caused by one. There was plenty of speculation about his sex life, including a mysterious French Mistress.

His health deterioration and final demise could also be explained by a brain tumour, for which at the time there was no certain diagnosis and definitely no treatment. During his last days he was in a coma from pneumonia and kidney failure. He died on 24 Jan 1895.



**LADY VIOLET BONHAM-CARTER
1887-1969**

Our second Blue Plaque is in honour of Lady Violet Bonham Carter, Baroness Asquith of Yarnbury, DBE. She was born in Hampstead on 15 April 1887 into a wealthy political family. Her father Herbert Asquith became Prime Minister. She had four brothers, so she and her mother were out numbered!

In 1891, when she was just four years old, her mother died from Typhoid. In 1894 her father married Margot Tennant, who became her stepmother. This was not the warmest relationship so she valued her closest friend Venetia Stanley.

Her brothers were sent to Public School but she had no formal education, being brought up by governesses. She did however have an independent mind and greatly appreciated art and literature. Later she travelled and spent time in France and Germany to add foreign languages to her skills. She came out as a débutante in 1905 when she was presented to the King and Queen at the start of her first season in 'society'.

She met and fell in love with John Hamilton Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen but he had a serious motor-car accident in 1909. They were engaged at his bedside, shortly before he died.

Among the many places she lived included 10 Downing Street, when her father was Prime Minister. Staying in the Liberal Party embrace, she married her father's private secretary, Maurice Bonham-Carter in 1915, and produced four children. He was knighted in 1916.

Her brother Raymond was killed at the front in 1916, even though her father had arranged for him to do war service away from the fighting. Her father was forced to resign over the disaster of the Somme and was replaced by Lloyd George in 1916. This greatly upset her on the unfairness of politics.

She was a fierce critic of the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919, and in 1923 warned: **"In Germany today one feels there is always a revolution in the offing, if not in full swing. A new and unsteady Democracy is struggling on to its feet, and we've got to keep it there; we've got to help it and back it up. French action in the Ruhr is threatening with extinction this new spirit which is struggling for life, and if the German workers are defeated in their fight against militarism it may have far-reaching and disastrous international consequences, for which our children and the children of the world will have to pay"**. Prophetic words indeed.



Lady Violet Bonham-Carter lived at No 43 Gloucester Square, W2.

She was a regular visitor to Chartwell, Winston Churchill's Kent country house. She became his closest female friend, after his wife Clementine. Despite this she supported her father's political work. She was also a popular speaker and in the 1930's spoke about the growing menace of Nazi Germany, as did Winston Churchill. After Hitler was elected in 1933 she observed: **"In Germany freedom as we conceive it seems to have perished in the last few weeks, in the twinkling of an eye, almost without a struggle, and given place to a nightmare reign of force whose horror is how this nightmare can have arisen - how it has become possible. I can truthfully say that nothing within my political memory has ever moved me more deeply to horror and indignation**

than recent events in Germany." She was even more horrified by the Nazi persecution of Jewish people.

She stood for Parliament twice but did not win a seat. She was however twice elected as the President of the Liberal Women's Federation, a post she held in 1923-1925 and 1939-1945. Then she became the President of the Liberal Party, the first woman ever, in 1947. She was also invited to become a Governor of the BBC.

Despite failing to win a seat in Parliament, she nonetheless used her effective oratory to campaign for equal pay for women and on behalf of various Liberal Politicians, including Jo Grimond (her son-in-law), Jeremy Thorpe, and her son Mark. As part of the Coronation Celebrations in 1953 she was made a Dame Commander (DBE) in the honours list and with her husband, they now each had their own title. Later she was part of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and spoke in 1960 on the BBC in support of a boycott of South Africa.

Moving in political circles she knew most if not all of the top politicians and statesmen of the time, so it came as no surprise to be asked to write a biography of Sir Winston Churchill, which appeared in two volumes: **"Winston Churchill : As I knew him"** (1965 the year he died) and then **"Winston Churchill: an intimate portrait"**. In 1964 she became a Life Peer, taking the title Baroness Asquith of Yarnbury and spoke in the House of Lords on Abortion and Homosexual Reforms.

She died on 19 February 1969 aged 82 and is buried in St. Andrew's Churchyard, Mells, Somerset. Her grand-daughter Helen keeps the family name alive, often acting the parts of people her grandmother met and knew well. So a liberal aristocrat lived nearly twice as long as a Tory Grandee, who sought power and fame and in the end lost both. They share two things in common, living in Bayswater and knowing Winston Churchill, though possibly Violet Bonham-Carter knew him rather better than his own father, who was more interested in pleasures of the flesh. Both of our Bayswaterians have left legacies. Lord Randolph left Winston, and Lady Violet left biographies of Winston. Helen Bonham-Carter's acting shows what her grandmother's generation achieved.



Health & Wellbeing



SEBRA Member Lisa Powell is a Registered Nutritional Therapist (CNHC) and Nutritionist (mBANT), Metabolic Balance Coach and Weight Loss Specialist. She also holds a Diploma in Performance Nutrition and runs corporate nutrition programmes.

NOT ALL 'HEALTHY' LABELS ARE HEALTHY!

be a necessity, but there are often other factors driving this trend. In my opinion plant-based products aren't a substitute for dairy as they don't contain the same nutrient profile, so you may be missing out on important vitamins and minerals.

Dairy is a big consideration here, and our ability to absorb calcium from plant-based sources can be hindered by naturally occurring compounds in plants such as oxalates and phytates. That's not to say plant-based products can't fit into a balanced diet, just be aware they are not always an adequate substitute for dairy. If you are choosing dairy-free foods, opt for fortified products where possible.

Fat-free. People often choose fat-free products to help with weight loss. It is true fat contains more calories than the other macronutrients, but that doesn't mean fat-free foods are healthier. Fat makes food taste better, so these products typically contain added sugar and salt to compensate. And fat helps us absorb fat-soluble vitamins in food, making it less nutritious.

Sugar-free. I'm all for cutting back on added sugars! But sugar-free products often swap sugar for artificial sweeteners, which carry their own health risks. Many 'healthy' products contain other natural sugars such as dates, maple syrup and honey, and can be high in calories and sugar content. So sugar-free doesn't necessarily mean reduced overall sugars or calories.



HOW TO AVOID THESE PITFALLS?

Learn to read labels and remember it is rare that gluten-free or dairy-free products will be the healthier option. As a general rule of thumb the more ingredients a food contains, the more processed it is, and best kept to a minimum.

I always advocate moderation in all things nutrition, and make sure clients understand that removing food groups has consequences - generally a more refined, processed and unhealthy product. And remember a gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free cake is still a cake, and should be kept as a treat!

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Why are your feet so important? Could they be the underlying reason for a problem elsewhere in your body?

Your foot is made up of 26 bones, 30 ligaments and 29 muscles which provide structure, stability and movement to the rest of your body.

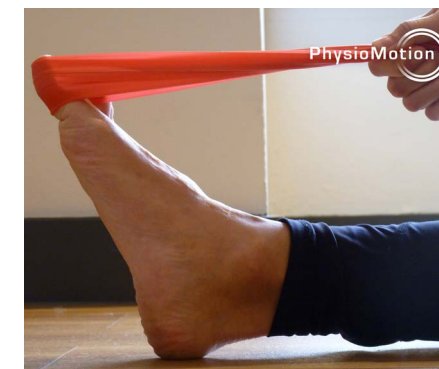
In *"Philosophy of the Foot"* by Taymour Soomro, the shoe maker describes the foot as the *"noblest part of the body. It is the body's beast of burden. It is the foot soldier for the body's army."* This indicates how important they are to ensure the rest of our body can work normally.

But what can happen when things are going wrong in your foot?

Common conditions that can happen locally to your foot are:

- Plantar fasciitis - pain in the heel when initially walking
- Bunion/hallux valgus - increased bone around the base of the big toe
- Morton's neuroma - inflammation of a nerve between the webspace of your toes
- Acquired flat foot syndrome - injury to tibialis posterior (muscle that supports your arch) resulting in the arch of the foot flattening

Changes in your foot strength, mobility and control can also have adverse effects on the rest of your body causing



Resisted big toe flexion exercise.

Zoe Birch is a Chartered Physiotherapist and founder of PhysioMotion, which operate four London clinics as well as providing physiotherapy at home. Here Zoe asks a simple question:

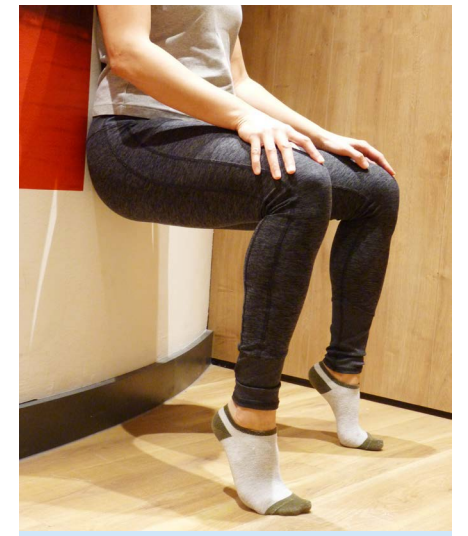
WHY ARE FEET SO IMPORTANT?

problems such as back, hip, ankle and knee pain. These can occur due to:

- Change in gait pattern
- Reduced control when landing with impact such as jumping or running
- Stiffness in the whole foot or parts resulting in compensatory movements to bypass the immobile area
- Ill-fitted shoes

So how can we avoid these problems and keep our feet healthy?

