

THE

ISSUE 78 | NOVEMBER 2021

BELGRAVIA SOCIETY MAGAZINE

THE ONLY
INDEPENDENT
VOICE FOR
BELGRAVIA

THE BLITZ IN BELGRAVIA

MORE FASCINATING
HISTORY FROM JOE BRIGGS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

MARY REGNIER-LEIGH ON
RECENT VANDALISM TO
LONDON'S MONUMENTS

BRILLIANT BERKELEY!

THE BERKELEY HOTEL
LIGHTS THE WAY





Registered Charity No: 1168619
Patron: Lord Fellows of West Stafford DL

Welcome to The Belgravia Society magazine, covering all aspects of village life in Belgravia and beyond.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Mary Regnier-Leigh

CHAIRMAN

George Waite

PHOTOGRAPHY

Mary Regnier-Leigh

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Fredd
www.fredd.co.uk

This magazine has been independently produced by the Committee of The Belgravia Society on a voluntary basis with regular contributions from local residents and other authors in and around Belgravia.

© 2021 Belgravia Society
All rights reserved

The Belgravia Society
63 Belgravia Court, 33 Ebury Street,
London SW1W 0NY, United Kingdom

www.thebelgraviasociety.com

IN THIS ISSUE

NOVEMBER 2021

Chairman's Message	3
Update from Nickie Aiken MP	4
Update from Cllr Rachael Robathan	5
The Blitz in Belgravia by Joe Briggs	6
Christopher Columbus by Mary Regnier-Leigh	8
Invitation from Grosvenor – Meet the Demolition Contractor Drop-in	10
Newson's Yard	11
Consultations – good or bad?	12
The Berkeley Hotel	14
The Peninsula Hotel	16
Splendid Performance by the Whitehall Choir	17
News from Westminster City Council	18
Councillors' Corner	19
Councillors' Surgeries and Contact Details	22
Membership Application	23

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



George Waite
Chairman of
The Belgravia Society
and ESRA

Apparently, British people complain three times a day on average, which partly explains why The Marble Arch Mound received so much media coverage. It was simply another opportunity to complain, closely followed by a 'witch hunt', as we are never satisfied unless we can find someone to burn.

Perhaps the solution is to do nothing; don't make any decisions, at least none that are risky. Unfortunately, we will still find reasons to complain, and we will still look for the 'witch' that is responsible for doing nothing.

There is no simple solution, largely because the problem is not simple. In fact, in the case of Westminster City Council, the size of the area that they cover and the complexity of the problems that they face pale 'The Marble Arch Mound' into insignificance. I fully support the cries for better consultation and agree that those responsible should be accountable for their action(s), however, if they did their job(s) to the best of their ability, they should not be afraid or fear the consequences of their actions.

There has been much reference to the 'falling on swords' but what do we learn from these acts of chivalry, especially when it is often the systems that are in place that

cannot cope rather than the individuals that run them? This Society had the pleasure of dealing with Cllr Melvyn Caplan (who 'fell on his sword' after it emerged that the costs of the scheme had reached £6 million) and found him to be highly knowledgeable and most professional. A sad loss.

Cllr Racheal Robathan (Leader of the Council) has confirmed her commitment to improve consultation and has explained that the Council is currently recruiting a new Director of Communications "... to bring more consistency and higher standards to how we engage and consult with stakeholders."

This Society currently enjoys excellent consultation with WCC and the other major stakeholders and, whilst we do not always agree with the outcome, we see no point in 'killing the messenger'.

On a final note, I quote from the editor of a neighbouring amenity society magazine who wrote after visiting The Mound and the Lightfield exhibition: "...The Mound is much greener now and, in truth, I did enjoy my visit... and I have to say that both Mrs Editor and myself thought that the Lightfield exhibition was excellent." ▲

WISHING YOU THE BEST FOR 2022

BY NICKIE AIKEN MP



As we draw closer to Christmas and the New Year, I wanted to reflect on another extraordinary year and highlight my push for Pedicab regulation.

Many of you will know, one of my key campaigns is gaining regulation of pedicabs to ensure the safety of those who use them. My legislation is currently making its way through Parliament, and I've been hard at work to build the case and gather support.

Similar to taxis and other private hire vehicles, my legislation would require Transport for London (TfL) to issue licences to Pedicabs drivers, requiring them to meet a specific safety standard, whilst TfL also gain the power to regulate the prices they charge.

