

Bloomsbury News

Winter 2007/08

The Duke's "Welcome"

Another Christmas is behind us and I hope for all of you it was a happy and restful break after a busy 2007.

As we move into 2008, we see daily headlines predicting doom and gloom in the months ahead, be it housing repossessions, personal debt problems, business insolvencies and tumbling stock markets. On the other hand, there is optimism that the Bank of England will set about reducing interest rates steadily over the coming period in the hope of stabilising some of the prevailing uncertainties we all face.

Here on the Estate, we are watching anxiously how businesses fare in these trying times. With two major office refurbishments in progress and further office accommodation coming empty towards the end of the year, we are keen to secure strong new tenants for the Estate. Fortunately, early marketing indications are encouraging, and there is a continuing shortage of supply in the office market generally.

On the residential side, we are close to completing our project at 26 and 27 Bloomsbury Square, which will provide nine newly converted apartments for letting. We are optimistic that these will let quickly, such is the demand for the high quality and well located flats we provide.

To all of our readers I send my best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2008.

[Andrew Bedford]

The Dickens Museum Prepares for Christmas

Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year for many companies and organisations, and the Charles Dickens Museum is no exception. This December, the museum staff has been busy organising refurbishments, traditional Victorian decorations, special Christmas events and even a trip to Texas!

'Behind the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses some centuries of age still stand looking on the public way....'

Taken from Charles Dickens's last unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, these words describe to us the location of Mr Grewgious's home at Staple Inn, just off High Holborn. They also, rather effectively depict the location of the Charles Dickens Museum, nestled away in the heart of historic Bloomsbury on Doughty Street.

The House, where Dickens resided between 1837 and 1839 is the only surviving residence of the



literary legend and contains the world's greatest collection of material relating to the life and works of the Victorian novelist. It was whilst he was living here that he published and completed *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

The house was purchased by the Dickens Fellowship in 1925, who raised funds to buy the freehold after it came under threat of demolition in 1923. It was refurbished and opened as a museum, offering visitors a fascinating insight into the world of Charles Dickens and a wide range of events throughout the year.

The museum is home to an impressive array of artefacts, from large pieces of furniture from Dickens's homes to smaller items such as pens and jewellery owned by him and his family circle. Whilst most of Dickens's literary manuscripts are in the Forster collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Charles Dickens Museum holds a significant collection of letters to and from him, as well as examples of Dickens's creative work in manuscript. The National Dickens library also contains a vast array of rare and limited editions of Dickens's work.

Christmas is a time often associated with Dickens, largely due to the immensely popular 1843 Christmas book, *A Christmas Carol*. The moral teachings and ideas of 'Christmas spirit' have become an inseparable part of the traditional family Christmas. The story has been adapted numerous times for film, theatre, television, radio and even opera. Even the most hardened 'Scrooges' amongst us must surely have warmed to Kermit the Frog as Bob Cratchit in the 1992 adaptation, *The Muppets Christmas Carol*.

Inside the museum, the halls are now decked, stockings are hung with care and young and old alike can enter into the festive spirit. This Christmas, special events include a Dickens Family Day on the 12th of December, when Dickens' descendants will be at the museum to answer questions and sign books, a reading of *A Christmas Carol* on the 15th and the ongoing *Ignorance and Want* exhibition (the festive link here being that *Ignorance and Want* are introduced to us as two urchin children who accompany the Ghost of Christmas Present in *A Christmas Carol*). The newly refurbished 'still room' is also now open for visitors; similar to a large pantry, this is the room from which the housekeeping would have been directed and where cakes, liqueurs and preserves would have been stored.

Museum Director, Andrew Xavier and Curator Florian Schweizer have recently returned from the 34th Annual Dickens on the Strand festival in Galveston, Texas. They took over a specially selected collection of artefacts, to form a unique 'Treasures from the Charles Dickens Museum' exhibition – the first of its kind in the United States. Included in the exhibition were several of Dickens's personal items such as his walking stick and traveling bag, the court suit and sword he wore to meet Queen Victoria (the author's only surviving clothing), his writing box with dip pen, quill pen and ink wells, and a page of manuscript of *Nicholas Nickleby*. The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF). The 'Dickens on the Strand' festival began back in 1974 when the GHF took on a mission to save the Strand's historic buildings from demolition.

The Charles Dickens Museum is located at 48 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2LX. For more information call 0207 415 2127 or visit www.dickensmuseum.com.