Your feet are great at telling you when something is not quite right, it could be a pain in a particular area or increased hard skin in another. At this point it is a great time to get advice before more permanent changes happen or pain appears further up the leg.



Soleus wall heel raise exercise.

If you are experiencing pain in the feet, this is where it would be beneficial to see a physiotherapist or podiatrist to provide you with an in-depth assessment of your foot mobility, strength and stability in static and dynamic movements, and gait analysis. This would be assessed in relation to how the rest of your body is performing these tasks as well.

This is helpful for you to understand what the cause of the pain is and help you make the best treatment plan to alleviate the pain or be referred for further investigation with a foot and ankle consultant.

Prevention is better than cure!

With a lot of musculoskeletal problems caused by adaptive movement patterns or overloading soft tissue structure, these can be avoided with preventive exercises such as:

- Heel raises
- Resisted ankle and toe movements
- Toe spreading
- Arch shortening
- Balance exercises

See the photos on this page for some examples of these exercises. So get started working those foot muscles and don't neglect them in your exercise programme!



Resisted ankle inversion exercise.

Simple things that you can do are to ensure that you keep your nails short and that skin is maintained clean and soft, especially between the toes, to reduce broken skin and fungus growing. If you find it difficult to perform this then it is worth finding a chiropodist in the local area or who can perform a home visits.

They are also great at letting you know when the biomechanics of your feet are changing and it would be beneficial to see a physiotherapist or podiatrist to assess these further and provide you with corrective exercises and/or orthotic devices such as an insole. A lot of foot conditions can be corrected before they become permanent and require surgical intervention if treated early.

PhysioMotion Ltd

www.physiomotionlimited.co.uk

020 3422 6655



From the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

Sue Price

Chairman, Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

Photography by Paul Shelley.

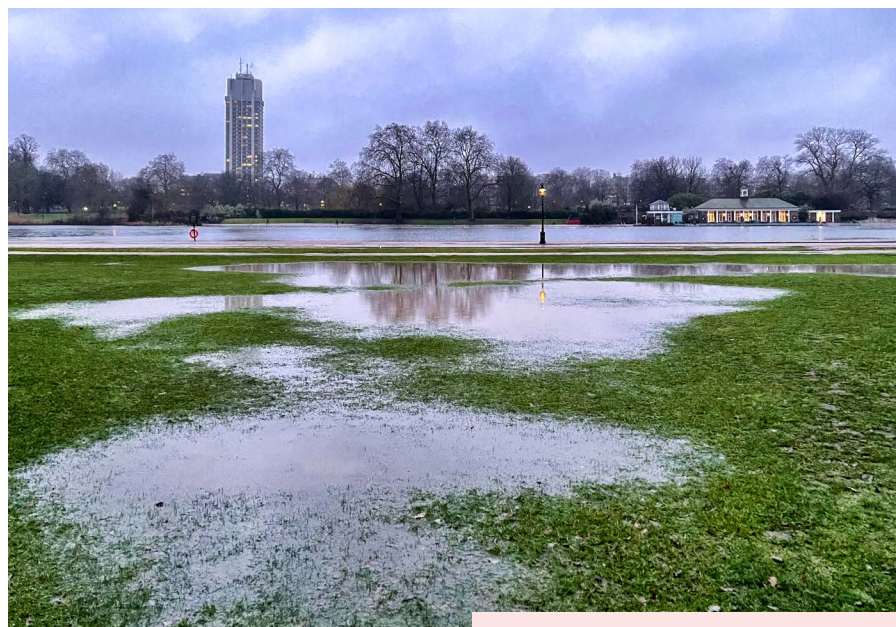
STORMS, FLOODS, SNOW AND ICE - WELCOME TO 2021!

We last wrote for SEBRA NEWS W2 in a glorious Autumn, we were restricted, it's true, but only to a certain extent and we were looking forward to getting together for Christmas.

It's probably just as well that we had no idea what was in store.

Storm Bella raged through the parks on Boxing Day night. Luckily it was at a time when the parks are closed. No trees were lost and the twigs, leaves and branches, scattered everywhere, were quickly cleared up by the teams the next day. The parks were able to remain open during normal hours.

Floods have been astonishing. The massive amount of rainwater soaked slowly away after dramatic floods appeared. However the rain continued and before too long the ground was saturated. Whole areas turned into lakes and streams. Home schooling was



abandoned as children enjoyed wading through to the tops of their wellies.

Snow followed, not to a great depth, but enough for a population of snow people to appear on a clear Sunday morning. For small children it was the first snow some of them had seen in London.

Storm Bella brought floods to the Royal Parks, followed by a light blanket of snow.

Ice set hard the next day and with a glorious blue sky the home-schooling was once again abandoned. Some of us walked out very cautiously. Was this the time to break a wrist? How were those runners able to plough on at speed?

The temperatures stayed remarkably low for many days, the earth really was as hard as iron with a wind chill-factor in the low minus scale.

Lockdown in London again with schools closed has, once again, showed us how important the parks are. They have been very busy, especially at weekends, and tempers have been frayed on narrow paths, with four abreast groups, holding their position. No room for manoeuvre except onto muddy ground churned up by the unexpectedly heavy footfall in the depths of winter.

Tolerance and good manners are certainly called for.



WELCOME TO WOODEN SCULPTURAL TREATS

We can enjoy some recent additions to the north of both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Sculptor Tom Harvey has created, thanks to Mission Invertebrate (funded by the People's Postcode Lottery), sculptures using fallen or felled Park trees to give us some wooden gems to search out and enjoy.



Sculptor Tom Harvey has been busy.

In Hyde Park meadows, to the north of the nursery, there are two. One is a massive forked tree trunk with a magnificent dragon fly set against a city skyline and another showing a variety of pollinators. Both are lying, as if just fallen, on the grass. One is quite difficult to spot at a distance, so a happy surprise when you come across it. The colour of the treated wood glows in the winter light.

Just in time for Christmas four more were installed in the North Flower Walk in Kensington Gardens. They are all different shapes and sizes, one a tiny pollinator bench seat for children to sit on, another a centipede balance beam. Two are upright on firm bases, the nearest to the water depicts spangled water-beetles, and another is a detritivorea massive stag-beetle which looks rather like a lobster.

Tom the sculptor works both indoors and outdoors in a large barn workshop in a village in Berkshire. But his favourite thing is working on site especially in London parks when he can chat to passers-by. He uses only chainsaws of all sizes down to very tiny ones for the fine detail.

He comes from a family of painters and went to Lincoln School of Art but was frustrated by the lack of sculpture facilities so he left and worked in forestry and tree surgery before starting carving.

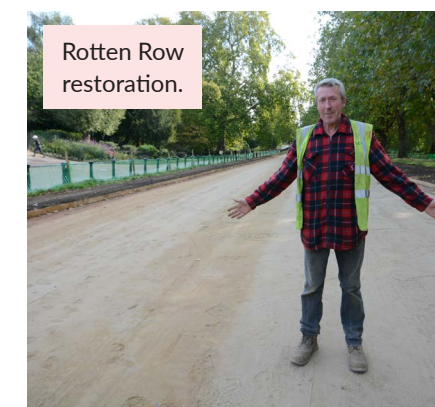
Plans are afoot to link up the very crowded area around the Italian gardens with this lesser known part of the Gardens so close by.

ROTTEN ROW REVIVED

An historic and very famous landmark is this 7k ride in Hyde Park. The good news is that 1k between Will to Win and the Lower Dell has been restored.

This stretch had become unusable. Large chunks of rubble had risen to the surface. Who knew that hard material from Blitz damage was buried here?

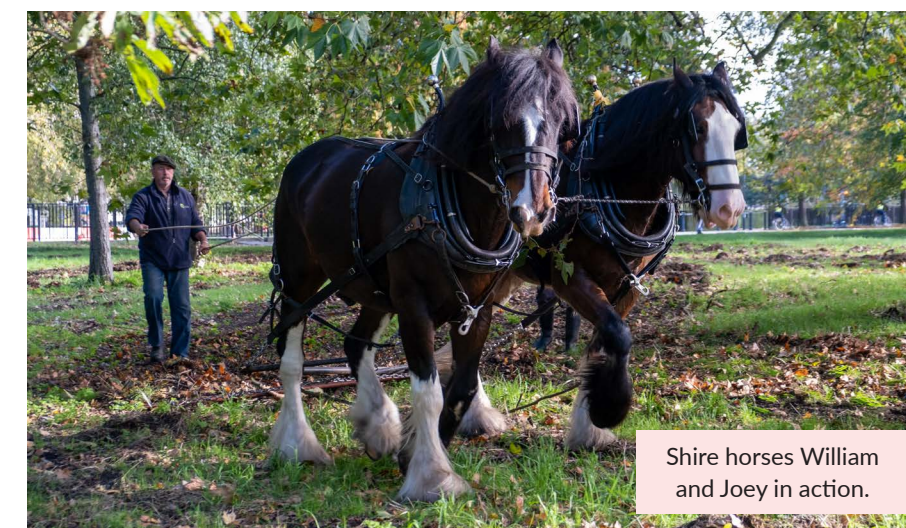
Other areas were compacted and the sand had drifted to one side so it had become very sloped. Very generous army funding meant it could be restored and maintained.