Earlier this year I met with Baroness Vere, the Minister for roads, buses and places to further push my campaign and, because of your comments and emails on this matter, I was able to show the Minister how vital this legislation is for the Two Cities. I am proud to also receive the support of Baroness Stowell who has brought my campaign to the House of Lords, and is working to raise awareness around Pedicabs.

In November, I led the Pedicabs Debate to further raise awareness of our unique issue in London. I am incredibly disappointed that my Bill was again unable to pass its Second

Reading in November. However, that is not the end and I will bring it back to the House in December. I will use the time to work with all colleagues and reassure them why it is so important to pass my Bill.

I was delighted to hear Ministers confirm that the Government acknowledges it is not acceptable for the Pedicab industry to be the only form of unregulated public transport in London and they remain committed to seeking opportunities to put forward legislation.

Find out more about my campaign, and show your support at www.nickie.news/Pedicabs.

Christmas is almost here, and I thoroughly enjoyed the Belgravia Christmas lights switch on. There are lots of festive displays going on across the Two Cities, and I'd love to see your favourites. Please share with me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @twocitiesnickie with the caption #TwoCitiesChristmas.

At the end of what was another extraordinary year, I wish you all a happy and prosperous new year and my best wishes for 2022, whatever it may bring. If there's anything I can help with, please email me at nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk and keep up to date on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @TwoCitiesNickie. ▲

UPDATE FROM CLLR RACHAEL ROBATHAN

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

As Council Leader, one of my great pleasures at this festive time of year is to attend Christmas lights switch on ceremonies across the City. This year, these events are more important than ever.

While lockdown has lifted, the ravages of COVID still cast a shadow. Visitors are returning to the West End and the shops are getting busy, but still not to pre-pandemic levels. It has been a tough 18 months for our shops, restaurants and bars which is why I was so impressed to see the work done by the Belgravia Traders' Association when I switched on the lights in both Elizabeth Street and Motcomb Street. And Motcomb Street is of course the venue for the amazing mini city that forms the centrepiece of the Gingerbread City exhibition.

Belgravia with bells on has a real magic to it, but these streets are important to us as residents all year round. These are the places we live, meet family and friends, go out to eat and work. I want to see them buzzing with life and visitors, and part of the thriving economy we are working to restore across the City.

The Berkeley Hotel was another recent venue for a Christmas lights event – one I particularly enjoyed because it, again, brought together local people at a venue which did so much to help the community during lockdown. You will remember it was only last summer that the Berkeley's kitchens became a conveyor belt to provide free meals to vulnerable Westminster residents – around



100,000 meals were prepared there – to be delivered by local volunteers. The hotel's forecourt became a drive-through café for emergency services vehicles (I spent a day serving 999 service workers through their car windows with a long COVID-safe pizza shovel). Unable to run its normal business, the hotel got down to the business of helping local people.

Making our City safe and attractive remains a key priority of the Council – whether that is staging free arts events or supporting al fresco dining. Incidentally, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation with strong support overall and also some really helpful suggestions on how outdoor dining schemes can work even better. It's a basic pillar of our approach to al fresco dining that it doesn't continue unless local people are happy, so your feedback is invaluable.

As we head to the end of 2021, the coming months will see us working at pace on the greener and cleaner agenda with more electric cleaning vehicles coming on stream to keep the streets looking their best. Also there will be hundreds more electric vehicle charging points for the growing number of motorists making the switch.

I will keep Belgravia Society readers updated on all these activities and, in the meantime, may I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2021. ▲



Bomb damage in Belgravia. Left: Eaton Square. Middle: 103, 105 and 107 Eaton Terrace. Right: 12 Lowndes Street. Images not too dissimilar to the recently collapsed houses at Durham Place in Chelsea

THE BLITZ IN *Belgravia*

BY JOE BRIGGS

In the run up to World War II, railings were removed from Belgrave Square to be used for armaments and the garden was covered in cement clinker and used as a compound to park tanks and other armoured vehicles. Today, the railings are back but the Square still has problems with the grass, given the impact the alterations and heavy vehicles had on the ground. Huge anti-aircraft guns were also installed nearby at Hyde Park. Air raid shelters were dug. London was preparing for the Blitz.

The Knightsbridge and Belgravia area was hit by 331 bombs during the Blitz, a relatively low number when you recall that London was hit by a total of almost 30,000 bombs. One bomb hit St Peter's, Eaton Square on 17th April 1941, which ended up killing the

vicar. One month later on 11th May 1941, a bomb hit the edge of a bomb shelter that had been built on the south-central garden of Eaton Square. It killed the Mayor of Westminster who had been completing a round of visits to Westminster shelters that night. The rubble from the bomb shelter was eventually cleared away and replaced by a tennis court.