New Initiatives Target Crime in Bloomsbury over the Festive Period

Although Christmas should be a time of good will and giving, it can unfortunately be a time when organised and opportunist criminals take advantage of the Christmas cheer and commit a host of crimes. This year the Bloomsbury Safer Neighbourhood Team has introduced two initiatives *Hotel Watch* and *Operation Christmas Presence* to stop criminals ruining this year's festivities.

The Hotel Watch initiative has been re-introduced after concerns that sophisticated criminals were targeting hotels in the Bloomsbury area. With the help of the Safer Neighbourhood Team, the Bloomsbury local community and the hotels in the Bloomsbury area, the initiative has been reactivated just in time for the one of the hotel industry's most lucrative periods.

The hotel industry has long been a target for scams and conmen but now organised groups of criminals have been working in teams throughout the country in various larger scale criminal operations. In the past professional thieves would scour hotels looking for easy targets but now crime has moved on with groups of criminals working together and targeting high end executive conferences where expensive equipment including laptops is often on show to thieves. These groups of criminals are said to book themselves into hotels under false names and then begin to commit credit card fraud and steal money and belongings from the hotel and its guests before leaving to target another hotel.

In order to combat this, Hotel Watch has been set up to re-open lines of communication between the area's hotels. As these groups of thieves generally attempt to hit two or three hotels in an area, it is essential that businesses work together and react quickly to stop and arrest these culprits before they can leave the town. If suspicious incidents take place, hotels are urged to keep the other hotels informed so they too can look out for similar strange happenings, suspicious faces and behaviour. So far the scheme has been a great success with the Safer Neighbourhood team providing useful assistance to help co-ordinate the initiative and with all 50 hotels in the Bloomsbury area getting involved, it is hoped that the project will help put a stop to this sophisticated organised crime.

Hotel General Manager of the Radisson Edwardian Hotel in Bloomsbury, Lee Melville who is also chairing Hotel Watch said, "Over the past few years, the hotel criminals have become more organised and they are no longer opportunists. They are very hard to spot as they look like other guests in suits, ties and with briefcases making them look like they belong in their environment. Hotel Watch is all about communication and awareness and working with all the different groups in the Bloomsbury community to stamp out all types of crime."

Nick Walduck, Manager of Imperial London Hotel Group said, "There are many groups now in the area who look out for different aspects of life in Bloomsbury but we felt we needed an organisation which solely looked out for the hotels. Hotel Watch has taken over from the Bloomsbury Hoteliers Association and so far it has proved a success. By building strong communication networks between the various hotels we are able to share information on suspicious characters, cars and scams and stay vigilant together in order to keep our hotels safer – especially during the festive period."

As well as Hotel Watch, Camden Council, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, licensed premises and local businesses are all teaming up to target other criminal activity such as thefts, snatches and alcohol related violence in what they have called Operation Christmas Presence. This scheme will also attempt to combat drink driving offences, underage alcohol sales and illegal street traders as well as enforcing controlled drinking zones and dispersal areas.



Operation Christmas Presence runs from the 3rd December until the 8th January and includes the introduction of high visibility patrols made up of street rangers and council wardens. These extra patrols are able to work alongside the other groups and can be useful in gathering intelligence to prevent further crimes as well as giving additional assurances to people living and working in Bloomsbury. The success of the operation hinges on the building of further links in the Bloomsbury area between Police and local stakeholders to enable the different groups to work together to tackle criminal activity and make the ward a safer place.

Another of the communication methods used by both Hotel Watch and Operation Christmas Presence is "Community Alert". This unique anti-social behaviour incident reporting system operating in the Bloomsbury and Covent Garden wards will provide a simple and fast method to transmit and map non-urgent reports of anti-social behaviour on our streets to the local Safer Neighbourhoods Teams via the internet.

This system was developed between the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at UCL, Bloomsbury Improvement Group, Bloomsbury Project Management LLP and was funded by the Metropolitan Police and Camden Community Safety for once again helping the community get involved in making their ward safer and more welcoming.

Police Detective Superintendent Jeremy Burton, who is leading the operation said, "Operation Christmas Presence is a hard-hitting campaign to rid Camden of some of the most prevalent problems in the borough at this time of year. Together with the Council and local businesses, we are making a concentrated effort to ensure that people can feel safe and enjoy the festive season."

Cllr Ben Rawlings, Camden Council Executive Member for Community Safety, said, "Christmas should be a festive and happy time; but we know that certain types of crime can increase, making people feel more vulnerable. This year the Council and the Police are working closely together to prevent crimes before they happen, enforce against them when they do, and make people aware of the risks of criminal activity so they can protect themselves."