Rotten Row restoration.

The restoration was run by Talbot Farms Ltd who are normally busy at this time of year with the reinstatement of the Parade Ground following Winter Wonderland.

Compaction was ripped through, rubble crushed and edging boards installed. Nothing was disposed of so sustainability criteria were fully met. The old sand was cleaned and reused and the height of the sand on the sides of the ride was adjusted to make it level. It'll be good to see the Household Cavalry out there again training for guard changes or trooping, it's ages since we've seen them in action.



Shire horses William and Joey in action.

OPERATION CENTAUR

An exciting name for a great Parks sight.

If your timing is right (about mid-morning) in the Spring and Autumn, about three times a year, in both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens you may be able to see the shire horses in action. You'll know when a huge horse box lumbers slowly along Policeman's Path and you see pairs of ears just visible through the tiny window that you are in luck. They visit the rough meadow areas and spring harrow, seed and roll and towards the end of the year do a rough harrow, this last to take out the matted thatch.

We were lucky to see William and Joey in action on a glorious Autumn day. Their size is deceiving as their hooves are very light on the ground and cause far less damage than any mechanised piece of equipment. William is a youngster who came from a rescue centre where he was born; he didn't experience any neglect or ill treatment. Joey is the senior partner.

They are horse members of a group which live in Richmond Park and sadly are the last working horses in London. The Shires are becoming rather a rare breed. They work in blinkers and go at rather a quick pace, their handler either walking or riding behind depending on the day's job and chatting and encouraging them.

The light harrowing equipment occasionally upends amongst low hanging branches and they wait patiently while it is untangled. Their groom told me that this equipment is very light and easy for them. "If they stay in the fields all day and don't work they get depressed and lose muscle tone" which just about describes me after months of lockdown!



Toilets in Hyde Park, worth a visit to see the Jacob Epstein sculpture.

AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

A very important piece of information which you will need before you set off on your long walk round “our” two parks, and perhaps having enjoyed a coffee, is the location of the toilets.

There are quite a few, but not all are managed by The Royal Parks Contractors.

Theirs are extremely superior and worth noting.

Some, round the outside boundaries, are run by Westminster City Council and those at the cafés by the catering concessions.

All the Royal Parks toilets have been refurbished in the last few years. They close throughout the day for a short while for thorough cleaning. All four cost 20p (contactless) to use.

Kensington Gardens:

Mount Gate toilets are nestling rather discreetly in the shrubbery in a capacious building.

Marlborough Gate toilets are close to the Italian Gardens Cafe and are in a modern building.

Hyde Park:

These toilets are in older rather elegant buildings.

At the Look Out, in the centre of Hyde Park, the attractive building with a classical pediment has a garden in front with a wonderful Jacob Epstein sculpture installed to commemorate the Year of the Child. It's worth going to see, whether you need a pit stop or not.

At the Bandstand the toilets are in a substantial looking single-storey brick building. They are closed at the

an experiment. Heavily used benches get repainted annually. If it turns out that the unpainted slats weather well it will be a big saving in the maintenance budget. They will be monitored throughout the year.

You will have noticed that chairs, tables and benches have been removed from the kiosks and cafés. Piles are stacked at the catering hub in the centre of Hyde Park waiting for some easing of rules when eating and drinking will once again become a pleasure in the sunny park.

The four benches in the sun by the kiosk, looking towards the Albert Memorial and Hall are a favourite spot to catch the rays.

IS ANYTHING HAPPENING?

As we all know, events of all kinds have been off the books for a year. Everything in the end has had to be cancelled despite some early hopes.



UK holidays should mean more visitors to London.

It's frustrating for potential organisers and sportsmen and women, impoverishing for charities which depend on the fundraising and so sad for all of us who really enjoy the wide variety of activities which London has on offer.

moment for rewiring then refurbishing, so these may well be worth a visit when they reopen. This building has an extremely well stocked seasonal flowerbed to enjoy when you are there.

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

(with thanks to Tina Higginson)

Kensington Gardens... has benefitted from the addition of 31 extra benches for us to sit and enjoy when we can eventually go back to a more normal way of relaxing. 24 were bought before the COVID pandemic and seven more refurbished ones were passed on by Greenwich Park which were surplus to their needs.

Sixteen of these benches have been painted and placed around the Gardens. Eight have been installed in front of Kensington Palace. You may have noticed that they have unpainted slats with just the ends painted black. This is



31 extra benches have been installed in the Royal Parks.

Of course this particularly applies to the Royal Parks organisation who's budget has had a massive hole blown in it. Without Winter Wonderland the funding for all the Royal Parks has been seriously reduced. And of course all of last summer's concerts were cancelled and there isn't a lot of certainty about this summer.

On a very small scale we haven't been able to organise any of the usual events for our members to enjoy, particularly in the summer, so also haven't been able to raise any extra income which we like to do for funding some small projects for the Parks.

However.... There is something stirring!

Van Gogh ...Alive, a multi-sensory COVID secure, temporary exhibition is coming to the East Albert Lawn in the summer from June to October. It has travelled the world, has been under wraps for some months and will be welcomed here.

With more people staying in the UK for their summer holidays, it will be good to have something special to visit. The Exhibition Road museums are hoping that it will also persuade visitors to come to see them, and of course it will provide some much missed and needed income for the Royal Parks. It was recently presented to various representatives of local interest groups who were all supportive.

It will be fully accessible and so it is hoped that it will be enjoyed by everybody.

SPRING IS DEFINITELY SPRINGING

Despite my opening when everything about the weather seemed to be doing its very best to fling the worst possible conditions at us, there has recently been a softening and a bit of a warm up.

And this part of what we write for you all is the favourite, especially with our photographers.



Irises in bloom.



Snowdrops are starting to appear.

Early signs, even before Christmas, were in the large planters at Will to Win and the Lido Cafe. Dark red camellias and tall, strong dark wine-coloured hellebores looked striking. Despite the extremely low temperatures, when the softer plants looked extremely dead, the wilting lovelies seem to have lifted themselves up in the last few days. Boo to the person who stole one of the camellias...what miserable behaviour.



Edgeworthia. The author's favourite.

Snowdrops which have been planted in their thousands by volunteers in the last few years have begun to spread across grassy banks and could now even be described as a carpet in places. The mimosa outside the Old Police House has been showing its strong yellow for some weeks, but still not fully out. I expect it is flowering in wild hedges in the South of France as I write. Yellow mahonia has looked good and attractive to small birds for ages. The cyclamen coum, planted amongst the leaves in the grassy areas under the plane trees at Speakers Corner have also settled and are spreading happily. They are in all shades of pink and white.

The bedding plants, put out in the autumn, have weathered a pretty rough patch of weather and will recover for a spectacular Spring show. Daffodils and narcissi were struggling up through the flood water, crocuses have appeared on the grassy banks alongside Park Lane and I narrowly missed treading on an iris emerging through the grass by the Cavalry Memorial on South Carriage Drive, there were more to follow.

The daphne in the South Flower walk is worth having a really good sniff at.

My favourite flower, which I will share, is by the Albert Memorial close to the kiosk.

It is called an edgeworthia. The shrub looks like nothing much in the summer with very take it or leave it foliage. And in the winter it entirely loses its leaves. It has a completely bald look. But at this time of year, even with ice dripping off its tight curled buds, you can see a hint of the crown of yellow flowers about to emerge. There are still no leaves, just these mystery flowers. And when they are fully out they make a magnificent show-stopping display. Their strong chrome yellow making you think of Chinese vases or lamp bases.

I expect you all have your favourites which, if you are a regular visitor, will be something you look out for.

I hope that, attached to this piece, will be plenty of photos of some of the flowers I have mentioned. If you have photos of your own special plants do forward them to us.

Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens

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Political Commentary



Karen Buck MP (Lab)
Westminster North

We can, at last, begin to see the way out of the pandemic, thanks to the ability of the NHS to deliver the vaccination programme at a scale and speed we could scarcely have imagined possible.

