THE ST MARYLEBONE SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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MARYLEBONE STATION CELEBRATING 30 YEARS SINCE THREATENED CLOSURE

Marylebone Station now. Photo: Mike Wood.

This summer Chiltern Railways will celebrate 30 years since Marylebone Station was saved from closure.

In the early 1980s Marylebone Station presented a sorry sight. There had been little BR investment in Marylebone's trains and facilities, and the 1970s recession, coupled with high fares controlled by the GLC and LT, took its toll and passenger numbers started falling. BR was losing money on Marylebone's commuter routes, such that in 1983 only 6,000 passengers alighted daily at Marylebone. Therefore, when the National Bus Company commissioned a study for a new coach terminus at Marylebone Station, BR and Westminster saw a possible solution to their problems. It was published in July 1983 and concluded that the new terminus would take 250,000 coaches off existing roads and by concreting over the tracks it would utilise the existing rail tunnels to create a 'busway', as a fast link into Central London. The report also stated that terminating coaches at Marylebone would have the benefit of reducing coach traffic at Victoria Coach Station.

Horrified at the proposal, the St Marylebone Society began an intensive campaign against the coach station and busway, writing to a wide range of organisations to garner support. Pre-computers, this represented a considerable administrative workload and the SMS coordinated correspondence and regular meetings to plan their strategy.

They attacked the idea of the station closure and NBC Coach terminus arguing:

- It would cause hardship for local residents and commuters,
- A coach terminus would be detrimental to the environment and the Dorset Square Conservation Area,
- A busway in the tunnels was technically unfeasible,
- There would not be a reduction in coaches on the roads,
- The station buildings must be Listed. Following an earlier proposal to List Marylebone Station and the Great Central Hotel the DofE had answered:

'We have now inspected these buildings inside and out, but have concluded I am afraid that none of them qualifies for listing as a building of special or architectural historic interest.'

Correspondence ensued between the St Marylebone Society and the Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP, Sec of State for the Environment, the GLC, WCC and local Councillors. They also involved national organisations with similar objectives, such as SAVE, The Georgian Group, The Civic Trust, SPAB and the Victorian Society. The SMS capitalised on their links to neighbouring amenity societies, such as the Regent's Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee (RPCAAC) and

Continued overleaf.

the St John's Wood Society. Utilising this network of well-connected groups who included, the Crown Estate and the Camden Civic Society, they brought the matter to the attention of many people in power at the D of E and in Parliament.

Leading the protest locally was the late Sam Briddes, a keen railway supporter and train enthusiast. He distributed a flyer to all the residents in Boston Place and started a resident's petition and sub group, 'Bostonians against Buses!' Sam also had many contacts along the lines leading out from Marylebone and especially with the Aylesbury & District Passengers Association. Together they shared information, conducted their own passenger surveys and started to get railway men involved, with NUR General Secretary, Jimmy Knapp writing to the SMS in support of retaining rail services and jobs.

It is interesting to note that the SMS were pro-active and well ahead of BR plans, as much campaigning activity took place some three years before BR posted the Notice initiating closure of the station on 15 March 1984. This official decision prompted keen interest from the national press and interviews on LBC Radio and a TV documentary spread the debate to a wider audience. Many people joined the fight to save Marylebone Station, with one exception …Westminster Council.

Marylebone Station in the 1970s.

'At a committee meeting on 11 June 1984, it was determined that, subject to conditions, Westminster Council in principle:

- Raised no objections to closure of the station and withdrawal of BR services
- Were willing to consider proposals for a coach station.

Consequently, Westminster's Planning Department started to draw up a planning brief for the site assuming station closure.

Dismayed at this stance by Westminster Council, the SMS responded with determined lobbying of their local Conservative councillors, angry with those elected to represent their views. The SMS collected detailed policy information, scrutinised timetables and fares, and listed legal and technical reasons supporting their objections to prove that closure of the routes would be unfeasible and cause hardship.

