

# THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 97 | JUNE 2023

THE ONLY  
INDEPENDENT  
VOICE FOR  
BELGRAVIA

## SUMMER MAGIC

THINKING OF  
LONDON'S WILDLIFE

ROUGH SLEEPING  
RACHAEL ROBATHAN DISCUSSES  
THIS GROWING PROBLEM



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

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

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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.

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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



George Waite  
Chairman of  
The Belgravia Society  
and ESRA

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

## Crime: the “new normal” we can never afford to accept

I often refer to articles published in SEBRA (South East Bayswater Residents' Association) News Magazine ([www.sebra.org.uk](http://www.sebra.org.uk)). The area covered by SEBRA is north of Hyde Park between Bayswater Road to the south, the Westway to the north, Westbourne Grove to the west, and Paddington Station to the east. They are literally just on the other side of Hyde Park to ourselves.

SEBRA's Summer Edition includes an excellent article by Dr Allen Zimbler, Chairman of the Hyde Park Paddington Neighbourhood Forum. I do hope that Dr Zimbler will forgive me for using the title from his article as well as a number of his comments which I found to be most shocking and a real cause for concern, as they mirror issues that we are beginning to face.

Dr Zimbler describes how knife crime in London's West End has reached worryingly new levels and, '...there is not a single one of us who does not have a story to tell about ourselves or those close to us having been victims of some crime or other... Crimes ranging from persistent begging... burglary, robbery, bicycle theft, mobile

*phone snatching, drug dealing, theft from motor vehicles, theft of motor vehicles, and of scouts identifying luxury vehicles on the streets from shopping lists and being paid £2,500 to affix tracker devices to these vehicles so that they can be harvested later at the convenience of gangs of car thieves... The shocking reality is that, in a first-world country like ours, we are becoming habituated to the kind of criminality that is characteristic of lesser developed countries in which the rule of law does not prevail, and crime and corruption are the norm – it is a “new normal” we can never afford to accept... walking in our streets of London is beginning to feel like running a gauntlet of potential criminal attacks or incidents, and I am mindful, when leaving my home, that my phone can be snatched, that I should not display a fancy wristwatch, that even my credit card details can be copied by someone brushing past me without seeing the card itself...'*

Dr Zimbler also chairs the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel for The Hyde Park Estate, and just as our Simon Davie and Andrew Newton (who also attend Safer Neighbourhood Ward meetings) complain, Dr Zimbler explains that the 'local Police... are underfunded, under resourced and underpaid... moreover ever time we are allocated an excellent young police officer... just as they are beginning to get the lie of the land and we are beginning to get to

Continued from page 3 >

know them, they are moved somewhere else...the days of having our own trusted, familiar, and knowledgeable "bobbies on the beat" walking through our neighbourhoods appear to be long gone'...there is no other conclusion to make other than to say that **THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN**. We are not being adequately policed...at our regular Ward Panel meetings our two hapless police officers are not even able to leave us with the printed copies of the crime statistics they present to us each time we go through the motion of discovering that, for all their "heat maps" and their undoubtedly sincere efforts, no progress is being made in addressing the criminals and their wave of crime...the proliferation of private security and Community Security Teams might provide a deterrent, but none of these teams have the power to apprehend and arrest, crucial powers in reducing the amount of crime...'

Dr Zimble concludes by stressing that the only way we can combat crime is by increasing police presence, therefore ...

**EACH AND EVERY CRIME NEEDS TO BE REPORTED. THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR BUILDING UP THE INTELLIGENCE THE POLICE NEED IN ORDER TO BE ALLOCATED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.'**

If we witness a crime or are the victim of a crime we need to report it – via 999 if it is an emergency, or 101 for non-emergency – and we need to keep making it clear to our local MP (Nickie Aiken) and our local Councillors that our policing is fundamentally inadequate and we need the security cameras that we keep being promised, as well as more visible police on the beat. ▲



THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY

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.thebelgraviasociety.com/  
online-membership-form](http://www.thebelgraviasociety.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

# NICKIE AIKEN MP HOW WE'RE HELPING MORE PEOPLE INTO WORK



Since 2010, four million more people are in work across the UK. But it's so important everyone has the same opportunities, and we can all get – and stay in – a decent-paid job.

That's why I'm proud of how this Government has put support for people with a health condition or disability at its core, with schemes like Access to Work making an immense difference and giving employers the confidence to take on someone with a physical or mental health condition or disability. Through grants and support, Access to Work allows businesses to offer a suitable working environment, ensuring opportunities.