WORKING FOR DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES AND INVESTING IN RECOVERY

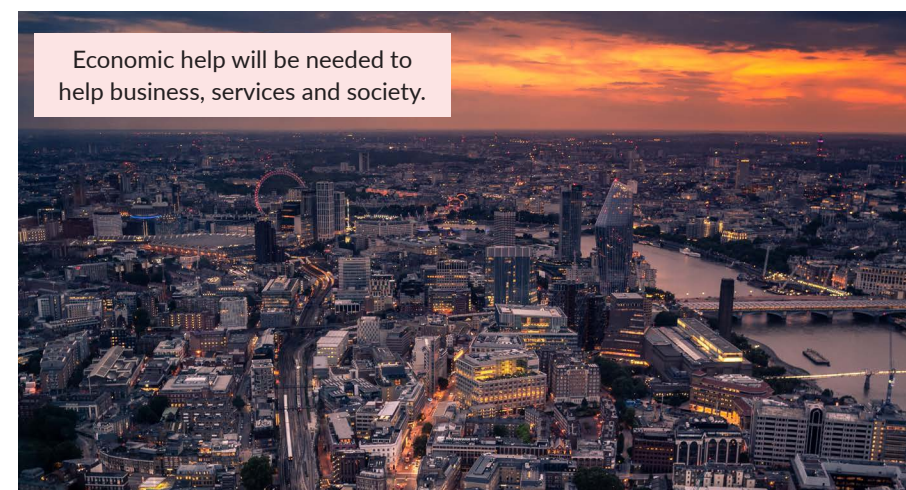
This is a genuine success story and worthy of celebration and our thanks to those who have worked so incredibly hard to make it happen. At the same time we need to know that it is sufficiently comprehensive in its coverage to protect us and to help ensure that new variants cannot take hold. As I write Westminster seems to have the lowest vaccination rate in the country. As a general rule, poorer neighbourhoods have lower vaccination rates and we have always had to work harder to improve preventive health care in our most deprived communities. However, vaccination levels are still low almost Westminster wide.

How much of this is due to inaccurate population data, or people leaving London and how much to anxiety about the vaccine (stoked up by massive disinformation on social media) is as yet unclear, but it is critically important that we understand it and get our responses right, in the interests of public health

and to restart the economy. We know that we need a high level of coverage overall in order to reduce the risk of new outbreaks so everyone has a stake in making sure no neighbourhoods or communities are left behind.

Recovery there will be - I've no doubt about that, and our sheer relief as and when restrictions ease over the spring may mask some other issues that must be dealt with. We will only succeed in 'building back better' if we recognise an important truth revealed by the pandemic - we are all left vulnerable if some are left vulnerable. We have experienced a combination of the worst death rate and the deepest economic shock anywhere, and whilst few are immune from the consequences it is painfully clear that Black and minority ethnic communities and more deprived neighbourhoods have suffered most.

What seems to me to be obvious is that we shouldn't cut corners when it comes to investing in the recovery. I have many disagreements with this government but the decision to spend big last summer to prevent the economy from collapsing was the right one. Help should not be withdrawn too quickly, and should be adapted to make not just the economy but public services and civic society fit for the future.



Economic help will be needed to help business, services and society.

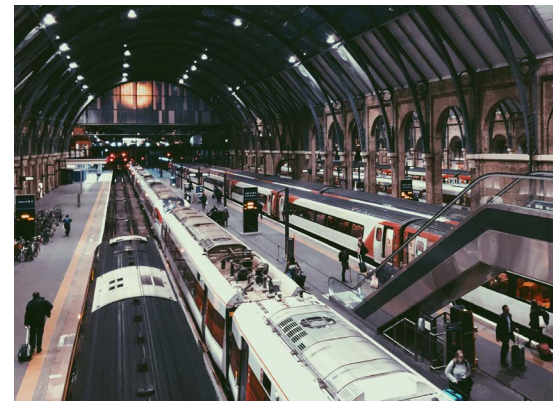
GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS

One of the most pressing issues will be addressing the future of our town and city centres. Some of the changes forced on us by the pandemic have intensified existing trends - like the shift to online shopping, more home working and less commuting. Retail, hospitality and creative businesses and jobs have been especially hard hit, as we know. Over 4,000 more people have had to claim Universal Credit already, with the local unemployment rate now being - unusually for us - above the national average - and that is before furlough and similar schemes come to an end.

So many people have experienced real hardship as their incomes dropped or disappeared altogether - and millions of self-employed people have had no effective help available from government schemes or from the social security system. Not only do we need business to thrive and to get people back into work, we will have to support children and young people for some time. Home schooling has been hard for most families, but for those in overcrowded homes, lacking the essential space and means to study, it has been a nightmare, and the educational and mental health consequences are severe, as I see almost daily in my caseload.

TRANSPORT ISSUES IN THE CAPITAL

Planning for the post-COVID city has wider environmental implications as well. In the short term, people have avoided using public transport, with tube passenger levels down to a third of 2019 levels. Yet even though commuting has also dropped off significantly, many residents have complained of increased traffic on residential streets. Some of this is a result of the shift to online retailing, of course, and this is a huge challenge for local high streets and those who work in them, for volumes of delivery traffic for congestion and air pollution.



TfL's services will be "critical to the city's recovery."

We're also still in tough negotiations about funding public transport in the capital. Transport for London is unusually dependent on fare income compared with other world cities, with the last annual government grant being removed five years ago, yet unlike the national rail companies which were bailed out early on as passenger numbers collapsed, the government has only offered short term funding deals with lots of strings attached.

The Mayor had to fight to prevent a massive extension of the congestion charge and the loss of concessionary travels for the children and the over 60s. Safe, affordable public transport is critical to the city's recovery and we can't afford to have game-playing over the level of support TfL receives.

CONSTITUENCY BUSINESS AND GOOD NEWS ON AIRBNB

Over the last few months normal Parliamentary and constituency business has inevitably changed - less face to face, more online. My office is getting record numbers of queries and problems though, with housing, income and employment issues, neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour dominating.

One issue which has been conspicuously reduced compared with recent years is the impact of short-let ('airbnb'- style) accommodation, which rather tends to confirm the scale of it pre-pandemic. Housing analysts are also reporting a significant fall in rents in central London, which further suggests that more properties were being used for holiday lets than the big companies were prepared to admit- they always used to tell me that the sector was too small to influence the overall private letting market though I never believed that.

Obviously we want the tourism and hospitality sectors to revive strongly, bring vital jobs and revenue into London, but I would not be sorry if it gave us the opportunity to take stock of the regulation of a sector which offered a great deal of flexibility but also dumped its costs onto neighbours and cash-strapped Councils. As founder/Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Short-Lets, this is something I will be returning to.

DEALING WITH CRIME

Lockdown has also undoubtedly contributed to tensions between neighbours, not least over issues like noise, as well as sadly contributing to higher levels of domestic abuse. As restrictions are relaxed, hopefully some of this will reduce, but as Boris Johnson has already warned, there is a potential for crime overall to 'rebound' across the country and we must do everything possible to prevent that.

There have been some horrific instances of serious youth violence in recent weeks, and we can't afford for that to continue into the summer. Sadiq Khan's budget for this year includes provision for an extra 1,000 police, and a fund for violence prevention, and this is very welcome, but the fact remains that we lost 21, 000 police in the last ten years, with three quarters of a billion being cut from the Met police budget, and the consequences of that are long lasting.

HEALTH POST-COVID

I have, of course, been in very regular contact with Imperial NHS Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Group as the NHS has battled to save lives during the epidemic, and is now also delivering the vaccine. As of the beginning of March, Imperial, including St Mary's was continuing to see a decline in the number of patients with COVID-19, but stressed that there will still 50% more



St Mary's Hospital faces a backlog of non-COVID patients.

critical care beds in use than normal, so the situation remains serious and of course staff have now been working under this pressure for a year.

Inevitably they will also face a backlog of patients needing treatment for conditions other than Covid, and they are working on their recovery plans, and, of course, continuing to move ahead with the longer-term redevelopment plans for St Mary's.

THE WORK CONTINUES

Despite Covid, Parliament's work does still go on, and in many ways it is busier than ever, with several sessions a week for MPs to raise concerns and ask questions of Ministers as well as NHS and GLA led briefings. I'm doing as many of these as I can, as well as my opposition front bench duties on the Work and Pensions team and as chair of the All Party Group on Legal Aid. Also as a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights I have been scrutinising and making recommendations to improve the government's emergency legislation.

AND FINALLY...

As I finish this, the daylight is still visible into early evening, and spring is on its way. We can at least hope to all meet in person this summer but in the meantime, please continue to contact me.

Karen Buck MP (Lab)

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Nickie Aiken MP (Con)
Cities of London & Westminster

CCOVID-19 continues to affect all our lives in ways that just over 12 months ago, very few of us would have thought imaginable. Since the last edition of SEBRA NEWS W2, many more lives have been lost. My thoughts are with those who have sadly lost a loved one to this dreadful virus.

Shafts of light are starting to appear at the end of what has been the darkest of tunnels. We now have a range of different approved vaccines at our disposal, a phenomenal global scientific achievement. We surpassed the Prime Minister's target of vaccinating 15 million of our most vulnerable citizens by mid-February.

Evidence suggests that at this point all the vaccines that have been approved appear effective at preventing severe infections that require hospital treatment. If this remains the case, we can hopefully continue to slowly reopen our society and our economy in line with the road map the Prime Minister has laid out. I know that the Prime Minister is being cautious to prevent a fourth lockdown that none of us want.