What gave the campaign its strength, and what was the significant contribution of the SMS, was its ability to link people and connect directly with those in positions of authority. Under the umbrella of the SMS an array of objectors grouped together across the social and political spectrum; from the aristocracy to NUR members, from local Labour councillors to those in the Conservative home counties, as summed up by Sam Briddes:

'What we have to remember is that the fight for the retention of the railway will have the support of many thousands of individuals, together with every local authority bar the Westminster City Council –yes, the Conservative shire counties are joining forces with ASLEF for this fight!'

Westminster's planning brief for Marylebone Station was released in April 1985 and the SMS formulated detailed comments on every line of the brief, cajoled local councillors on board and requested permission for a deputation to speak at the Planning Committee meeting. The SMS also started lobbying politicians and joined forces with residents in Victoria, to get the coach terminus out of Central London altogether, suggesting it would be better placed on the recently completed M25. They managed to get David Mitchell (Under-Secretary of State DofT) to agree but despite this and widespread protests, in July 1985 Westminster Council approved their own Planning Brief for Marylebone Station, although with conditions attached to the future coach station use. Local Councillor Jo Hegarty decried their decision, stating, *'When the Council goes out to consultation, it doesn't mean consultation. It's largely a sham.'*

To counter the Westminster Planning brief, the SMS and associated resident's groups began suggesting alternative uses for the site; from a steam railway centre to a specialist-shopping destination designed by SMS member and architect John Prizeman. One group in particular was proactive, the Paddington Federation of Residents and Tenants Associations (PFTRA), gaining £1,650 GLC funding to submit an alternative planning application for the Marylebone Station site in

Marylebone Station in the 1980s.

November 1985. Effectively writing their own planning brief for the site, in what is perhaps the first case of 'Neighbourhood Planning' in Marylebone. They envisaged the site used for housing and community facilities and launched their plan with panache by staging a 'Monopoly Board' event in Dorset Square.

The SMS's activities and commitment grew over four years of intensive campaigning to Save Marylebone Station, and this determination is characteristic of the Society and its membership, who believe in self-determination and the right to protect one's neighbourhood. Prolonging the consultation period, asking questions in high places and creating diversions brought about advantages with time, such that when SMS Chairman, Carolyn Keen, wrote to The Times in Spring 1986 she could state, '16,000 passengers now use the station every day' and highlight the role of the station as destination for Steam and Rail, a sentiment echoed by Steam Railway magazine which declared, 'Marylebone: A Recipe for Success'.

Passenger numbers had increased with the introduction of the Capital Card and BR's plans to divert trains to Baker Street now seemed impossible due to increased capacity across the public transport network. The tide had turned and on 30 April 1986 BR officially announced that Marylebone Station would remain open. The NBC commissioned a new report into an alternative coach terminus site at Paddington, which gave rise to a new amenity society, still thriving today, Paddington Residents Against the Coach Terminus (PRACT), but that's another story. Marylebone Station was saved and today the St Marylebone Society continues to support the conservation and improvement of this historic station, which is a success for Chiltern Railways and has become the hub of our neighbourhood.

Gaby Higgs

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum

Figure 1: Officially designated Marylebone Neighbourhood Area.

In our update on Neighbourhood Planning last summer we reported that the residents of Church Street and St John's Wood had applied to become separate Neighbourhood Areas (NAs). We also reported that we had joined forces with the Marylebone Association and the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association to apply for a "Marylebone NA" which roughly corresponded to that of the old London Borough of St Marylebone, less the Church Street area and that of St John's Wood (see the Map in the Summer 2013 Newsletter for the exact area concerned).

The decision on our combined "Marylebone NA" was delayed because of a couple of subsequent NA applications for Fitzrovia – both of which overlapped with our Marylebone NA. One of these, "Fitzrovia West", consisted of a triangle of land within Westminster roughly between the underground stations of Great Portland St, Oxford Circus and Tottenham Court Rd. The other Fitzrovia application was for a "Cross Borough" Fitzrovia NA, which roughly included "Fitzrovia West" in Westminster and an equivalent area to the east in Camden.