That same night in May 1941, a bomb hit Eaton Terrace, destroying numbers 103, 105 and 107 (where the car park to Kilmuir House stands today). In October 1940, a bomb hit 12 Lowndes Street destroying only the ground and middle floors. People were reported missing in the upper storeys, which now hung precariously over the rubble underneath (see picture above).



Maps of Belgrave Square from 1900 and 1950. Belgrave Square and Eaton Square were not originally designed to include tennis courts



Two air raid wardens scaled an external water-pipe to search the rooms. They found two dead bodies and one injured woman trapped on the second floor. They lowered the woman to safety using knotted sheets and both wardens were awarded George Medals for their bravery.

Lion Lodge on Eaton Place was also hit and was completely rebuilt after the war. Before the war this mansion was the London home Dr Harald Bielfeld, a senior Nazi official and one of a number of Nazis who lived in Belgravia during the 1930s, including the infamous Joachim von Ribbentrop who lived at 37 Eaton Square (a house owned by arch-appeaser Neville Chamberlain). Nazi affection for the area might explain why Belgravia got off relatively lightly during the Blitz – perhaps they planned to return if they were victorious! Such plans were not unusual for the Nazis, for example, Hitler ordered that the City of Oxford was to be kept completely intact as he planned to make it his capital city, following in the footsteps of Charles I who made Oxford his capital during the Civil War. ▲



Registered Charity No: 1168619

An amenity Society recognised by City of Westminster

NOTICE OF THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**MON 6TH DECEMBER 2021
6.30pm on Zoom**

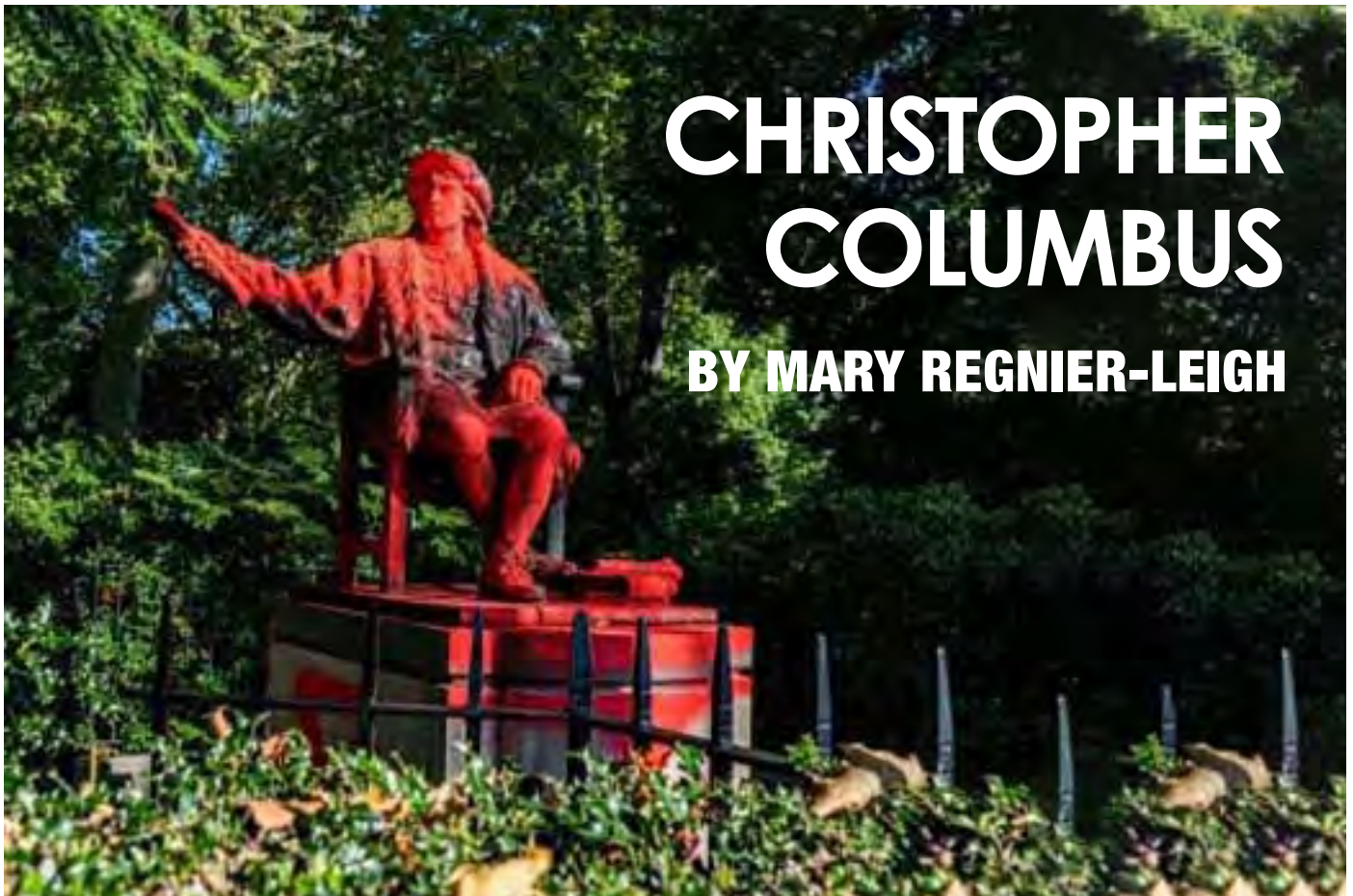
To attend RSVP via email to
helenoratore@aol.com