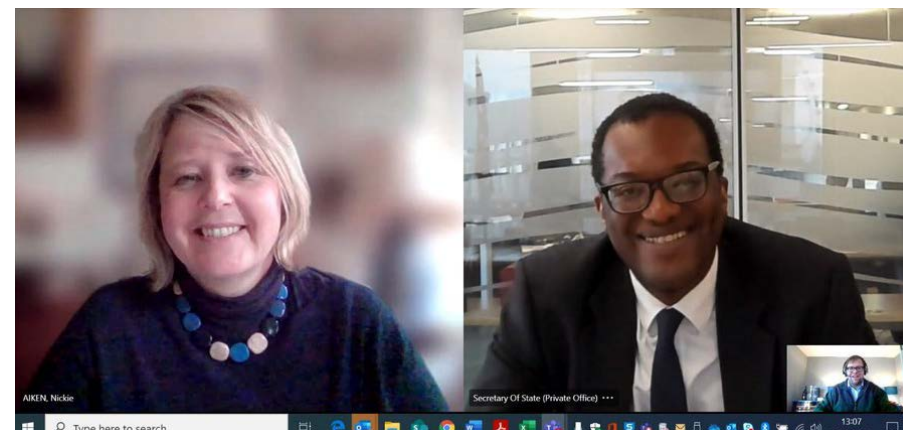
Locally the roll out is progressing well. The pace of vaccinations across Westminster should rise as new vaccination sites come online, including the new centre at Marble Arch. It has been incredibly uplifting visiting vaccination centres in our constituency and seeing the delight and relief of those receiving jabs.

I should mention that I have had some people get in touch with me raising concerns about COVID vaccines. To try to put people's minds at rest I have set up a frequently asked questions page about the vaccine online at www.nickie.news/vaccine. Please visit it if you have concerns or want to find out more about the vaccines.

THE FUTURE OF PLANNING – NEW LEGISLATION ON ITS WAY

My thoughts on planning have always been driven by the principle that local authorities working with local people should shape how their areas look and feel and respond to local needs. That's why I am currently lobbying the Planning Minister to ensure that the new Bill secures the rights of councils and local people to have the final say on what goes where in their areas. There is much to welcome in the Bill such as embracing digitalisation. I find the zones idea which permits councils, following consultation, to decide on the areas that should be identified for renewal, protection and growth. It is an interesting concept, but the devil as always will be in the detail and I will scrutinise what the Government proposes once the Bill is finally tabled in the coming months.

One of the most significant issues that the Government needs to address in its planning reforms is that over one million planning permissions are still yet to be seen a spade in the ground. I have spoken to Ministers about these issues and will continue to do so.



Nickie meeting with the new Business Secretary the Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP to discuss Central London's recovery.

Planning must remain at the heart of local democracy. I know from the conversations I have had with resident groups that there are concerns that changes proposed as part of the new Planning Bill will make it easier for developers to convert retail space into residential property. The Government has held a consultation in relation to this aspect of the Bill which closed at the end of January. Its findings should, I hope, influence the forthcoming proposed legislation.

One of COVID-19's long term impacts will be its impact on the High Street. The closure of non-essential shops for long periods to protect public health

has caused difficulties for several major brands. Longer-term, it remains to be seen if the High Street will be further affected by the boost that the pandemic has given to online shopping.

Locally, in Oxford Street, we will see a number of empty premises when its shops reopen once restrictions are lifted. The collapse of the Arcadia Group and the selling off of its brands to online companies along with the sale of Debenhams leaves several prime retail locations vacant. Analysis carried out by the New West End Company anticipates that already 57 of the street's pre-pandemic outlets will not reopen.

To tackle this, Westminster City Council's recently published its Oxford Street Framework outlining ambitious plans that respond to retailers and business needs as we rebuild our economy. I am confident that Oxford Street will recover from the tricky last twelve months it has faced and that the Council's plans will support the recovery of the nation's High Street, making it fit to respond to further changes in the next decade and beyond.

UNSAFE CLADDING

Many people living in the Two Cities have contacted me about cladding on their buildings. I was Leader of Westminster City Council at the time of the Grenfell Fire and through the support we provided to our neighbours at the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea in the aftermath of the disaster, I saw first-hand the devastating effect the fire had on the local community. Seventy-two people lost their lives. I am determined to ensure an event like it could never happen again.

Compared to other London constituencies, the Cities of London

& Westminster has a comparably small number of buildings with ACM or other flammable cladding. One of the largest concentrations of buildings affected is Paddington Basin.

Many of those who have been in touch have been encouraging me to sign the McPartland/Smith amendment to the Government's Fire Safety Bill when it returns to the House. The amendment prevents the owner of a building from passing on the costs of removing cladding on to leaseholders or tenants. As a Vice-Chair of the Conservative Party, I am considered a Government Payroll MP and therefore am bound by ministerial collective responsibility. I am therefore unable to sign any amendments to government bills.

However, that does not prevent me from lobbying Ministers on issues I think are important. For months, I have been talking to Ministers about cladding. I recently met with Lord Greenhalgh, the Minister responsible for fire safety at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, before the Government's announcement of further £3.5bn of financial support to remove unsafe cladding and to introduce a new levy and tax on developers. At the meeting, I shared the concerns of those who have contacted me directly about cladding. My sense from that meeting was that the Government understands how devastating the issue is for leaseholders and tenants. I will continue to raise local people's views on cladding with the Government privately.

SHORT-TERM LETS

At the 2019 General Election, I ran on a platform of addressing the disruption caused to local people by short-term letting. As I know many of you are aware, there is a 90 day a year limit that a property can be short let in Westminster. The issue is not about the law that is in place but about enforcing it.



Short-term lets. Nickie is "determined to curb the negative impacts".

Since being elected in December 2019, I have joined and become a Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Short Lets Sector. The group, set up by fellow SEBRA area MP Karen Buck, gives all MPs the opportunity to come together to discuss issues related to the sector.

COVID-19 has unfortunately halted progress on the issue for now. I do however remain determined to curb the negative impacts of short-lets once life returns to normal.

I am encouraged that the Scottish Government is in the process of introducing measures that empower local authorities in Scotland to regulate short-lets. Any success there, may make change easier to achieve in London.

PEDICABS UPDATE

Since January last year, as many readers will know, I have been trying to get a Private Members' Bill through Parliament regulating Pedicabs. Under the Bill I have put forward Pedicab drivers would require a licence issued by Transport for London (TfL) to operate and their vehicles would have to meet specific safety standards. The Bill also gives TfL the power to regulate the prices they charge.



Pedicabs regulation remains on Nickie's agenda.

Unfortunately, since the last edition of SEBRA NEWS W2 in which I reported back that the Bill had been objected to at its Second Reading by the MP for Christchurch, Sir Christopher Chope, the Bill has not been able to progress any further.

Another attempt at a Second Reading was rescheduled several times. As part of its COVID-19 response, in January the House of Commons passed a motion

to suspend sittings to hear Private Members Bills on Fridays. This has severely limited the parliamentary time available to debate the Bill and progress it through the Commons.

I understand how important greater regulation of Pedicabs is for so many people living in the SEBRA area. I will continue to push for the Bill to be given the parliamentary time it needs. However, this is unlikely to be in the near future. I know that this will be a disappointment to many.

Rest assured, I am determined to ensure that Pedicabs are regulated for the safety of those that use them and to minimise the disruption that some drivers cause.

LOOKING AHEAD

My team and I have been incredibly busy supporting individuals and businesses across the Two Cities over the last year. We have received and responded to over 15,000 emails.

I began 2020 holding regular face to face surgeries, later switching to virtual surgeries to ensure people could still quickly raise concerns and seek my help with any matter.

I had also planned to be out and about as a highly visible local MP, holding regular street surgeries, knocking on doors and holding public meetings across the Two Cities, listening to what matters to local people and taking action in Parliament. Sadly, COVID-19 has made this virtually impossible to do. So, I have been more active on social media, posting regular videos on different platforms to report back on what I am doing on your behalf. I also hold a monthly Zoom call with representatives of Resident Associations and Amenity Societies, which I find extremely useful.

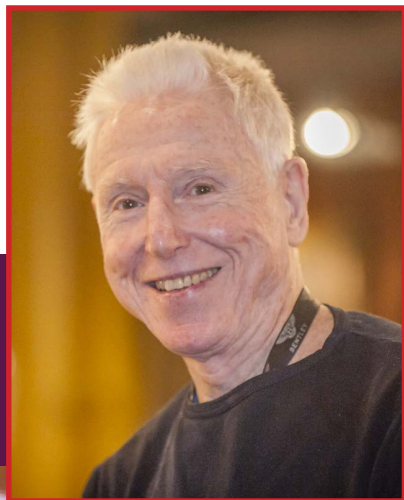
This year, with vaccines being rolled out, I plan to be much more visible in person across the Two Cities, in line with government guidance and of course as soon as it is safe to do so. Fingers crossed we will meet in person at the almost legendary SEBRA AGM!

If you have any issue or concern, please contact me using the details below.

Nickie Aiken MP (Con)

Email: Nickie.Aiken.MP@parliament.uk
Tel: 020 7219 4553
Address: Nickie Aiken MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Twitter: @twocitiesnickie
Instagram: @twocitiesnickie
Facebook: fb.com/twocitiesnickie

Social Affairs



Jack GORDON

Jack is Chair of the Westbourne Ward Safer Neighbourhood Panel and a SEBRA committee member.