The Waitrose Belgravia branch is showing the way and, after my visit in February, I was delighted to invite the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Tom Pursglove MP, on a visit to the store to show him Government work in action. The branch employs five deaf Partners who are supported by interpreters through Access to Work. The team, led by Branch Manager Stuart Smith, has also come together, supporting those Partners by learning hand signals and using notes to communicate. It is truly inspirational and their work demonstrates that not only is it right for businesses to engage in disability employment, but the huge impact it has

and what can be achieved with the right Government support.

Belgravia is home to so many entrepreneurs and employers, I wholeheartedly encourage every single one of you to find out more about Access to Work. You will make a huge difference. Get more information via [nickie.news/AccessToWork](http://nickie.news/AccessToWork).

### LOCAL COMPETITION!

I'm delighted that my photography competition returns for a third year! Running until 12th September, pick up your phone or camera and take a picture that captures what Belgravia or our neighbourhoods across the Two Cities mean to you. Take a look at last year's winners and find out more at [nickie.news/SummerSnaps](http://nickie.news/SummerSnaps). I can't wait to see this year's entries.

If I can be of any help on any issue, local, national or international, please send me an email at [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk) or write to me at Nickie Aiken MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Keep up to date and be the first to know what I'm up to by following me on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube @TwoCitiesNickie. And sign up to my community newsletter to get the latest community news directly to your inbox at [nickie.news/SignUp](http://nickie.news/SignUp). ▲

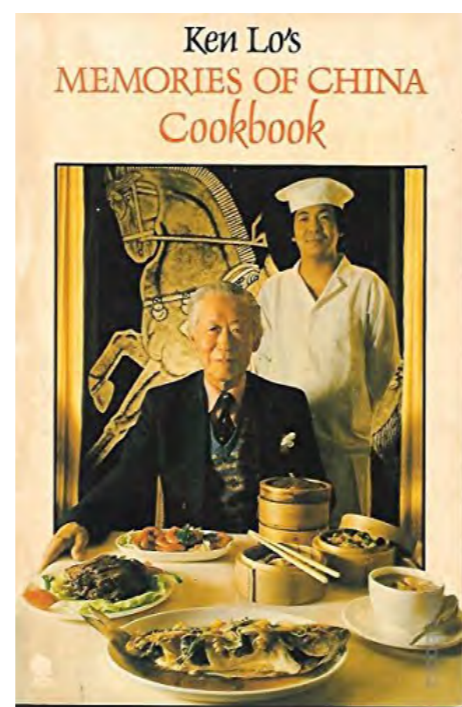


# STOP PRESS – KEN LO'S MEMORIES OF CHINA SUDDEN CLOSURE

BY MARY REGNIER-LEIGH

I was sitting at my computer last Wednesday (21st June) when I received an email from a colleague. The gist was that the Memories of China was closing on Friday 23rd June. I simply could not believe it. I went there and I spoke to the lady who was the person in charge on that day. She confirmed, with tears in her eyes, that it was true and they were closing on Friday.

I have been told by a very reliable source that Memories of China had been negotiating for almost two years for a new lease. The source confirmed that Grosvenor served notice a year ago requiring that their occupation should come to an end on 23rd June 2023. Negotiations and discussions took place with Grosvenor. I am told that Grosvenor did not like that there were not very many



daytime patrons. They wanted a more lively atmosphere, and they did not think the space was being properly used. They wanted the interior to be upgraded and a new shop front. I was told that Grosvenor suggested that other Asian cuisines should be served as well.

My source told me that the management offered to make changes to satisfy Grosvenor. These offers were not accepted. Our MP, Nickie Aiken, went to see the chief executive of Grosvenor to plead the case for Grosvenor to change their minds. She was told they were not prepared to allow Memories of China to remain.

I know that immediately prior to 23rd June there was a conversation between Grosvenor and Memories of China who were expecting some further discussions. There was no discussion. The Grosvenor representative simply wanted the keys to the premises. At that stage, Memories of China just said that they had to give up.

We cannot understand Grosvenor, which takes a pride in the quality of the businesses on the Belgravia Estate, would want an internationally famous Chinese restaurant, well known and highly valued, to leave in such a compromising way. Ken Lo was widely known, as was Memories of China, the restaurant bearing his name. The cuisine has remained superb and has remained true to its founder, Ken Lo. At least twenty five workers have now lost their jobs. Our chairman, George Waite, has been trying to get information from Grosvenor to hear the other side of the story.