On 28th March 2014 WCC officially designated the Marylebone NA as shown in Figure 1. This effectively hived off Fitzrovia West from the area we applied for, but left us with both sides of Portland Place. At the same time Fitzrovia West, with minor boundary changes, was approved in preference to the Cross Borough Fitzrovia application. As well as losing Fitzrovia (West), Regent's Park was also removed from the designated Marylebone NA. This was a surprise because somewhere along the line in these tortuous negotiations WCC had encouraged us to include Regent's Park in our NA. The reason for exclusion of Regent's Park in the NA Designation Notice was simply that: "Regent's Park is not considered to be part of Marylebone but a separate geographic entity in its own right."

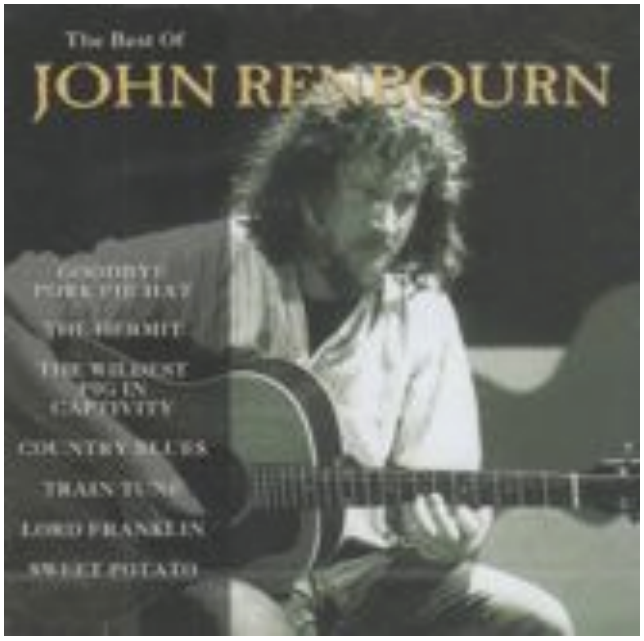
The final surprise was that our area was designated as a Business Area (as opposed to a Residential Area). The practical consequence of this is that there will need to be two referendums on the Neighbourhood Plan – one for residents and one for businesses. If these two referendums go in opposite directions, WCC gets a casting vote on whether or not to accept the Plan.

The next step is for us to formally constitute the Forum and to apply to be designated the Neighbourhood Forum for the Marylebone NA.

Mike Wood

Gaby Higgs was commended in the Westminster – Better City, Better Lives Community Awards.
Also commended were our members, Baker Street Quarter, in the same category, and the Landmark Hotel in the Business Award category.

Musicians in Marylebone



This is the first in a series about musicians with connections to the Marylebone area and I thought I would start with the one who has the strongest ties as he was born here and was recorded by a local label. The guitarist came to fame by creating a new style and the label was the first independent to achieve national success. He was a member of the fab five, Pentangle, and his name is John Renbourn.

I have yet to find out where in Marylebone he was born but we know he went to Marylebone Grammar School, on Lisson Grove/Marylebone Road before heading off to Kingston Poly to play in Hog-Snort Rupert's Famous Porkestra before moving into the world of folk music in the early 1960s.

He made the move into the world of folk music following his discovery of the blues by the likes of Big Bill Bronzy and he started playing cover versions, typical for the time. He was also inspired by Davey Graham who championed guitar playing in the UK, moving it on from the three chord strumming of skiffle in the mid/late 1950s into something far more intricate and with a wide range of influences, East and West. John is one of the first generation of acoustic guitar players, a scene led initially by Bert Jansch, an instrumentalist rather than a singer, who took this combination to an enthusiastic world of folk clubs. John moved into a flat on Somali Road, NW3 with Bert in 1964, the start of an association that peaked with Pentangle.