The Bloomsbury Safer Neighbourhood Team are also be running a series of talks to educate local residents, nurses, students and people who work in Bloomsbury on how to be safe while making the most of the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The first of these talks took place on the 5th December at the Elizabeth Garrett Hospital, but businesses and organisation who are worried about their staff's safety over Christmas can also contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team in Bloomsbury in order to arrange a safety talk.

These talks give useful advice on how to keep yourselves safe whether you are celebrating, working or shopping. PC Foster Percil, part of the Bloomsbury Safer Neighbourhood Team explains the basic factors that people should remember.

"First of all if you are going somewhere, even if it just to the toilet or to have a cigarette, make sure someone knows where you are going and what to do if you don't return. When talking on a mobile phone people often feel safer, but it actually makes you a target for thieves so always think first. Be careful in familiar surroundings – they aren't necessarily safer. When parking, think about when you will be leaving, will it be dark? And if so try to park in a well lit area and reverse into your parking space for a quick departure. Carry a personal attack alarm whether you're male or female as it can help to disorientate an attacker."

For more information on how to stay safe and to purchase personal attack alarms call 0208 721 2693 or visit www.casweb.org/bsnt.

Bloomsbury Safer Neighbourhood Team
Rockard - 0208 721 2693

- Sgt Darren Bone, Pc Foster Percil, Pc Emma

To report incidents of Anti-social Behaviour online, visit - <http://www.communityalert.org.uk/>

Falkiner Fine Papers

Nestled amongst the modern shop fascias of Southampton Row lies Falkiner Fine Papers - a shrine to the almost forgotten art of hand bookbinding.

The first Falkiner's store opened in Covent Garden over 30 years ago, before moving to its current location in Bloomsbury 1984. Originally specialising in artist's papers the company has developed and diversified over the years and now boasts not only one of the UK's best collections of handmade papers but also a huge selection of bookbinding tools and full in-house bookbinding services.



Stepping inside Falkiner's customers are drawn into a mesmerising world of colour and texture, with lofty shelves laden with all manner of exotic papers and materials. Over 2,000 different papers from around the globe can be found within the store, each with its own history and interesting story to tell. There are colourful Japanese silk screen designs from one of the few remaining Chiyogami houses in Japan, traditional English sheets and handmade Italian paper that takes five days to make and is regarded as the finest in the world.

As well as offering its own bookbinding service Falkiner stocks a staggering selection of bookbinding supplies, and the basement of the store is a treasure trove of tools and materials. This includes cloth and leather book coverings, with everything from goat skin to the hard to find stingray skin in chalky black, binding equipment and minute instruments for miniature bookmaking.

Falkiner's also sells its own range of bespoke stationery that is created with typical attention to detail, and is almost too beautiful to write on. This hand stamped collection of diaries, address and notebooks use rare paper prints from Japan, with each inside page specially designed and printed, before being hand bound. This artisan range has been taken on by the likes of Liberty and other stylish stores.

General Manager William McCracken explains the store's dedication to supplying something truly unique: "So many things are manufactured cheaply, on a mass scale these days and with books this is especially true. But handbinding is an artform and should be kept alive and we work hard to maintain the craft, as well as stocking the best quality materials and those rare products that customers can't find elsewhere."

Today Falkiner's belongs to the Shepherds Group, which also includes the old Sangorski & Sutcliffe and Zaehnsdorf Binderies that are regarded as the couture houses of bookbinding. Indeed Sangorski & Sutcliffe was originally based on Southampton Row, just a paper weight's throw from the current Falkiner's site. It is this bindery that was responsible for the renowned Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, the famous book of almost a thousand poems by the Persian mathematician and astronomer. The exquisitely decorated tome took two years to complete, with its detailed cover crafted from leather and individual jewels, featuring peacocks surrounded by trees and flowers on one cover and a tiny, actual stringed instrument inlaid into the other. An image of the lost book, which is said to have

gone down with the Titanic, can be seen on the walls of Falkiner Fine Papers and is as extraordinary and enchanting as the shop it sits in.

Falkiners Fine Papers, 76 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4AR, 020 7831 1151

St Georges' Renovation set to be Completed for Christmas

Work on one of central London's most beautiful churches is to be completed in time for Christmas after nearly six years of work and £9.2 million being spent on the project. Steeped in history, St George's Church on Little Russell Street in Bloomsbury has undergone extensive restoration work on the tower, stone work, galleries and undercroft. In 2001 the church was placed on the World Monument Fund's list of 100 most endangered sites after it fell into disrepair in the 1980s.