People have asked me what to do. It is a *fait accompli*, but there is always hope. Why not write to Grosvenor and tell them you want Memories of China back? See what happens. Unless they already have a new tenant they may invite Memories of China back. If we don't try we won't get. Their address is 70 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 3JP or email [UK@Grosveor.com](mailto:UK@Grosveor.com). Please send copies to us. We will report again next month. ▲





# SUMMER *Magic*

Summer has come early and the roses this year have been glorious due to ideal temperatures and conditions over the past winter and spring, despite an early severe frost in 2023 which saw many plant casualties. A gentle reminder for the summer months, please be mindful and think of the wildlife in London by giving them a lifeline with access to water; whether it be insects accessing a drink on a small dish filled with marbles or stones, or bowls filled with fresh cold water for birds, pets and wildlife.

Wouldn't it be nice, if we had more 'nature fountains' in our streets, not only to look good and cool the environment, but to serve a useful purpose for nature? They remind

us to pause and appreciate the present, evoking a sense of calm reflection, hope and resilience. A nature fountain may help to transform our environment and take us to a place where we can celebrate the delicate intricacies of nature and its beauty, with each fountain carefully inspiring us to feel emotionally rejuvenated in our cities.

Generations past had the right idea when they produced wonderful fountains dotted around London. Indeed, we have a couple of delightful historic ones, such as the memorial drinking fountain in Pimlico Road, constructed in memory of Richard Second Marquess of Westminster who died in 1869, and another in Ebury Square, refurbished in recent years. A return of the fountain,



especially where nature is considered, will create harmony and pleasure for future generations.

A walk to Hyde Park is a summer must, being near Belgravia. We are fortunate to enjoy a unique habitat in the heart of London. A variety of flora and fauna abound, and positive changes in management practices have gone a long way to encourage diverse species into the park.

Summer magic includes looking out for butterflies feeding off native wildflowers, in the summer meadows of Hyde Park. Trees, shrub beds and herbaceous plantings provide rich habitats for songbirds such as robins, dunnocks and tits. Watch out for small groups of Long Tailed Tits hopping around from tree to tree looking for nesting materials and insects. Summer can be magical, but do enjoy it wisely, by being aware of other species needing a helping hand at this time of year. ▲

## SOURCES:

*A PAPER • OPEN ACCESS Water Fountains in Environment Transformation Correcting* – [iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1757-899X/262/1/012144/pdf](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1757-899X/262/1/012144/pdf)

*The Royal Parks: Hyde Park-Wildlife* [www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/hyde-park/things-to-see-and-do/wildlife](https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/hyde-park/things-to-see-and-do/wildlife)

## 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 [info@thebelgraviasociety.com](mailto:info@thebelgraviasociety.com). We can only accept a limited number, so first come, first served.

Our next meeting is on  
11th July 2023



If you have a CAF account, IT is an easy way to donate to the Society. Please do help us to maintain our work for Belgravia, and our community magazine.

## PLANNING ADVICE

If you get a notice of a planning application near you and you want advice, telephone our dedicated helpline: 07578 969509

## WANTED!

### Writers | Historians | Story tellers

Do you enjoy writing? We would be delighted to receive articles and short stories about Belgravia/our neighbours/ London and beyond – all voluntary, of course. Discuss your ideas with us at [info@belgraviasociety.com](mailto:info@belgraviasociety.com)



# THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND ITS LUXURY AND POWER, PERSIA TO GREECE EXHIBITION

*This page:  
Left: Ivory carved head  
Below: Gold amulet*

*Next page:  
Left: Gold drinking vessel  
Right: Gold chariot*

**B**etween 490 and 479 BC the Persian Empire tried and failed to conquer mainland Greece. Many Greeks explain their victory as a triumph of plain living over a barbarian enemy defined by luxury. Ancient objects reveal a very different story. The Persian court used luxury as an expression of prestige and power with this distinctive style across cultural borders, even influencing democratic Athens and later, the world of Alexander the Great.

Some of the artefacts on display are exquisite and are over 2,000 years old. They represent two empires, Persia being the largest, and Athenian Empire which grew out of the need for the various Hellenic cities to work together to defeat those of Persia.



We are reminded in the exhibition of the legacy to us all of democracy. We have, over the millennia, inherited and devised one of great legal systems being Roman law and English common law. Despite its prestige and power, Athens did not bequeath to us a legal system but something extremely precious: a concept of democracy.