Yes, it is true that there was a moment in the early 1960s, when the Beatles seemed merely a pop group producing top-notch singles, when Mersey beat pushed past trad jazz and calypso as the next big thing and when serious musicians ignored this popular culture and instead took the acoustic guitar to be more worthy than the electric guitar. Most of this was due to the awesome technique of Davey Graham, more so than the blues and attachment to the civil rights movement in the USA.

John, who performed on the folk circuit – Les Cousins on Greek St, Soho, the Black Horse on Rathbone Place, the Troubadour in Earls Court – recorded some demos which raised no interest from the two established record labels, EMI and Decca. This is where Nat Joseph, head of independent label Transatlantic (86 Marylebone High Street) took a chance. This was a brave move for two reasons. The first is John's early recordings are not that compelling, in terms of the material, voice or playing, especially in comparison with Bert Jansch at this stage in his career and who was already signed to Transatlantic. Nat had an advantage as he was unfettered, Transatlantic was his own label, and he spotted the opportunity of taking the first generation of folk singers out of the folk clubs, but with no idea where this would lead. The second is that he released the results from these untested artists straight onto 12", 33⅓ rpm vinyl without bothering to test the market first with 45s, which was the starting point with all pop groups, the Beatles included.

Whilst John spent his early years fitting into the folk circuit playing folk songs and blues to keep him solvent, he soon developed a style known as Baroque Folk, formally composed, even stately, folk music, mixed a hint of jazz; in 1968, after flower power became Iron Butterfly, he recorded the truly wonderful 'Sir John Alot of Merrie Englandes Musyk Thyng and ye Grene Knyghte', an LP which sounds completely out of its time and in a style which was immediately overshadowed by his complete involvement in Pentangle for the next six years. Yet he continued to develop the style, reaching perfection on the Black Balloon, an LP with which he combines the formal baroque folk style with numerous variations and then pure improvisation, all seamless and thoroughly listenable to and again as completely out of its time as 'Sir John Alot…' was in 1968.

His interest in Baroque music was not entirely in isolation, but almost. What influence did events many miles away in the US have – there Joshua Rifkin released the LP Baroque Beatles Book in November 1965 on Nonesuch, the classical label of Elektra, and Elektra itself released LPs by many New York folk singers. Only slightly more popular was the group, the Left Banke, which released a series of excellent Baroque pop singles starting in 1966 with 'Walk Away Renee' and 'Pretty Ballerina'.

Best Baroque folk LP – Black Balloon, 1979 easily available.

Best Baroque pop – the Left Banke, collected on 'There's a storm'.

Beat Baroque Beatles LP – Joshua Rifkin's Baroque Beatles Book, released on Elektra in 1965.

Johnathan Monnickendam

Artist's impression of the restored Cinema (Tim Ronalds Architects, 2014).

Alfred Reneson Coucher, The Regent Street Polytechnic and The Regent Street Cinema

Alfred Reneson Coucher..

Founding President of the St Marylebone Society, Councillor (and later Alderman), Alfred Reneson Coucher, enjoyed a lifelong association with the University of Westminster, formerly the Regent Street Polytechnic, on Regent Street. The University of Westminster Archive details the achievements of A R Coucher during the period 1906-1910 when he studied at both the day school and the evening School of Architecture. His list of awarded prizes include certificates for grammar and composition, English and French and medals for both Football and Cricket. In the entertainment programme for the 1907 prize-giving ceremony he is listed as playing the hilarious Mrs Malaprop in Sheridan's *The Rivals!*

Coucher continued his relationship with the Regent Street Polytechnic after completing his studies. He was a regular contributor to the Tuesday Social Evenings, giving talks to accompany films he had shot himself, in colour, often detailing his travels abroad. Many readers may be aware of the colour footage he filmed in London during the Blitz. These films remain some of the only colour footage of the Marylebone area from this time and are now held by the Imperial War Museum.

Interior of the Regent Street Cinema, believed to have been taken around 1900. Very few photos of the cinema interior exist. (University of Westminster Archive).