St George's Church was built after the 1711 Act of Parliament decreed to build 50 new churches in London. Only 12 out of the planned 50 were actually built, with St George's parish being formed from the ancient St Giles in the Fields parish, to serve the more fashionable area of Bloomsbury. The church was designed by the leading architect of English Baroque, Nicholas Hawksmoor and was his sixth and final church.

The church has a long and interesting history playing a pivotal role in Bloomsbury society. During the 19th Century the church provided practical help such as schools, a library and a soup kitchen for the local community. In the early 20th Century the church continued to play an active role in spiritual and secular affairs of the area. The church was the setting for the Memorial Service of suffragette Emily Davidson who threw herself in front of the King's horse in the Derby, and also for a special service of remembrance for those killed during the Abyssinian War in 1937, which the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie attended.

The church had a strong association with the University of London from the mid 1950s, but when this ended in the late sixties the church struggled to establish a clear role for itself and the building deteriorated. When attempts were made to restore the church in the late nineties, it was brought to the attention of the World Monuments Fund, whose subsequent involvement in the restoration was the first pivotal step in getting to where the church is today.

The work has been carried out in phases and it has meant a tough six years for the Rector, Reverend Dr Perry Butler and his parish. First of all a major operation was carried out to clean the outside of the church which had become filthy over time. This included spraying the stone work to take away moss and years of dirt, before work was carried out on the tower itself. The tower and steeple of St George's is one of Hawksmoor's most inspired and theatrical designs. It is based on the Roman author, Pliny the Elder's description of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The tomb was famed for its superb sculptures and friezes, fragments of which are now on display in the British Museum, a stone's throw away from the church.

St George's spire was adorned with gigantic lions and unicorns at each corner and topped with a statue of King George I, but the lions and unicorns were removed in the restoration of the 1870s. As part of the restoration, these extraordinary sculptures have been recreated and repatriated by Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey Ltd, whose sculptor Tim Crawley carved the Modern Martyrs for Westminster Abbey in 1998.

Inside the church massive renovations have also been carried out with the return to the east-west orientation being the biggest project. The church was originally built in this format but in 1780, the plan of the church was changed to a north-south orientation in order to accommodate more people. This has now been reversed to return the church back to the original Hawksmoor scheme. Work has also been carried out to erect the north gallery and new windows have been fitted on the south gallery to allow in more light and showcase the fantastic portico from the interior of the church. The portico was described by Sir Nicolas Pevsner as 'the most grandiose of London's 18th Century church fronts'.

It was also decided that part of the restoration work would be carried out below ground as well as above. This meant coffins that had been buried there between 1780-1840 had to be removed from the undercroft and reburied in Finchley. This included the coffins of many prestigious Bloomsbury characters such as Charles Grant and Lord Mansfield. The undercroft has now been turned into a state of the art multi media exhibition centre which details the story of Bloomsbury, St George's Church and Bloomsbury's illustrious patrons. The exhibition is made up of old maps and artifacts from the church and gives an insight into how Bloomsbury was built and what inspired Hawksmoor's unique design of St George's. Further information on famous Bloomsbury characters is also available to show how authors like Dickens and Trollope, artists like Turner, socialists and suffragettes all helped to mould Bloomsbury and St George's.



The whole project has cost £9.2million with the World Monuments Fund, The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Robert Wilson Challenge Fund, The Paul Mellon Estate and other small donors all playing key roles. Father Perry commented, "It has been tough at times but just by looking at the work done and the changes made you feel immense pride in seeing the church in all its glory. I feel that this year's Christmas services will be ones to be remembered.

Although attendance on an average Sunday is between 40-50 people per service, the church does provide a service to travelers in central London as well as serving as a base for students located close by. The church even has its own newly formed choir and has recently appointed someone in the role of Event and Outreach Officer to further link the church to the local community, build good relationships, promote the church as a heritage site and foster its links with the neighborhood.

Service times

- Sunday 16th December – 6pm Carol Service
- Sunday 23rd December – 4pm Special Christmas concert: Opera scenes and Christmas melodies
- Christmas Eve – 4pm Carols at the Crib
- Christmas Day – 11am Sung Eucharist

The church is open at lunchtimes most days. For further information check out the St George's Church website – www.stgeorgesbloomsbury.org.uk

What's on Winter

The Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon Street, WC1H OAH
www.thebloomsbury.com Box Office: 020 7388 8822

John Edgley – Letters to an Earwig

2 February 7.30pm

John Hegley an Edinburgh Festival regular who has appeared in Australia, Canada, Colombia, Zanzibar and Luton – the small town of his upbringing, brings a show of songs, poems and joining in's to Bloomsbury Theatre for audiences new and old.