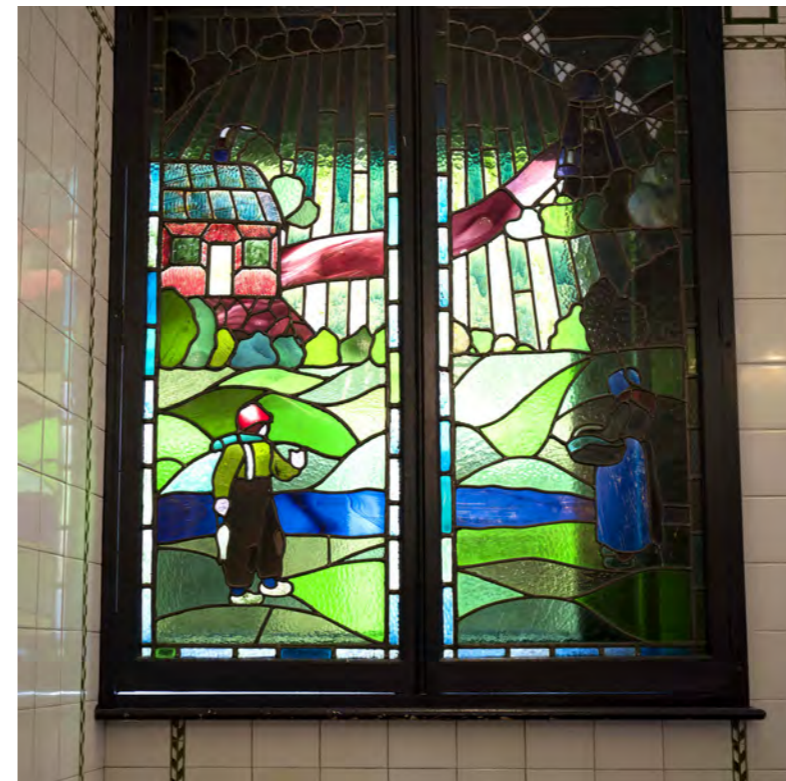
Responding to the growing social conflict, Cleisthenes (about 570-508 BC) introduced new reforms in 508 BC. New laws shared political responsibility equally across all adult male citizens, excluding women, foreign-born residents and slaves. This was later termed a democracy, from demos (people) and kratos (power). Perhaps I should include a trigger warning now, since you will see that the only political responsibility was that of adult males who were citizens. It may be that our lady readers, and slaves and their descendants, may be disturbed and upset by this. However, the concept of all adult males being eligible to vote on an equal basis, irrespective of their wealth or place in society, was an entirely new one. Today, we see the franchise is much wider in democratic states but the origins were in Athens.

Democratic Athens dominated the defensive need of their neighbouring cities against

Persia. As the collaboration proceeded those cities became an Athenian empire. Athens grew wealthy from the tribute paid by the subjectivities and from silver mines.

The designs from the two cultures of Persia and Athens, amongst the exhibits, are often combined, so a stone head amongst the exhibit has a Persian style beard and ringlets but also wears a Greek style wreath. Often other influences blended alongside the nation and other local cultures. Today we often think how well travelled we are but the ancients travelled a great deal as well and left their mark in many different cultures.

Hellenistic kingdoms were gradually overtaken by the Romans in the Mediterranean and by the Parthian Empire across the Middle East. The last Hellenic ruler, Cleopatra VII of Egypt was defeated by Rome in 31 BC. Her death marked the end of an era. In Rome exotic goods associated with the East continued to bestow status and prestige. While some Romans reveled in the show of wealth, others regarded it as excessive and decadent. This uneasy combination of desire and distrust survives today. ▲



PizzaExpress has been in the building since 1967 when it was bought as the dairy closed. It was the second restaurant in the PizzaExpress family. It is to the credit of the PizzaExpress management that the interior was meticulously retained with some modifications and enhancements in keeping with the setting.

Do look at the milk bottle lighting. It is an unusual space and well worth visiting for its own merit, as well as excellent pizza. If you like pizza and an historic setting, then this is the place for lunch. ▲

# The Old Dairy IN COPTIC STREET

One of the joys of visiting the British Museum is the historic shops and buildings in the streets nearby. We can particularly recommend a visit to the PizzaExpress in Coptic Street. The choice of pizzas is not as good as it used to be, but the pizzas are excellent and always a huge special treat when you are supposed to be on a diet!

The premises were originally the Dairy Supply Company and was built in 1888 and many of the interior features are still present, and have not been torn out by the need for modernisation. The ceramic tiles in

the interior and the hand carved lettering on the façade are still to be seen.

The Express Country Milk Supply Company was established in 1864 by George Barham and sold milk that was transported into London and then delivered directly to homes. This was a revolution in freshness as, up until that point, milk was transported into London by rail because in London milk was of very poor quality by 1866. The Dairy Supply Company was formed later as a separate company and sold dairy equipment to aid the transportation of milk. All was supplied by the company.