Zoom details will be sent
to those who RSVP.

As places are limited, members will
be given priority over subscribers if
not enough places are available,
and priority will be given to members
in order of response.



**IF YOU HAVE A CAF ACCOUNT, THAT
IS AN EASY WAY TO DONATE TO THE
SOCIETY. PLEASE DO HELP US TO
MAINTAIN OUR WORK FOR BELGRAVIA,
AND OUR COMMUNITY MAGAZINE.**



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

BY MARY REGNIER-LEIGH

I think most residents in Belgravia were horrified to see the statue of Christopher Columbus in Belgrave Square vandalised with quantities of red paint. The vandals claimed that they were doing it since all the ills done to indigenous peoples in the Americas were his responsibility. To me, Christopher Columbus was the person who discovered America in the 15th century. I knew nothing about him apart from that fact and I know that the statue was a gift of the Spanish state.

Looking for actual fact, I learnt that Christopher Columbus set foot in the Americas on 12th October 1492, claiming the land for Spain. He is often credited with the discovery of the continent, in fact, the Americas were known at least 15,000 years ago. Recent discoveries suggest humans have inhabited the Americas for as long as 20,000 years.

So now we know that Christopher Columbus did not discover America.

As a result of his voyages, he introduced the Americas to Western Europe which led the way for immigration of Europeans to the creation of the Northern nations, now called United States, Canada and Mexico, and beyond to the South.

So let us stop there a moment. Columbus is accused of crimes including rape, enslavement and mass genocide. There are facts supporting some of that. However, all these evils have been part of history, in all continents and amongst almost all people. Slavery was a fully established part of life for the Greeks and Romans. Are we throwing red paint at their monuments? Perhaps instead of sending the Elgin Marbles back to Greece, we should throw red paint over them or, better still, smash them up. There is no end to the evils of slavery or the inhumanity of man to man.

So how should we view Christopher Columbus? Should his statue be removed? Should Spain apologise to the Americas?



Columbus's behaviour was no different to that of other perpetrators of inhumanity. He was not a nice man. Nor was Hernan Cortez, who led the conquest of the Aztecs in Mexico. With 450 men in search of gold the Aztecs were defeated and their civilisation destroyed. The land was claimed for Spain. But then the Aztecs themselves were no better, making war to take prisoners solely for the purpose of killing them by cutting out their hearts to sacrifice to their Gods.

The world was and is full of autocratic dictators, seekers of wealth and power who wish to control those who are unfortunate enough to be their subjects.

It seems to your editor, that those who have enough time to throw paint over statues of people who lived in a different time and place with different values, should actually look at themselves in the mirror. They should ask themselves, how can I help the enslaved and suffering people of today? Their vandalism was without a thought for the sufferings of people of today subject to the same atrocities.

These self-serving virtue signalling vandals should turn their energies to alleviate the sufferings of today. ▲



Registered Charity No. 1168619

BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY

**To celebrate the past,
improve the present,
and engage the future**

The more members we have, the louder our collective voice will be.

JOIN US TODAY!

Benefits include:

- Monthly magazine
- Opportunity to join us at any of our monthly meetings
- Have your say on local matters
- Advice where possible on planning issues
- Invitation to our AGM and opportunity to vote

**[www.thebelgrviasociety.com/
online-membership-form](http://www.thebelgrviasociety.com/online-membership-form)**

Please fill in the online form by clicking on the link above link.