Coucher continued to film after the war. On March 11th 1952, the Polytechnic Magazine promoted "A Holiday in Spain" illustrated by colour films (by) Mr Councillor A. E. Reneson Coucher in its listings, and in 1955 "With a Cine-Camera at home and abroad". These screenings or 'illustrated talks' took place at the Polytechnic at a time when the Cinema also operated a full screening programme for the general public.

Considered the birthplace of British Cinema, the same special venue was chosen by the pioneering Lumière brothers as the site for the first public display of moving images in Britain in 1896 when, for the price of a shilling, their Cinématographe was demonstrated to an astonished audience. It remained a working cinema until it closed its doors to the public in April 1980, since when it has been used by the University as a lecture theatre and for occasional events.

Members of the St Marylebone Society recently paid a visit to the Cinema, to hear about the plans to restore this unique venue. Visitors were given a talk by the University Archivist detailing the historic use of the site and learned about the plans to reopen the Cinema to the public in spring 2015. The restored Cinema will offer a stimulating programme of screenings, talks, lectures and workshops. It will also provide a unique venue for students to showcase their work alongside established practitioners of film, and offer a platform for debate and learning for film enthusiasts, and a new arts venue for the local community.

The University of Westminster has been fundraising for the £6m required to complete the project since 2012. With over two thirds of the funding now secured, the restoration will be commencing in the next month. To help the University reach their final target a Name a Seat initiative has been launched, whereby supporters may select a name of their choosing to be placed on the back of a seat in the restored auditorium. Those who have already supported include broadcaster Sandi Toksvig OBE and Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, himself an Alumnus of the University. The University is aiming to have all 200 seats named before the Cinema opens next year.

Members being shown the renovation work.

The St Marylebone Society also decided to name a seat in support of this unique project and will take their place amongst the growing community of supporters to be recognised in the restored Cinema.

A fitting continued association with the former Regent Street Polytechnic which we hope Alfred Reneson Coucher would have been pleased to support.

For further information on the project or to find out how you can become involved or support personally, please visit the University's website www.birthplaceofcinema.com or alternatively contact James Williams on 020 3506 6291 or e-mail j.williams2@westminster.ac.uk

James Williams
Development Officer
Regent Street Cinema Project

Visit to the Open Air Theatre

Members and Emma Friend outside the east end of the admin building.

On 9 April, a beautifully sunny day, a group of society members were given a comprehensive tour of the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre by Emma Friend, Assistant to the Artistic Director.

We were shown the auditorium, which was being given a complete refit with new waterproof seating and updated lighting and staging, the undercroft was stripped-out ready for refurbishment. With only a month to go before the first performance it seemed a daunting task to have everything finished in time.

The box office was being extended and we were shown the low-build corporate entertainment building, which doubles as an audition and rehearsal room.

The really interesting part of the tour was to see the new administration building, which has been cleverly designed to fit into a thin strip of land to the rear of the stage and facing out on to the Inner Circle. Built with a steel frame, clad in sustainable wood and having a green, living roof it is a great solution to the space problem that the Theatre had. Now that the exterior wood has weathered the building is hardly noticeable and blends in with the existing trees and foliage. This building incorporates offices for the directors and the rest of the team who run the Theatre, dressing rooms with showers, wardrobe and a green room. Most of these activities were run out of portakabins or off-site before.

We finally saw the original workshop building which had been, while retaining the old exterior, fitted-out in the same style as the new building.

It was fascinating to see how the Theatre, which is self-funding, continues to evolve and maintain its position as a unique landmark in London.

The Society's thanks go to Emma and the Theatre staff for letting us have such an interesting tour.

Robert McAulay

Obituaries

Mike Sharman

Members of the Society will be shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Mike Sharman, a long-serving member.

Mike was not only a qualified architect, he was a journalist and former editor of *Building Design* magazine. He brought these skills to the St Marylebone Society, in particular to the Planning Committee. Passionate about modern architecture, he lived at 125 Park Road, an iconic building of which he was immensely proud. Designed by Sir Terry Farrell and Sir Nicholas Grimshaw in the late 1960s, Mike and Maz lived there from the beginning, in the 1970s. He wrote about the scheme in his magazine, thus contributing to the reputation, not only of the building but of the careers of the architects, both of whom are now world-famous. To his great delight, he succeeded in having 125 Park Road made a Grade II listed building in 2001.