Tickets: £15, concession £12.50, UCL students & Children £10

Mark Watson

31 January – 1 February

Winner of 2006 If.comedies Prize and Time Out's No 1 Critic's Choice, Mark Watson, touches down at the Bloomsbury with a brand new stand up show after a year of regular appearances on BBC2's Mock The Week, his own hugely acclaimed Radio 4 series, publishing his second novel and performing sell-out runs at the Adelaide and Melbourne comedy festivals which led to a two-week run at the Sydney Opera House.

Tickets £17.50

Pete Firman – Hokum

25 January 2008 8pm

Star of Channel 4's critically acclaimed late-night magic show, Dirty Tricks, Pete Firman is the UK's leading conjurer. Described by Derren Brown as 'delightful and very, very funny', Pete is part magician, part comedian and has been wowing audiences around the world over the past few years. Pete has also fronted numerous magic shows on TV including Five's Monkey Magic and Sky One's The Secret World of Magic and features on Saturday Live Again! For ITV1 alongside Jimmy Carr and Marcus Brigstocke.

Tickets: £10 in advance, £12 on the day (£10 concessions)

TS Eliot Awards Readings

13 January 2008 7.30pm

Bloomsbury Theatre will be hosting a night of readings from the ten shortlisted candidates of The T S Eliot Prize, the biggest cash reward in UK poetry. The Awards will then take place on Monday 14 January 2008 in The Courtyard at the Wallace Collection.

Tickets £12, concessions £8, (schools £5 - call to book)

Danny – Champion of the world

11-29 December 2007 7- 26 January 2008

The 1975 Roald Dahl classic adapted for the stage by David Wood comes to Bloomsbury this Winter. Telling the story of Danny and his pheasant poaching father as they are caught up in a thrilling and remarkable adventure as they fight to save their home from Mr Hazell, the biggest landowner in the district.

Tickets: Adults £17.50 Children £10 Concessions £12 Schools £8.50 Family of four £49.50

British Museum, Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG

www.britishmuseum.ac.uk Box Office: 020 7323 8181

The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army

13 Sep – 6 April 2008

The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army will explore one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century, giving an insight into China's First Emperor, Qin Shihuangdi, and his legacy. The exhibition will include a number of the world-famous terracotta warriors from Xi'an, China, which were buried alongside the First Emperor in readiness for the afterlife, as well as some of the most striking recent discoveries made on the site.

Tickets £12, concessions (£10) for 16-18 yr olds & NUS holders, (Free admission for accompanied under 16's)

Lanturns, Dragons, and Hats

27-31 December, 11.00–16.00 Room 33

Keep the little ones entertained and take in the beautiful surroundings of the Joseph E Hotung Gallery at the British Museum while learning about traditional Chinese crafts including lantern, dragon and hat making and if you're feeling creative why not have a go yourself.

Admission: free

Rokeby Gallery, 37 Store Street, WC1E 7BS

Tel: 020 7168 9942 www.rokebygallery.com

Fusion Now! Curated by JJ Charlesworth

21 November – 20 December

Fusion Now! takes the rapidly developing science of nuclear fusion to bring together artists, and social and scientific commentators who explore the widest meaning of energy in art and politics, from radically divergent standpoints. As a revolutionary science that heralds an unprecedented advance in society's access to energy, nuclear fusion can provide energy that is abundant, potentially unlimited and clean.

Axel Antas

8 January – 9 February

Axel Antas continues his investigations into the relationship between man and nature in a new exhibition of work. By creating structures for birds to inhabit; empty and perched on top of cliffs and rocky outcrops in the harsh and vast Catalan Pyrenees, Antas utilises the location to continue his direct interventions within the landscape finding new ways to relate with the surroundings.

The Cartoon Museum, 35 Little Russell St, WC1A 2HH

Tel: 020 7580 8155 www.cartooncentre.com

Britain's relationship with 'Europe' 1957-2007

Until 20 January

This exhibition of over 90 cartoons by more than 30 cartoonists including work from David Low, Steve Bell, Matt and Ralph Steadman offers an opportunity to look back on how the story of the European Economic Community came into existence and Britain's accession into the EEC in 1973.