Alternatively, print the application form on page 23 and post your completed form to

63 Belgravia Court
33 Ebury Street
London SW1W 0NY



INVITATION FROM *Grosvenor*

Meet the Demolition Contractor Drop-in

In June this year, Westminster City Council resolved to grant planning permission for the Cundy Street development. Since then, Grosvenor have been preparing the project for the next phase and are now ready to prepare the site for demolition.

On 30th November Grosvenor are hosting a drop-in event for residents, businesses and other neighbours to find out more and ask any questions. Grosvenor will also be introducing the contractor who will be carrying out the enabling and demolition works.

Meet the Demolition Contractor Drop-In

Tuesday 30th November

3pm-7.30pm

at St Barnabas Church, SW1W 8PF

If you would like to find out more about the proposals, visit the website for more information: www.cundystreetquarter.co.uk, get in touch with Grosvenor at cundystreet@grosvenor.com or call 020 7312 7007.

They wish to see as many of you as possible on 30th November.

NEWSON'S YARD



We are now able to report the up-to-date position on Newson's Yard. Grosvenor invited us to see the progress. It was interesting to see the site and how it looks now that it is in the process of preparation for its future use.

The project is due to complete in May 2022. After that those that will operate the units will be able to fit them out and prepare for the opening. Space is beginning to emerge within the yard area itself. The brick piers in the building are virtually unique and remain. They are to be lightly cleaned and protected to retain the character of the original building.

However, looking at the computer-generated image (above), it is difficult to determine whether we will be able to enjoy the visual aspect including those brick piers which give this building its striking appearance. We fear that the structure will be hidden behind shop fronts and visitors will not be able to see it in all its glory. We hope its special character will not be lost.



Computer-generated image

The work to replace the roof lantern is reaching completion with acoustic glazing, blinds and louvres being added to enable passive ventilation. The mansard rafters are also now visible from the road and the façade retention is in the process of being dismantled.

The decorative railings from No 43 Pimlico Road have been temporarily removed for protection and refurbishment. These will be reinstalled following works to the façade.

We shall see next what the future decades will bring to Newson's Yard. ▲

CONSULTATIONS – ARE THEY GOOD OR BAD?



Park Lane cycle lane

In our Magazine two months ago, we questioned whether consultations are really helping to guide public authorities or developers and the like, or are they simply tick box exercises where outcomes are already decided. We hear of complaints of “loaded questions”, inadequate space for real opinions. Are the consultations with the right people? Are enough people or too many consulted? Are the right cohort of consultees being asked to reply?

It is fundamental that local residents are consulted and their views taken into account. Often the residents are not given priority because lots of visitors or employees have responded outnumbering the residents. It is important that, when consulting, we know which category the respondents represent. Make sure your voice is heard and respond to consultations.

The following are three important consultations for you to respond to:

1. TfL Cycle Lanes Consultation

This is a TfL survey to see what you think about cycle lanes. It mentions a few but the Park Lane is NOT mentioned. Say what you think, even about the Park Lane cycle lane.

Go to the TfL site at:

haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/park-lane/survey_tools/park-lane-survey

2. Grosvenor – Consultation Survey on Life in Belgravia

They want to know your views on the issues impacting local businesses, what it's like to work or live here, what you think about facilities, neighbourliness, belonging, the local environment and anything else that is important to you.

There are two ways of taking part:

The first is to answer their survey

If it has been sent to you, use it. Your editor did, which was good. But once used it cannot be copied to send elsewhere as it shows you have already taken it!

The second is to Join a workshop

These will be held at 25 Eccleston Place, SW1W 9NF. Refreshments and a £20 Love2Shop voucher will be provided. To register, please click the links below or phone 020 7703 9630.

Workshop details:

Workshop 1 – Tuesday 8th January
3pm-4.30pm

Workshop 2 – Thursday 20th January
3pm-4.30pm

Our experience of research organisations is that they have pre-conceived notions and report outcomes do not necessarily reflect the attendees' views. Let us hope we are wrong on that.

3. Westminster City Council – Consultation on Cycle Lanes

The WCC is now consulting on proposals to extend a number of traffic orders which enabled these temporary cycle lanes, whilst they consider longer term solutions.

They say “please visit our website” and “complete our questionnaire”. None of the mentioned cycle lanes are actually in Belgravia, the closest being Buckingham Palace Road, but these lanes affect us as we move around Westminster.