125 Park Road.

Mike's own apartment on the eighth floor echoed the extraordinary style of the building. Black, grey and white was the theme carried out in glass and steel. Mike tackled planning issues and the Council with steely patience – most recently with the next-door, Atrium building in Park Road, the design of which he regarded with some disdain. A tireless champion of good design and always modest about his talents and intellect, Mike Sharman will be greatly missed.

Gwyneth Hampson

John Gentle (1930-2014)

We were sorry to hear that John had died.

Married to Jacqueline, a teacher, they began their married life on a barge in Little Venice that they fully restored and fitted-out. Later they moved to a delightful house in Linhope Street where John became involved with the Society.

John trained as an architect, at the Architects Association (AA), and was a partner in Rosenberg Gentle Architects, based in Nottingham Place,

Marylebone. His knowledge and experience were invaluable to the Society. He chaired the Planning Committee for many years during the 1990s. He never missed a meeting and always turned up having studied the drawings and documents thoroughly, so that the rest of the committee had a good idea of what they were to consider. This did not mean that he ignored the opinions of his fellow committee members, everyone's thoughts were taken into account. As a result his reports to Westminster Council were a model of how comments from a local perspective should be: concise, informed and professional.

Typically, he kept a full record of all the applications and comments which, after much heart searching he had to dispose of because he could not take them to their new home in Cambridgeshire, which they moved to in 1996 to be closer to their three daughters and nine grandchildren.

He was a good friend to the Society and will be missed.

St Marylebone Society Programme 2014

Tuesday 24 June 7.00 pm. Westminster History Group. Lord Mayor's Reception Rooms, 18th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1. A talk given by Professor Julia Merritt entitled "Westminster and the English Revolution 1640-1660". The effect on Westminster of the English Civil War and the restoration of the monarchy. There is a panoramic view of the London skyline and a glass of wine is included in the price. **Meet outside City Hall at 18.40 pm. £10 payable on arrival.**

Wednesday 9 July 10.30 am. St Marylebone Society Coffee Morning kindly hosted by our member Michèle Hart at her home. 12 members only – first come first served. **Please book your place with Douglas Temple.** You will be escorted to her garden in the sky, but mind that last flight of stairs! **Waterdale Manor House, 20 Harewood Avenue, NW1 61X.**

Tuesday 22 July 2014 2.00 pm. Benjamin Franklin's House, 36 Craven Street, London WC2 (near Charing Cross). The diplomat, statesman and inventor lived here for many years during the 18th century before returning to America at the time of the start of the War of Independence in 1776. A guided tour of the house. **Meet outside 1.50 pm. Price £5 on arrival.**

Thursday 14 August 2014 11.00 am. The Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, 35-45 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2. A fascinating collection of surgical and medical instruments illustrating developments in the sciences since the 18th century, with a particular medical theme. **Meet outside 10.50 am. Free**

Wednesday 24 September 10.00 am. St Marylebone Society Coffee Morning at Aubaine Restaurant, 7 Moxon Street, London W1U 4EP. **A new venue in Marylebone, pay your own way.**

For more information and late bookings please contact: St Marylebone Society Events Secretary, Douglas Temple, Flat 1, 23 Seymour Place, London W1H 5BH – 020 7723 6417.

Bridge Club at Rayne House, Maida Vale, every Tuesday 1.30 – 4.30pm. For more info phone: Lawrence Block 020 7569 2530.

Baker Street Quarter Events

Guided Walks – These are free to attend and no registration is needed. Meet our guide outside 55 Baker Street.

GARDENS OF THE QUARTER

25 June 1.00 pm – Discover the beautiful green spaces in the Quarter. We explore its delightful parks and pay a visit to two charming private garden squares, not usually open to the public. Lasts 45 Minutes.