SEBRA'S HINTERLAND - AN INSPIRED SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INCUBATOR

The strikingly resplendent design produced for SEBRA's gold-plated 50th Anniversary prompted me to consider again the remarkable, almost unique, social and cultural achievements that were created and found form around Notting Hill, Portobello Road and Golborne.

These were bold, ambitious, ground-breaking initiatives that, in the main, established roots in the subsoil of an impoverished area riven by social divisions, particularly racial strife, and deeply scarred by the Notting Hill race riots of the late fifties.

As a young person drawn to community activism I was a very junior member of a committee that was responsible in providing direction and guidance on a number of social experiments in the area, some of which were developed and replicated across the country. The committee consisted of the Reverend David Mason, Pat Smyth, Donald Chesworth, and George Clarke all committed and well-respected local community activists, and myself.

“Neighbourhood Councils could be hailed, even in their infancy, as a manifesto for true local democracy.”

THE GOLBORNE NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL

The Neighbourhood Council which had its epicentre in Golborne Road was one of the first, if not the first, Neighbourhood Council in Britain when it was first established in the late 60's early 70's.

Neighbourhood Councils, also known as community leagues, are Government or non-Government bodies, whose purpose it is to promote citizen participation in local Government by making advisory recommendations to city Government on community needs and direct participation in the management of neighbourhood projects and facilities.

Our nascent attempts to inspire a new, freshly-minted style of local democracy, heavily promoted locally, flourished initially but eventually withered and died, prematurely, as we found it difficult to galvanise voter turnout in sufficient numbers for the Council to be properly represented. It also didn't help that canvassing votes had its own difficulties as some parts of the constituency were considered no-go areas.

However, the concept itself survived with many Neighbourhood Councils springing up and working effectively on behalf of local communities all across the country.

Neighbourhood Councils could be hailed, even in their infancy, as a manifesto for true local democracy.

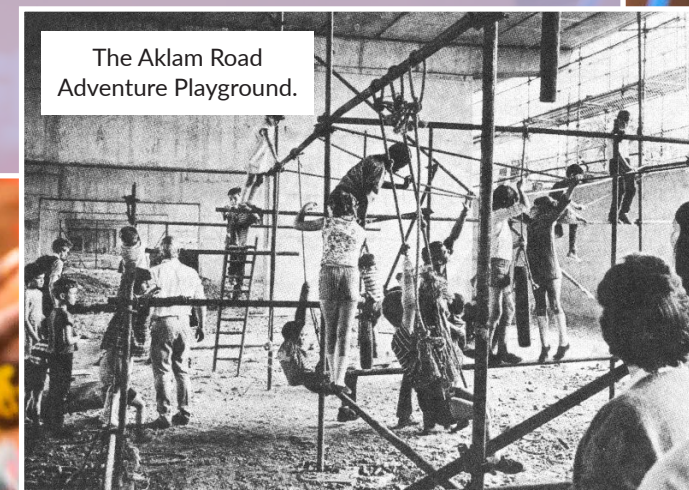
THE AKLAM ROAD ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

One of the first adventure playgrounds in Britain, where I worked in a voluntary capacity, was born in the Aklam Road and run by Pat Smyth, quite a community Colossus, who had a background, we believed, in the special forces. No wonder then that the playground resembled, to many observers, an SAS assault course.

Whilst a remarkable innovation in Britain, the Adventure Playground movement began as early as the 1930's in Denmark with the first adventure playground opening in Denmark in 1943, during the Second World War.

The very first 'junk playground' opened in Camberwell in 1948. Now there are around 90 of such playgrounds across the capital, even with the competing popularity of skate parks.

Again, this hinterland provided a form of social invention, this time in support of young people, that flourished and provided a sense of collective welfare.



The Aklam Road Adventure Playground.

ORIGINS OF THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

The history of the Notting Hill Carnival, according to Julian Mash in his excellent book 'Portobello Road: Lives of a Neighbourhood', is a complicated and at times a troubled one that has seen it grow from humble beginnings to the biggest street party in Western Europe.

Yet it can be traced back to the night of Monday 1 September 1958 when, in one of the worst race riots on post-war British history, some three hundred black men clashed with a mob of white locals and Teddy Boys.

All of which I still remember vividly as I do Peter Rachman, the slum landlord and his bagman who collected the rents for him, many times with an Alsatian dog on a tight leash.

Whilst our committee worked hard on behalf of the Carnival, its establishment was led by the West Indian community as it took shape in the mid-sixties. The moving forces, of the Carnival's twin strands, were the Trinidadian journalist and activist Claudia Jones, described as 'the mother of the Notting Hill Carnival' and Rhaune Laslett, another community activist who also founded the Notting Hill Neighbourhood Service.

In many ways these street-level community enterprises can be seen as a form of social contracts which support and promote community solidarity and self-expression. Individual strands that are woven together to form the fabric of a local society.

In another, more abstract way, these remarkable, and outstanding, elements of what could be seen as a form of agit-prop have an artistic value that makes an almost revolutionary impression.

As Vladimir Mayakovsky proclaimed on the ideals of Art in Revolution: "The streets shall be our brushes, the squares our palettes".



Race Riots in Notting Hill, 1958,

“The streets shall be our brushes, the squares our palettes.”
Vladimir Mayakovsky



Background Photo: Adrian Scottow.
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WARD BUDGETS - SPRING 2021 UPDATE

Ward budgets are a flexible resource that Westminster Councillors can use to address local issues and priorities.

Ward budget funds are granted at the discretion of Councillors for projects within their Wards that benefit local residents and are managed by an organisation, community group or charity. An initial budget of £46,000 per year is allocated to each Ward which rolls over each year across a four-year electoral cycle.

In this Spring 2021 update, we are nearly at the end of the third year in the four-year electoral cycle and Councillors continue to allocate Ward budget funds to projects which benefit local residents.



Hallfield School received a science lab contribution from the Ward Budget.

Aid's Ready Meals project helped volunteers to deliver a prepared meal to local people in Bayswater, Lancaster Gate, Westbourne and surrounding areas.

The Lancaster Gate Councillors also continue to fund and support the Lancaster Gate Lunch Clubs, which have always proven to be very popular. The lunch clubs have been put on hold in recent months due to Government guidelines, but the Councillors and the organiser are planning how the lunches can go forward in future to deliver the best service for residents. In addition, they are exploring alternative ways of helping and interacting with senior residents, such as lending iPads to help understanding of technology and using online services. The beginning of a regular newsletter is also being discussed along with regular phone calls to increase communication and encourage more senior residents to join the club.

It has long been on the minds of the Lancaster Gate Councillors to rejuvenate the planters on Queensborough Terrace. The plans to replant and maintain the planters have now been finalised and agreed upon. It is hoped that the planters will bring bright colour and attract a variety of birds to the area.

Are you an organisation who can benefit residents in your ward area? If so, you may be eligible for Ward budget funding.

To apply for Ward budget funding or simply find out more information, please head to the Ward budget page on Westminster City Council's website at bit.ly/budget-spring-2021.

In December, the Bayswater Councillors approved funds for the Westminster Creative Collective project. This project aims to improve the social and mental wellbeing of residents by using creativity as an outlet for expression and celebration following many months of hardship during the pandemic. It aims to help residents make sense of poignant moments in 2020, including COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement, in a series of creative projects and exhibitions. This project will collate pieces of work to mark 2020 in three coordinated projects: public exhibitions in Westminster libraries, community art workshops and podcast workshops for schools and youth groups.



Art from the Creative Collective.

The Bayswater Councillors have also recently approved funding for a Young Leaders Project. Taking place from December 2020 to March 2021, the project is organised and delivered by Westbourne Park Family Centre. The Centre will provide a targeted and specific project developing young people's confidence and skills through volunteering, mentoring, training and play. Furthermore, Bayswater Councillors have approved funding for an additional defibrillator to be installed at College Park School by London Hearts. London Hearts work hard to provide defibrillators in order to decrease cardiac arrests around Westminster.

Your local Ward Councillors are always keen to hear your views on how these funds should be allocated, so please share your ideas with the Ward budget team by emailing wardbudgets@westminster.gov.uk, or by contacting your local Councillor directly.

Westminster City Council
www.westminster.gov.uk

NEWS FROM YOUR BAYSWATER WARD
LABOUR COUNCILLOR

Maggie Carman

MAYHEM ON MOSCOW ROAD

It astonishes me what residents sometimes have to put up with from badly run premises before the Council takes action.

Olympic Food Stores, 21 Moscow Road, have had their alcohol licence revoked following a police raid where drugs and firearm ammunition were seized. Obviously I can't go into detail as there is a criminal investigation underway but all of the following occurred from 2013 onwards and is a matter of public record.

- The sale of alcohol to minors
- Sale of alcohol after hours, residents report them regularly selling alcohol at 2am
- Multiple complaints from residents relating to littering, noise, street drinking, anti-social and aggressive behaviour
- Contraband tobacco seized by HM Customs and Excise
- No Designated Premises Supervisor since 2013 despite it being a mandatory condition of the licence

Long-suffering locals used to cross the road to avoid passing by – but for now the shutters are down.



Licence revoked in Moscow Road.



Greetings from Westminster



FLY TIPPING

You won't have to walk far before you come across an old fridge, broken chair or chest of drawers dumped on the pavement. Why do people persist in doing this when Westminster offers a bulky waste collection service?