Make sure your voice is heard and respond to these consultations. If you feel that the questions were not fair or the outcomes have been misrepresented, let us know. The Belgravia Society is committed to demanding fair and balanced consultations and outcomes reflecting the view of local people. ▲

WWW.THEBELGRAVIASOCIETY.COM



West Halkin Street at night



**INVITATION TO THE NEXT SOCIETY
COMMITTEE MEETING**

We would be delighted for you to join our video meeting. Please let us know by email if you wish to be linked in:

thebelgrviasociety.com

We can only accept a limited number,
so first come, first served.

**Our next video meeting is
8th December**



The Berkeley Hotel

THE Brilliant BERKELEY HOTEL

BY HELENE ORATORE

**VICE CHAIRMAN OF
THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY**

In these unsettled times there is at least one corner of SW1 that is working its magic creating happiness for all. Not only is the Berkeley Hotel Knightsbridge continuing to be a bastion of outstanding excellence for its guests and visitors but it has continued to partake in various community projects.

There is always a buzz in the air when the Berkeley Hotel announces their switching on of the Christmas lights. This is the third year that my family and I have attended this delightful tradition. The forecourt was

full of guests who were treated to mulled wine, cider, sausages and nibbles. Carols by candlelight were performed by four of the choristers from St Paul's Church Knightsbridge. The 'Snowfall Song Sheet' included *Silent Night*, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* and *Ding Dong Merrily on High*.

Such is the fondness for the Berkeley Hotel by the local community that the event was attended by the Leader of Westminster City Council, Councillor Rachael Robathan, Paul O'Grady and Simon Mantle from Grosvenor



Carol singers at the Berkeley

Estates, the Chairman and committee members of the Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum, the Vice Chairman and committee members of the Belgravia Society. The Young Belgravians were represented by private equity analyst, Alexandra Oratore. Even some of Belgravia's very pampered pooches accompanied their owners.

In his welcome speech, the General Manager, Knut Wylde mentioned the Berkeley's recent extensive programme of repairs, refurbishment, construction and improvements. Admirably, the Berkeley Hotel has been fully engaged in community matters during COVID lockdown. This included creating a light refreshment drive-in for the emergency services and establishing a COVID centre for the hotel's staff.

Hotel Manager, Lee Kelly was also seen chatting and greeting guests. Lee is involved in more local community matters and is an active committee member of the Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum. He is one of the representatives of the business community who is working with the Forum to create a neighbourhood plan which will be active for the next 20 years. No wonder international travellers flock to this edifice of excellence, neighbouring businesses applaud their superb business acumen, and locals welcome their community spirit.

The Belgravia Society's mantra is "Stay Local, Shop Local", so please consider supporting all local businesses – especially during these challenging times. ▲



Meeting of the Peninsula Liaison Group

THE PENINSULA HOTEL

We attended the 17th Construction Liaison Group meeting on 17th November. We were updated on the current progress of the development. We were treated to the time-lapse video of the site showing the progress of the works from April 2017 to October 2021; it was fascinating to see. It was also incredible to consider that it is now three years plus since the development started. Time seems to have gone very quickly.

There are currently 800 men on site which will increase to over a thousand when the fit out begins. The executive leadership team have been hired – 14 in all. Sonja Vodusek is the Managing Director who we met at the previous Liaison Group meeting. Although it had been hoped that practical completion would take place in 2022, now it is all scheduled for practical completion in early 2023. The pre-opening stage covered the operations of internal fit out; some 700 staff would need to be recruited.

Sonja Vodusek will be meeting with Westminster City Council and would discuss what improvements can be made and how they can help with the underpass to the tube. It is obviously a serious problem and I think we all hope that it can be dealt with so that everyone can safely use it.

Sonja confirmed that the restaurant would be run by the hotel and not by subcontractors. We heard that the fit out was going of the very highest quality and the hotel was expected to be one of the most luxurious in the world. The hotel management will be looking for partnerships and it will be more intensely marketed during the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee.

The next liaison meeting will be in March next, the date to be fixed. This will include a site tour. The expectations created from the information we were given are very high indeed. It will be a while before we can see the final results. ▲

SPLENDID PERFORMANCE BY THE WHITEHALL CHOIR

BY HELENE ORATORE



The audience in St Peter's Church

The Whitehall Choir is a registered charity and on November 18th 2021 they gave their first performance to a live audience since Christmas 2019. Throughout lockdown the choir has embarked upon a rigorous routine of online practice sessions.