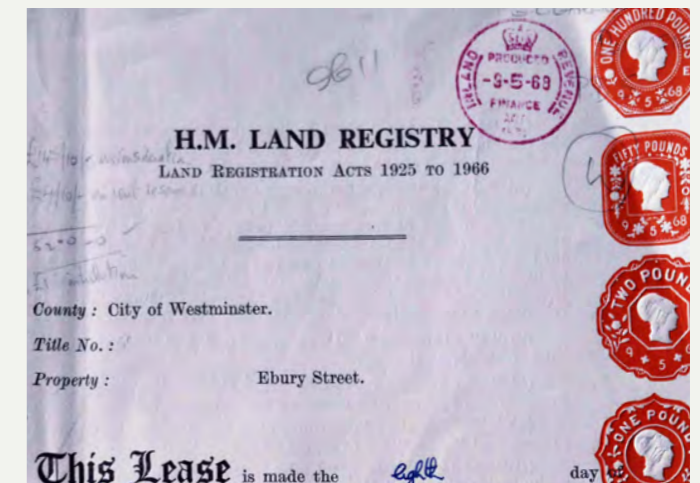
## WARNING TO LEASEHOLDERS

Do you have a lease of business premises with or without residential accommodation? If so:

1. Do not agree to the exclusion of the Landlord & Tenants Act relating to business tenancies
2. Do not agree to a landlord's right to break clause especially if it has no date fixed when it can be exercised.

AND VITALLY

3. DO NOT try to negotiate a new lease yourself without specialist advice from an experienced surveyor or solicitor.



Failure to follow this advice could result in having your lease ended when you do not want it to or that you will lose the ability to sell your lease and goodwill. You may be offered a cheaper rent, but do not fall for that as you will be in your landlord's hands and they are not always fair to tenants.

There are other potholes you could fall into, but your professional advisers will know what they are and you will be advised. ▲



# FLIGHT SERGEANT PETER BROWN

*Forgotten Heroes*



**S**adly, we often hear of the death of an elderly person who has outlived their family and friends and a funeral needs to be arranged through the local authority. Such is the case with Peter Brown. He died in December. He was thought to be one, if not the last, of the so-called “Pilots of the Caribbean”. He died at his home in Maida Vale.

Mr Brown, who was originally from Jamaica, came to the UK at the height of the Second World War to volunteer for service in the RAF. He flew in Lancaster bombers, carrying out a number of missions as a radio operator and gunner and was a Flight Sergeant.

*In keeping with his military background, the RAF hosted Mr Brown's funeral at St Clement Danes Church in his home borough of Westminster*

After the war he stayed in the RAF before joining civilian life. WCC tried to find relatives or friends who knew Mr Brown. The RAF became involved as Mr Brown was one of their own.

Arrangements were made to ensure Mr Brown received a dignified send-off, worthy of his life story. The announcement by Westminster City Council and the Royal Air Force came after plans to hold a funeral at Mortlake Crematorium were postponed because of a surge in requests to attend from well-wishers. In keeping with his military background, the RAF hosted Mr Brown's funeral at St Clement Danes Church in his home borough of Westminster.

St Clement Danes is The Central Church of the RAF, has a significantly larger capacity than the previous venue, and allowed for many more people to pay their respects.

600 spaces in the church had been reserved for the public. Priority access was given to those with a connection to Mr Brown. The service to mark the life of Flight Sergeant Peter Brown was held at St Clement Danes, the RAF Central Church, in Westminster on 25th May at 11am.

Since then, there has been a search spanning the globe looking for his relatives and a number of leads were followed up by council officers and genealogists. An RAF spokesman said, “Flight Sergeant Brown is an example of the selfless contribution of all Commonwealth personnel who have



served throughout the RAF's history. We should never forget their sacrifices which have defended our freedom and kept us safe.”

I think all of us would agree with that and are so grateful for so many contributions from those who came from the Commonwealth and who risked their lives to uphold our freedom and way of life.

We also thank all the people who facilitated Flight Sergeant Peter Brown's funeral. He has been remembered in the most appropriate way and we want to show him our gratitude and thank him for his service.





# ROUGH SLEEPING AND HOMELESSNESS

BY RACHAEL ROBATHAN

**W**estminster has for many years suffered a particularly acute challenge in terms of the number of people sleeping rough. Indeed, 20% of all rough sleepers in London are in our City and, on any given night, about 200 people will sleep rough on our streets, more than double the next highest borough. In large part, these are people drawn to the centre of the Capital or who have travelled by coach or train to Victoria.

Each of these cases is a tragedy – with lives falling apart due to substance misuse, mental health or other pressures – but the

fact that the numbers aren't even higher is due to the level of provision which the Council, funded by grants from the Government, pours into helping people. Westminster is the only area to have teams of outreach workers on the streets 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, engaging with those they find and doing everything possible to persuade them to 'come inside' and access accommodation.

The Council commissions over 400 supported housing bed spaces and an assessment centre which can sleep up to a further 40. There are more than enough

beds for all those on the streets and there is no charge for them. We also offer counselling to help people overcome addictions and also employment and skills training. So why do we still have this problem?