STREETS OF SHERLOCK

23 July 1.00 pm – Get to know the origins of the Quarter's most famous character Sherlock Holmes in our whistle-stop walk. Whether you're a fan of Arthur Conan Doyle's crime sleuth or have a penchant for literature history come and join us. Lasts 45 Minutes.

BLUE PLAQUE DISCOVERY 'EVENING WALK'

13 August 6.00 pm – The Quarter has been home to many of the famous and notorious! Let our blue plaques walk take you to the doors of some of our well-known former residents. Lasts 90 Minutes.

WOMEN OF THE QUARTER

27 August 1.00 pm – Many influential women have shaped the Quarter's history. From Lady Montagu, the women of the Wallace Collection, Madame Marie Tussaud to Sherlock's very own Mrs Hudson. Join us for some tales of the unexpected. Lasts 45 Minutes.

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The Landmark Hotel
London Clinic
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Old Philologians
Open Air Theatre (Regent's Park)
Opera Rama
Peoples Travel
The Portman Estate
15 Portman Square Tenants' Association
Queen's College
Regent's University
Rossmore Court Leaseholding Ltd.
Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT)
St Marylebone Parish Church
St Marylebone School
The Seashell Restaurant
Terry Farrell & Partners
The Tyburn Angling Society
University of Westminster
Westminster City Council
Wood and Vale
Wyndham Place Management
York Estates
Zoological Society of London

Life in Marylebone– St George's Day Photography Competition 2014

Kate Cooper.

This year we were delighted to receive over 350 entries for the Art in Marylebone Photography Competition 2014. Usually held around St George's day, 23rd April fell on Easter Tuesday so this year we included the Easter weekend and following week (19th-27th) to allow as many residents, tourists and workers to take part as possible.

The judges look for different elements in deciding what makes a great photograph: interesting subject, imagination, composition and technical aspects. The weather this year was not favourable and perhaps for this reason we received many more images of people rather than buildings and street scenes. In rain and overcast skies buildings

Povilas Norvila.

are much more difficult to photograph, although when the sun did appear many entrants caught Marylebone's parks and gardens bursting into spring. Many more photographers captured people at work, rest and play; at morning, noon and night. It was therefore fitting that we titled this year's exhibition 'Life in Marylebone'.

The judges selected as 3rd Prize Alex Melman's shot of Church Street, one of the oldest markets in London, which illustrates the wonderful, cultural diversity of Marylebone as a microcosm of London as a whole.

Runner up was Povila Norvila's portrait of 'Chef Taking a Break', in one of the most interesting ginnels in Marylebone, Grotto Passage. The judges were impressed with the composition catching two people passing by along Paddington Street oblivious to the tale of intrigue… Who is he talking to? What has happened? What will happen next?

Alexanda Melman.

First prize was unanimous. House of Mirrors by Kate Cooper captures the architecture of Marylebone in a clever self-portrait 'shot from the hip'. It is a fleeting glance of life passing by amid the constancy of Marylebone's Georgian streetscape and a good example of how the ordinary can be made extra-ordinary by the photographer's eye, a 'memento mori'… that our time is short and we must make the most of it.

The judges selected their top 50 photographs, which will be eventually deposited at Westminster Archives to continue to build up a picture of the social and architectural history of Marylebone. An exhibition featuring the selected images was held at the Hellenic Centre on Paddington Street and a book featuring all the 50 selected winning images is available to buy for £20 from www.art.marylebone.com

Visit to Clifton Nurseries

Members enjoying coffee at the Quince Tree.

Aurine Dovydaityte and Dorian Aroyo.

The coffee morning at the Clifton Nurseries, Quince Tree Café was attended by 16 people, all paying for themselves too. The new manageress Aurine Dovydaityte (Do-vee-die-tee-tay) from Lithuania had prepared a beautiful table for 12 in the centre of the room so we spilled over onto other tables as the party grew. Lots of us went on to shop at the garden centre which was in bloom as if especially colourful for our event!

Dorian Aroyo

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