One resident told me she was shocked to be charged £31 to take away a mattress; she had to wait three weeks and then it would be picked up between 8am and 2pm. I can understand how some people might be tempted to illicitly dump.

Perhaps if the Council introduced an affordable single item charge or even first collection free of charge it would help stop fly tipping. In neighbouring Camden they collect large electrical items for free and the over 65s are offered two free collections of bulky waste a year. In Haringey they have a "Wall of Shame" showing CCTV footage of illegal dumping and ask residents to identify the culprits. They also use crime scene tape, a visual reminder that fly tipping is a crime.

I'd love to hear your ideas about what Westminster could do to help stop this blight on our streets.

DOUBLE GLAZING UPDATE

The last time I wrote in **SEBRA NEWS W2** about double glazing was in spring 2019 when Notting Hill Genesis were refused permission to install double glazing to properties in Hereford Road as they were Grade 2 listed buildings.

I am pleased to report that since then, Officers in Planning undertook a review of the approach and, as a result, an informal cabinet meeting agreed a paper

which sets out a positive approach which will allow slimline double glazing in some listed buildings, subject to protecting the character of the historic building.

This will be good news for people like the Hereford Road resident who told me, *"My bedroom is so cold I cannot sleep there, it is like sleeping in a fridge and so I sleep on the couch in the living room and have done so for years in the winter. This is not normal to be living like this in the 21st Century. I work, pay my bills and all my taxes and am tired of living like an animal in winter. It is embarrassing and not right. I am ashamed to bring people round to my house."*

I have urged Notting Hill Genesis to reapply for planning permission.

COVID 19 AND COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

While government advice and sensible precautions have meant I've not been able to run my regular fortnightly surgeries at Porchester Library I have been just as busy as normal, dealing with residents' problems via email, telephone and video calls.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if I can help in any way.

Write to Maggie at:
64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP
Telephone:
020 7641 4299
Email:
mcarman@westminster.gov.uk
Website:
www.westminsterlabour.org.uk
Twitter:
[@BayswaterLabour](https://twitter.com/BayswaterLabour)

Property Market

LONDON RESIDENTIAL UPDATE

Nicholas Barnes - Head of Research at Chestertons

CHESTERTONS

SALES MARKET

Despite the obstacles created by the coronavirus, including two national lockdowns, the London property market proved remarkably active in 2020 and Chestertons experienced its busiest December on record.

Although annualised Land Registry data for the first nine months of 2020 suggest that sales across Greater London for the whole year were around 30% lower than in 2019, the number of sales agreed by Chestertons in the prime locations rose by 21% compared to 2019 to reach their highest level in a decade. This reflects the greater resilience of the prime locations in spite of the additional handicap of delays in the conveyancing process due to a huge backlog of cases.

The desire for a dedicated homeworking area and outdoor space, together with the rush to beat the stamp duty holiday deadline, remained major drivers of buyer demand and in many prime locations including Hyde Park and Bayswater, buyers additionally saw an opportunity to take advantage of prices that were still falling.

Across Greater London, the Land Registry reported that prices rose by 9.7% in the year to November. In contrast, in the prime locations the large number of properties available for sale meant that prices fell by 2.6% in 2020 according to the Chestertons' Index. The fall in prices in Central London was more pronounced at 4.6%, in part due to their higher starting point but also because of the lack of overseas buyers who typically account for over half of sales.

Although the hangover from Covid-19 will be felt throughout 2021 and beyond, and despite the uncertainties following the UK's departure from the EU, I believe the outlook for the prime London property market in 2021 is positive.

Even though we have entered a new Tier 5 national lockdown, three vaccines are now being rolled out and there is light at the end of the coronavirus tunnel. Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey has stated that he believes the economy will bounce back strongly once lockdown restrictions are lifted which should boost consumer confidence.

Interest rates are set to remain low and the banks are still keen to lend and there is still a large number of buyers in the market with the desire and financial strength to move. Chestertons' has already recorded a 37% increase in sales in the year to mid-February compared to the same period in 2020.

The important foreign buyer market is expected to pick up once the coronavirus is brought under control, as London retains its attraction in terms of a safe haven and the pound is likely to remain relatively weak against major currencies for a while to come. The impact will be most apparent in Central London locations such as Hyde Park, Bayswater, Mayfair, Kensington and Knightsbridge.

Brexit is unlikely to have a significant short-term impact on the housing market. However, even assuming no further major systemic shocks, we forecast that Greater London property prices will drop by 2% in 2021 as rising unemployment affects household finances. The prime locations are likely to fare better and we expect prices to stabilise in Central London and rise by up to 2% in certain areas.

LETTINGS MARKET

Although the rental market slowed after the exceptionally busy peak summer months, it was nonetheless a lot busier in 2020 than in previous years. Despite Covid-related restrictions, the evictions ban and the rise in furloughed staff and redundancies which plagued the market, Chestertons' recorded a 36% increase in tenant enquiries and a 28% rise in new lettings over the year.

There were several reasons for this uplift in activity. As in the sales market, there was a strong desire for larger properties to better facilitate working from home and also outdoor space, even if only in the form of a balcony or roof terrace, to be able to cope better with any future lockdowns.

Tenants were also encouraged by the wide choice of properties on the market. The number of properties available to rent in prime locations was 88% higher at the end of the year than at the end of 2019. The increase in supply meant that rents came under downwards pressure which also prompted tenants to look for better value, especially if their financial position had changed as a result of the pandemic impact. Towards the end of the year, a number of landlords faced with voids also offered incentives to encourage tenants to move, including rent-free periods.

Rents fell by 10% across Greater London in 2020 and the drop was even more severe in the prime locations where rents fell by 15%-21%. Prices for flats with no outside space were hit especially hard although family houses with gardens generally maintained their rental values.

The rental market will remain challenging in 2021. Even after Covid restrictions are removed we may well see a permanent change in working patterns with staff spending part of the week at home and part in the office. Nonetheless, a return to some degree of normality should bring the return of foreign students and corporate tenants and we expect demand to remain strong in 2021. Until supply and demand are more balanced rents are likely to decline further, although far less than in 2020.

Chestertons Hyde Park

020 7298 5900
www.chestertons.com

YOUR LOCAL MARKET INSIGHT

Today, it's not an estate agent you need.
It's a partner in property.

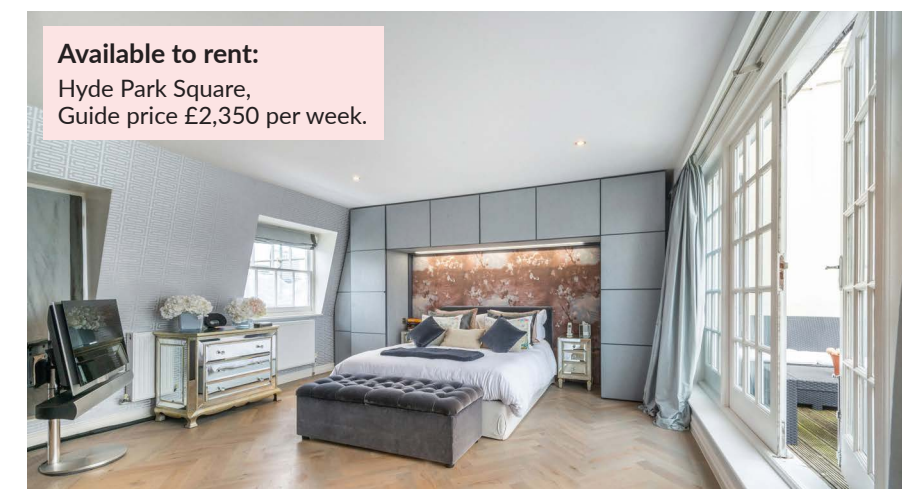
Knight Frank

2020 turned out to be an extraordinary year for the property market, and 2021 may well be no different. Despite the current circumstances, sales and lettings activity in the past six months has been exceptionally strong, and forecasts for the coming quarter vary wildly depending on whom you listen to. Either the market will begin to slow down, or it will continue bullishly as ever, buoyed by the promise of vaccines for everyone and a seemingly unabated appetite for moving home.

While house viewing levels have been impacted recently over concerns for the new variants, particularly in London, when you look at the bigger picture, it's encouraging to see demand is still here. In Hyde Park alone, the number of new prospective buyers registering with us over the last six months was up 155% on the five-year average. Whilst the number of offers accepted increased by 101% respectively. Source: Knight Frank Data.

"Hyde Park and Bayswater has remained a key location for London buyers thanks to the special, green open space of the park on your doorstep. We've seen properties with private outdoor space or garden square access commanding strong demand. W2 has always been an area renowned for attracting international buyers but despite the lack of travel at present, we are currently helping local families who are keen to find a new residence which offers a bit more outdoor space whilst remaining in this wonderful pocket of prime central London. We are able to offer virtual tours of our clients' properties, but if buyers would like to physically see a property they can

Available to rent:
Hyde Park Square,
Guide price £2,350 per week.



rest assured that we are acting with extreme caution on viewings, in line with government guidelines," explains Laura Dam Villena, Office Head.