Many people, for whatever reason, mistrust authority and it can take many repeated encounters with the Outreach teams to persuade people to accept help. There is also the problem that more people travel to our city every day and end up on the streets so there is always a race to reach them before they become 'entrenched' in a way of life which is difficult to turn around.

However, the 'street population' is increasing – people who usually already have accommodation, come to our streets to beg or make money from criminal activities. Sometimes, women and children have been trafficked. All too often the lure of easy money is too great. There is aggression and intimidation to ordinary people. Frequent reports of people feeling frightened to take money out of cash machines or witnessing anti-social behaviour – urination, defecation, drug taking – in residential areas in broad daylight.

What can we do? First, for anyone wishing to donate to help, please do NOT give money to individuals on the street. These are usually either organised begging teams who will be encouraged to keep returning if they are given money, or people who will take the money and spend it on drugs or



*The Council commissions over 400 supported housing bed spaces...*

alcohol. It is far better to donate to one of the charities working in Westminster via The Hidden Network (Westminster City Council). This way the money will be spent on services to help support people to turn their lives around and build a better life away from the streets.

Second, if you're concerned about an individual, you can report this to Street Link which will alert the local Outreach teams who will go to that location and try and connect with the people you're worried about (Streetlink London).

Finally, if you experience or witness anti-social, intimidating or criminal behaviour, contact the police using 999 (for emergencies), 101 (for non-emergencies), or by contacting your local Safer Neighbourhoods Team at Metropolitan Police. ▲



# P&O TWO-ENDED FERRIES

It is not often that we take an interest in modern ships, however, we could not but be impressed with the new ferry brought into service at Dover which is double ended!

P&O was founded 180 years ago on 22nd August 1837. P&O ships have sailed the seas from the beginning of the industrial revolution as well as two world wars. They claim they have spearheaded innovation in the past. So the enormous innovation of a double-ended ferryboat might be expected. Having read the details of the new ship, I was impressed.

The new ferry was built in China and a sister ferry is also under construction and expected to enter service later this year. The first ferry will be named P&O Pioneer. The ferries are very manoeuvrable but P&O intends they will not need to turn round in port as is the case with other non-double ended ferries. It will save time, including when loading and unloading, and can save fuel consumption by slowing down the overall crossing. The crossing will not take longer because of the time saved in not having to turn the ferry around. There is more deck space and the design team have provided 1,550m<sup>2</sup> on each of the new

vessels. Double height windows span decks 8 and 9 allowing passengers better views whilst enabling them to stay warm inside.

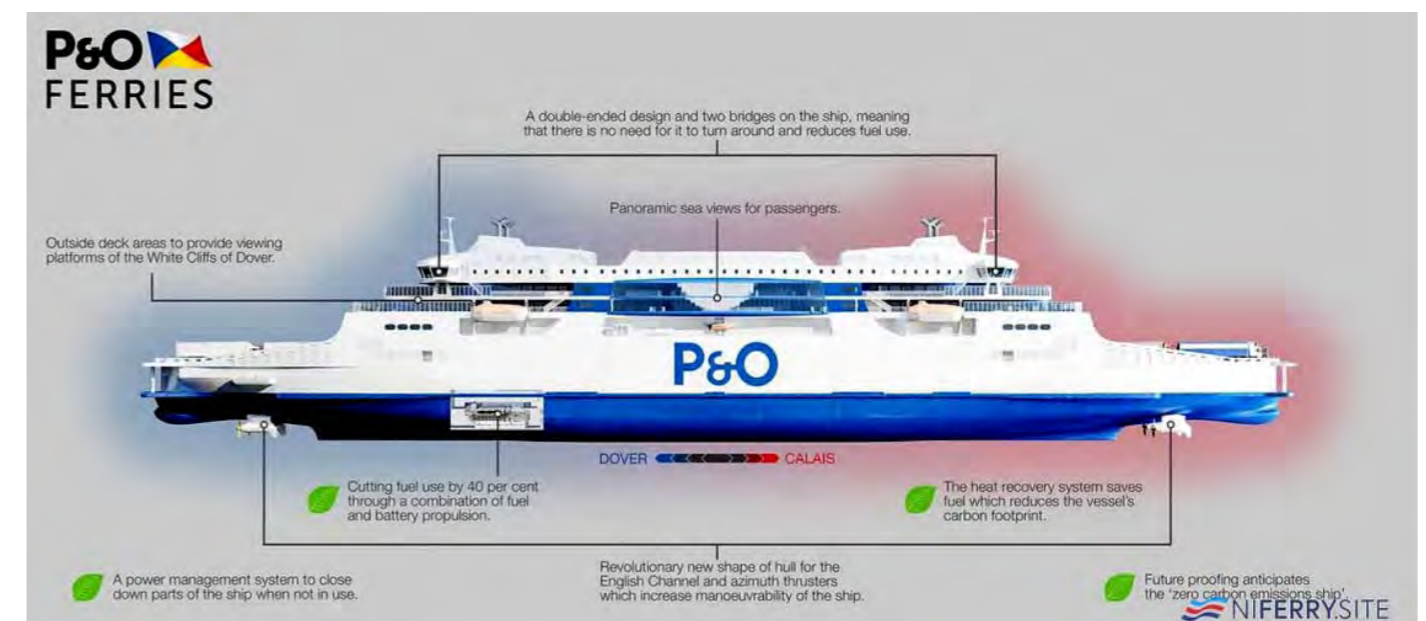
The passenger capacity is 1,500 and up to 2,800 lane metres for commercial vehicles +200 cars or small vans. It is now in service and will provide greener travel. It is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 40%. P&O hope to transform these hybrid models into fully electric ferries when the infrastructure is ready at Dover and Calais ports. These ferries are believed to be the world's largest hybrid double-ended ferries and a part of a £250 million investment. Ferries are 230m long and propelled by traditional fuel and battery combined, until facilities at the ports are ready to deal with all-battery ferries.