The programme commenced with *The Hope of Loving* by Jake Runestad who studied at the Peabody Conservatory. *The Hope of Loving* is a setting of six love poems originally by mystical writers but adapted and compiled by American poet, Daniel Ladinsky, into *Love Poems from God*. Next was *Alaska Spring* by Libby Larsen.

Libby is a Grammy Award winning composer and an internationally known actress. Joanna Tomlinson writes, "Her love of language is clear in the way she sets text in her choral pieces, with the shapes and rhythms of speech giving flow to the music."

Alaska Spring comprises five poems from the collection, *For The Sake of the Light* by Tom Sexton, the poet Laureate of Alaska. "These poems depict the stark landscape of Alaska, but with the triumph, hope and persistence of nature, breaking through each spring following the long dark winters."



Joanna Tomlinson, the conductor of the Choir

Finally, the Whitehall Choir gave a wonderful performance of *Salve Regina* and *Ave Maria* (op 67) and *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré. “Gabriel Fauré studied music with Saint Saens who became a mentor and friend. Fauré is best known for chamber music, songs and piano music and even in the larger scale *Requiem* there is still an intimacy of chamber music. Written in 1895, the two offertory songs for solo voice with organ, op 67, are contemplative and ethereal, offering a similar feeling of calm to the *Requiem*.”

The *Requiem* was composed between 1887 and 1888 and gives comfort and solace and perhaps a confidence that eternal rest will come. Michael Higgins who arranged the version which the Whitehall Choir performed this evening also attended. The *Requiem* is scored for string quintet and organ. It was an excellent and passionate performance with the stunning backdrop of St Peter's Church golden Apse. A thoroughly polished and powerful performance.

If you wish to be considered for the choir email joinus@whitehall.org. ▲

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS

Our counsellors tell us that Westminster leads the way on charging points. The Evening Standard revealed that Westminster is the London Borough with the most electric car charging points. There are a current total of 1059 charging points, 400 more than any London local authority.

There are plans to install a further 500 including a trial for commercial electric vehicle points in 2022. We understand the drive towards electric vehicles as part of Westminster's commitment to a carbon neutral City Council by 2030 and the whole city by 2040. For more information on what the council is doing to tackle climate change [click here](#).

WESTMINSTER PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES RETAIN GREEN FLAG STATUS

All Westminster City Council's 29 parks and public spaces with green flags previously, have retained this status. The green flag scheme recognises well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational and outdoor spaces across the UK.

As well as including some of the City's most famous green spaces such as Hyde Park and Leicester Square Gardens, Westminster's 29 winners also include three of Westminster's estates: Pimlico Churchill Gardens, Longmore Gardens and the Lisson Grove in Marylebone. Councillor David Harvey, Cabinet member for housing services, said, “Quality green spaces are vital to people's well-being. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has worked tirelessly to maintain them throughout the pandemic.”

Given all the responsibilities of the WCC, we welcome these reports as a sign of the continuation of care and good practice despite the problems of COVID. ▲

COUNCILLORS' CORNER

OUR COUNCILLORS FROM KNIGHTSBRIDGE & BELGRAVIA AND WARWICK & PIMLICO WARDS HAVE BEEN KEEPING US FULLY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN WESTMINSTER

KENSINGTON & BELGRAVIA WARD



Elizabeth Hitchcock



Rachael Robathan



Tony Devenish

PIMLICO WARWICK WARD



Christabel Flight



Jacqui Wilkinson



Nickie Aiken

BUSINESS SUPPORT



Councillors tell us how much work has gone on to support business. After an incredibly difficult 18 months they tell us it is great to see business picking up again, particularly

in areas like Motcomb Street and Elizabeth Street which have become so important to residents. Councillors Rachael Robathan and Elizabeth Hitchcock are seen here in Elizabeth Street at the start of the Christmas festivities. Elizabeth said, "The pandemic really highlighted the importance of the small independent shops as well as restaurants and cafés to the local community. It's part of what makes Belgravia such a fantastic place to live in and the lights really make it extra special".

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL



Most of us forget that the Albert Hall is in Knightsbridge and Belgravia ward. The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy was approved to pay for specialist lighting in the north porch alcoves overlooking Kensington Gardens, which light the statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The lighting will vastly improve the appearances of the statues as well as the public realm around the Hall itself. Councillor Elizabeth Hitchcock has commented, "It's wonderful that this funding for the neighbourhood realm projects will be used to make such a difference to the look of these two statues at one of the most iconic landmarks in the ward."