The next few weeks will be interesting, with the end of the stamp duty holiday on the 31 March and the increase in activity that Spring may provide. However, more supply coming through in April could put downward pressure on prices, so we are encouraging sellers to come to the market and be mindful of subtle shifts in the supply/demand dynamics.

"Most Prime London rents have undergone a fundamental reset and the growth in supply continues to put pressure on asking rents. We may see this trend continue until the airports re-open and we see the return of international travel. Although new rental properties are not coming on to the market at the same rate as last year, supply levels are still high so it's more important than ever that Landlords are pricing their properties sensibly in the early Spring market," according to Guy Spencer, Lettings Manager.

On the lettings side, demand has been strongly upheld by the domestic market, driven by needs-based movers and weaker demand from international students, although corporate enquiries have started trickling back through. In spite of this, the number of tenancies agreed in the last six months went up by 28% against our five-year average and in the same period the number of new prospective tenants registering with us was up 127%.

Knight Frank Data: July - Dec 2020.

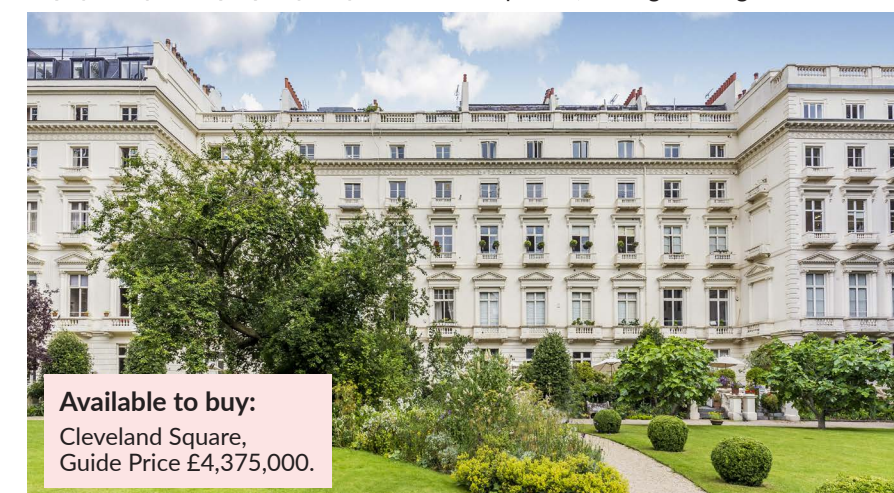
With so much uncertainty in the air, it's all the more crucial that you have a source of objective market intelligence and property advice that you can absolutely rely on. With our global team of research analysts, we are uniquely equipped to give you an informed picture on which way the market is going.

And if you are thinking of selling or letting your home, you can rely on us for the frankest possible advice when it comes to pricing, timing and achieving the best outcome.

Simply call us on **020 3544 0657** or email us at hydepark@knightfrank.com

We'll make it our business to be with you every step of the way. It's the least you could expect from your partners in property.

All potential tenants should be advised that, as well as rent and the deposit, an administration fee of £288 and referencing fees of £48 per person will apply when renting a property (if not an AST). (All fees shown are inclusive of VAT.) If the landlord agrees to you having a pet, you may be required to pay a higher deposit (if not an AST) or higher weekly rent (if an AST). Please ask us for more information about other fees that will apply or visit www.knightfrank.co.uk/tenantfees.



Available to buy:
Cleveland Square,
Guide Price £4,375,000.



Your Letters

We welcome your letters on any subject that might be of interest to the readers of **SEBRA NEWS W2**. Send your contributions to: editor@sebra.org.uk or by post to John Zamit, Chairman (address on page 2). Note that contributions may be subject to minor editorial changes. Please include your full contact details. The writer of the "Star Letter" will be presented with six bottles of wine.



ANOTHER NAIL IN THE HERITAGE COFFIN

Almost 160 years ago William Whiteley opened his drapers shop in Westbourne Grove.

Whiteleys has been synonymous with the area ever since. "The Whiteley" is meaningless in much the same way

If Harrods was redeveloped would it be called The Harrod? Or Selfridges The Selfridge? Despite William's death in 1907 the name has stood through two world wars (and might have made it through a second pandemic?) What earthly reason is there to change it now?

We are too fond of removing our heritage and this is just another nail in the coffin. Please put a stop to this nonsense!

John King
Lancaster Gate, W2

Comment from SEBRA Chairman John Zamit

This was just one of many letters we received on the subject of changing Whiteley's name to "The Whiteley London". The original name is locally cherished and will be forever associated with Bayswater. In my opinion this the most bizarre decision I have ever encountered and you will read

elsewhere in this magazine that many others (including local Councillors) also find the decision to be ill-advised.



Whiteleys - "Synonymous with the area".

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

I have been re reading the 50th Anniversary edition of SEBRA NEWS W2 with great enjoyment and admiration.

It's such a good read! But It will also serve as a record of the social history of Bayswater and its residents over the last half-century.

As Bob Dylan famously sang: "*The Times They are a Changing*" not always for the best of course, but the character of our fascinating area remains diverse, and full of energy.

Let us hope that the transformation of Queensway and Whiteleys (sic!) into a mini Bond Street or Marylebone High Street doesn't drain off this energy - somehow I doubt it!

Now that things seem to be easing up on the hospitality front, I would like to thank Richard Brown of the Westminster Citizens' Advice for his invaluable and wise advice on licensing in his regular column in this magazine.

Richard, I think we are going to need you even more than usual!

Sally Sampson
Hereford Road, W2

KIND WORDS TO THE CHAIRMAN

John, we wanted to send you a big thank you for all your work and energy you have put into SEBRA in 2020!

The magazine is always eagerly awaited and it was reassuring to read that many residents seem to share our concerns about Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes.

Also thanks for steering SEBRA along a pragmatic and common sense path - there's always a risk and temptation for organisations like SEBRA to turn into nimbyism, but luckily this has not happened, hence the broad appeal to many residents. Here's to a better 2021!

Martin & Becky Kummer
Orsett Terrace, W2

CHAIRMAN'S REPLY

What a really nice message to receive in what has been a very difficult year for us all.

It is not often we receive praise about our magazine, but the 50th Anniversary issue did prompt a lot of positive feedback, and that is very much appreciated.

It is not just about a magazine though, we continue to work for our members and are in constant contact with WCC to ensure SEBRALAND remains a great place to live, work and visit.



Plane Trees, here to stay.

TREES SAVED ON QUEENSWAY

I just wanted to say a big "thank you" to all residents who took the time to sign my petition to save the trees at the park-end of Queensway.

Of course the biggest thank you goes to John Zamit and the SEBRA team for their pivotal role in ensuring these trees continue to brighten up Queensway in the years to come.

Elline Demetriou
Consort House, Queensway, W2

THE LEANING MAILBOX OF BAYSWATER



This mailbox situated on Westbourne Terrace has been sealed shut for more than a year, and is perilously leaning over the pavement.

It would seem to make sense to remove it before it inevitably falls and potentially hurts someone.

Sophia Thomas
SEBRA Member, W2

CHAIRMAN'S REPLY

This particular box has been leaning like this for over two years and Sophia's letter has prompted me to take action.

I have been in touch with Royal Mail in an effort to resolve things, and will publish an update in the next edition.

MORE KIND WORDS FROM SEBRA MEMBERS

I should like to say how much I enjoyed the anniversary issue of the magazine though it made me feel quite homesick.

What an unprecedented year 2020 was and I for one have certainly missed visiting dear friends in SEBRALAND.

Hopefully 2021 will be a better year for all of us. Stay safe everyone

Chris Hall
SEBRA Member, W2

The 50th Anniversary of SEBRA NEWS W2 arrived at just the right time. What a good way of spending a grey miserable Saturday afternoon.

Congratulations to John and Steve for producing such a bumper edition.

Nicky Hessenberg
Westbourne Park Villas, W2

It was good to have the Christmas wishes email that you sent and I am sure that all members of SEBRA will have appreciated this.

I always enjoy the communications from your association and feel that these keep us well informed. Without doubt John you have made a personal contribution over many years and this is still a very pleasant place to live.

My congratulations to you and thanks for all that you have done.

Trixie Gardner
SEBRA Member, W2

Many thanks for the fantastic 50th celebration SEBRA NEWS W2 magazine. It brought back so many happy memories.

Thank you John for leading us so successfully over this period. Keep well and stay safe.

Edward Gray
Chichester, Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR

It has taken me a while to read this very special issue - a most fitting celebration of SEBRA's 50th anniversary.

The content is full of interest, and made much more accessible thanks to the splendid layout and all the photos. It must have taken you hours but the result is splendid.

I know that John has been receiving a lot of congratulations and I add my own. I hope you now enjoy a well earned rest.

John Walton
Gloucester Terrace, W2

EDITOR'S REPLY

My thanks go to John Walton, SEBRA's former President for his very kind words. It does indeed take a very long time to put the magazine together, but it is an enjoyable task.

Thanks also to the other members who took the time to write in with praise for the 50th Anniversary edition. We have printed some here but there were also congratulatory emails from Madeleine Mitchell and David & Jane Butler too, they all mean a great deal.