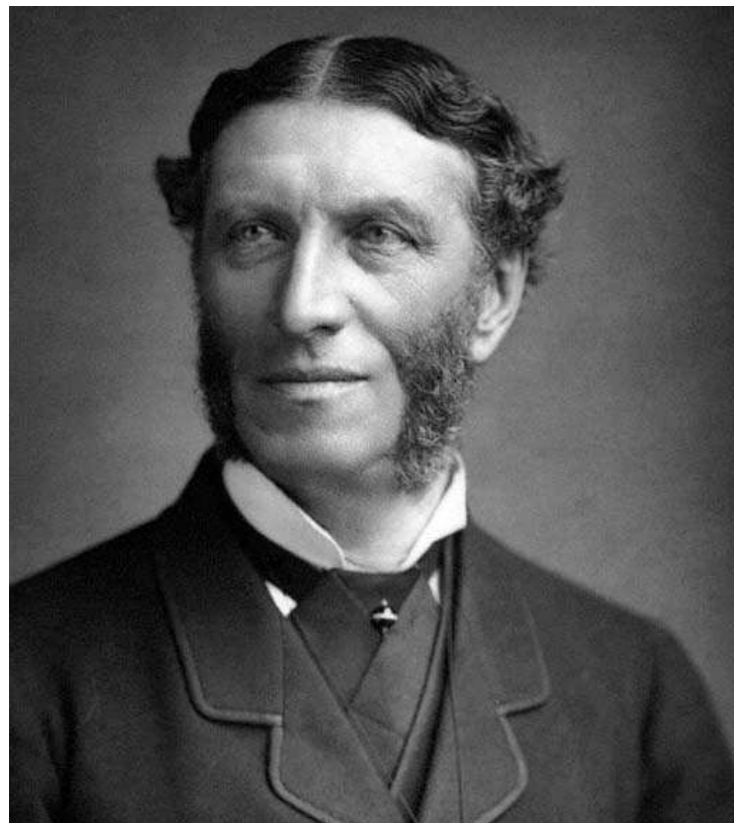
Peter Hebblethwaite, CEO of P&O Ferries, said that the "P&O Pioneer marks a new era in low carbon travel and trade

for the UK and France, with the investment of £250m in new hybrid ferries on the iconic Dover-Calais route," adding that the two "ultra-modern" ferries will deliver a "fantastic travel experience."

The launch of the cutting-edge ferries marks a significant ramp-up of P&O's operations on the famous route, which handles around £144 bn worth of trade in goods with the EU per year. The ferry operator said that P&O Pioneer would be "the next step" in its commitment to the Channel and expects the hybrid vessel to complete over 100,000 crossings in its lifetime, with a capacity to carry up to half a million units a year between the UK and EU.

The new ferry in operation sounds amazing and, for those who want to travel by ferry, I think it will make a wonderful start and finish to the journey. It might be worth going on a single trip, there and back, to experience one of these new ferries. ▲





# MATTHEW ARNOLD

## 2 CHESTER SQUARE

BY PETER WYETH

**P**oets are not often bureaucrats, but Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was both. He was an inspector of schools for thirty-five years, and “the third great Victorian poet, alongside Tennyson and Browning”.