BUS STAND ON ELIZABETH BRIDGE

There have been concerns raised by local people about two new bus stands on Elizabeth Bridge to allow coaches to park. Councillor Jacqui Wilkinson investigated and tells us, “These have been installed as a temporary two-year provision to enable coaches to park when other stands in Buckingham Palace Road are being used while major works are carried out at the 123/151 Buckingham Palace Road development.”



Apparently, as the stands are temporary, stakeholder consultation was not required. Hopefully the works in Buckingham Palace Road will be completed as quickly as possible.

up fallen leaves to ensure the pavements are safe for pedestrians. It is a problem each year and WCC is well accustomed to dealing with it.

LEAF CLEARING

With autumn here the start of Westminster City Council's leaf clearing plan is proceeding. In Eccleston Square and Pimlico, work has been underway clearing

Councillor Jacqui Wilkinson has explained this vital work will continue throughout the city for the next 4 to 6 weeks. Some 1000 tonnes of leaves will be collected in addition to the usual levels of litter. ▲

EVERY LITTLE HELPS – amazon smile

If any of our readers are Amazon customers and have not signed up yet to their charitable “Smile” scheme you should note that The Belgravia Society is now a member. Amazon will contribute 0.5% out of any purchase you make. It may not be a lot on its own, but little sums add up and we need donations to fund our magazine and other activities.

All you need to do to join the scheme is go to Smile.Amazon.co.uk. You can then put our full name – “The Belgravia Society” – in the search box and confirm. That's all there is to it.

When you next go into Amazon type in “Smile.Amazon” instead of just “Amazon”, then just carry on as normal. Nothing else is necessary. The donation is automatic on completion of any purchase. ▲





COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES AND CONTACT DETAILS

KNIGHTSBRIDGE & BELGRAVIA WARD

Cllr Rachel Robathan (Con)	leader@westminster.gov.uk
Cllr Tony Devenish (Con)	tony.devenish@london.gov.uk
Cllr Elizabeth Hitchcock (Con)	ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk
Tel no for all	020 7641 3411

Surgeries by telephone only for the time being. Please telephone 020 7641 3411.

WARWICK WARD

Cllr Christabel Flight (Con)	cflight@westminster.gov.uk
Cllr Nickie Aiken (Con)	nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk
Cllr Jacqui Wilkinson (Con)	jwilkinson@westminster.gov.uk
Tel no for Cllr Aiken	020 7641 3255
Tel no for Cllrs Flight and Wilkinson	020 7641 3411

Surgeries by telephone only until further notice. For the time being, please use telephone number 020 7641 5377.

CHURCHILL WARD

Cllr Murad Gassanly (Con)	mgassanly@westminster.gov.uk
Tel no	020 7641 5377

If you require help and/or support with a problem, email Councillor Gassanly or call at the above telephone number. Councillor Gassanly's monthly drop-in advice surgeries (City of Westminster Housing South Area Advice Centre, 137 Lupus Street, London SW1V 3HE) are currently on hold. Call or email for information.

Cllr Shamim Talukder (Lab)	stalukder@westminster.gov.uk
Tel no	020 7641 4299

Surgeries, usually held on the second Thursday of the month, 7-8pm, are currently on hold. Please call or email for updates.

Postal address for all Councillors:	Westminster City Hall 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------



Registered Charity No: 1168619
An amenity society recognised by the City of Westminster

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is open to residents and non-residents and is free

Name email

Second name (if any) email

Address.....

Telephone: Home..... Work

Mobile Date

By signing this Application I CONSENT and AGREE to The Belgravia Society sending emails to me until I unsubscribe or resign from the Society.

Signature(s):

Please let us know if you have any special interests, concerns or queries:

PLEASE RETURN THIS APPLICATION FORM TO THE PERSON WHO GAVE IT TO YOU OR EMAIL TO: info@thebelgraviasociety.com
OR POST TO: **63 BELGRAVIA COURT 33 EBURY STREET LONDON SW1W 0NY**

Gift Aid declaration – for past, present and future

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts made:

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

☐ Today ☐ In the past 4 years ☐ In the future



giftaid it

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the Charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

SIGNATURE(S) DATE

ADDRESS

Please notify the charity or CASC if you:

☐ Want to cancel this declaration ☐ Change your name or home address ☐ No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

PLEASE EMAIL THIS APPLICATION FORM TO: info@thebelgraviasociety.com
OR POST TO: **63 BELGRAVIA COURT 33 EBURY STREET LONDON SW1W 0NY**



THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY MAGAZINE

The only independent voice for Belgravia

NUMBER 78
NOVEMBER 2021



REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1168619
www.thebelgraviasociety.com