Arnold found being a school inspector “drudgery”. Travelling constantly across much of England, “He spent many dreary hours in railway waiting-rooms and small-town hotels, and longer hours still listening to children reciting their lessons and parents reciting their grievances. But among the first generation of the railway age he travelled across more of England than any man of letters had ever done and knew provincial England better than most of the metropolitan authors and politicians”.

A literary critic in his thirties, he was appointed professor of poetry at Oxford. His poetry received mixed reviews during

his lifetime, but his literary criticism led him to a general critique of the spirit of his age. *Culture and Anarchy* was famous for him attacking the arrogance of “the great Philistine middle-class, the master force in our politics...humdrum people, slaves to routine, enemies to light,” who believed that England’s greatness was due to her material wealth alone and took little interest in culture. For Arnold, Liberal education must involve a close reading of and attachment to the cultural classics, and critical reflection to create the “best self”, to suppress one’s “ordinary self”, the tradition of “aristocratic liberalism” of JS Mill and De Tocqueville.

Under the influence of Spinoza and his father, Dr Thomas Arnold, he rejected the supernatural elements in religion. “Never let us deny to the story of the Salvation of Christ power and pathos or treat with hostility ideas which have entered so deep into the life of Christendom. But the story

is not true; it never really happened. A seriously religious man, no irreverent word ever escaped his lips, and yet he had in one short sentence slain the supernatural. ‘The case against miracles is closed. They do not happen’ ”.

“A man of the world entirely free from worldliness and a man of letters without the faintest trace of pedantry”, Arnold was often at “the Athenaeum, a frequent guest at great country houses, charming, a lively conversationalist, with a self-consciously cultivated air combining foppishness and Olympian grandeur.”

“A man of the world entirely free from worldliness and a man of letters without the faintest trace of pedantry...”

PUNCH’S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 59.



MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD.

ADMIT THAT HOMER SOMETIMES NODS, THAT POETS DO WRITE TRASH, OUR BARD HAS WRITTEN “BALDER DEAD,” AND ALSO BALDER-DASH.

A cartoon in Punch

Arnold’s poetry reflects the intellectual history of the nineteenth century, especially the corrosion of ‘Faith’ by ‘Doubt’. “At his best, a very good but highly derivative poet, as with Tennyson, his dominant precursor was Keats, whom he professed not to admire, yet his own elegiac poems had a diction, meter, and imagistic procedure, embarrassingly close to Keats”, yet much criticism of Arnold is “a convenient parody of what he is supposed to have stood for,” rather than the genuine article.

However, “few of his ideas were his own”, and he annoyed his contemporaries by the contradiction between his urbane, frivolous manner in controversy, the “high seriousness” of his critical views, and the melancholy, almost plaintive note of his poetry. “A voice poking fun in the wilderness”. ▲



# VICTORIA COACH STATION – PART 2

Paul Small, the Senior Service Manager, mentioned that the Coach Arrivals in Eccleston Place has only seven more years to run on their present Grosvenor lease and there are no current plans about its future. He explained that all new coaches are run on Euro 6 emission standards which make them cleaner and quieter – the new coaches having much smaller engines. Coach companies are presently looking at hydrogen and/or hybrid coaches. Flix Buses are currently trialling a totally electric bus from VCS. We discussed two of the main problems causing concern to residents which are idling and congestion.

We were then taken into the Control Room which manages all the departures. A large set of screens shows them what is going on both within the VCS and also the surrounding roads, and the staff explained that if anything is happening in London or even on roads and motorways outside London which could impact the arrivals and departures of coaches, they are alerted and can adjust their timetables accordingly to try and avoid possible congestion. They explained that it was a quiet day when members were visiting – around 470 departures, whereas at weekends it is more likely 600. They also handle tourist coaches departing to places

like Stonehenge each day, as well as the Harry Potter film location coach and other tourist coaches.

One of the members asked what happens to coaches in the Arrivals building on Eccleston Place and did they all automatically come to the Departure building. Paul explained that any servicing or cleaning is done there and then, depending on timetables, they move across the road to the Departures building. Not all coaches would come to VCS, for instance Green Line coaches have their own depot in Battersea where any necessary work is done.

In summary, it was a very interesting and informative tour of the Coach Station and members learned a great deal about the day to day running of VCS. Our chairman, George Waite, remarked that we must try to get the Coach Station to be part of Belgravia, rather than separate. This must, though, be dependent on the development plans mentioned above for which there are funding problems. Finally, Paul Small confirmed that, in TfL's opinion, Cross Rail 2, which was to use VCS as a service centre during construction, will not take place. ▲



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## 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](mailto:info@thebelgraviasociety.com)  
OR POST TO: 63 BELGRAVIA COURT 33 EBURY STREET LONDON SW1W 0NY

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