

# soho

CLARION



THE FREE MAGAZINE OF THE SOHO SOCIETY

# Small business is our Soho business



**T**HERE ARE CONCERNS that Soho is losing some of its edgy shabbiness and uniqueness that people who live or work here identify as Soho.

The Colony, the Old Rifle shop in Beak Street, the Black Gardenia - even Jimmy's Greek restaurant with the late-night Greek dancing - is gone. Is the varied weirdness and bohemian life of Soho changing?

Are high rents and business rates that are set nationally creating an environment where only the rich or famous or those already well established in a chain can afford a shop or restaurant?

Is Soho going to become like everywhere else? Do people who visit really want to see the same old places as they have in their towns? It seems a way to keep Soho different is to give small independent businesses a helping hand through reducing business rates.

At the present time business rates are set nationally and local governments are lucky to see £1 in £10 and even

then they have to apply for the money through grants. This trend may change as in July 2011 there was a suggestion from the Government that business rates should go to local councils but as yet this hasn't been decided. If the business rates are set locally will we see a reduction for small independent businesses?

In the meantime part of Savile Row has been designated a Special Policy Area and some of its remit is to protect tailoring and allied trades. Do we see a change of heart and can we hope that small independent businesses are given a chance to get on their feet before the "big cats" step in?

If you have a story or would like to lobby for reduction in business rates for small independent business write to the Soho Society.

KAYE DE VILLE  
CHAIR, SOHO SOCIETY

Cover collage of leaves from Soho Square by Kaye de Ville

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**SOHO PIZZERIA**



**THE SWISS GLOCKENSPIEL** has returned to Leicester Square. The original Glockenspiel was part of the former Swiss Centre and was given to the City of Westminster in its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1985 by Switzerland. When the Swiss Centre was demolished the council stipulated that the Glockenspiel should be retained on the site. The rebuilt Glockenspiel features a procession of 11 moving Swiss figures against an Alpine backdrop, the coats of arms of Switzerland's 26 cantons and 27 bells. At over 10 metres high, it is the tallest Glockenspiel in the country, and the bells will chime and performances take place 2,132 times a year. The Glockenspiel also incorporates a high-frequency distress sound system to deter birds from roosting on it.

## Soho's new market



**SOHO HAS AN EXCITING NEW MARKET.** The Brewer Street Market is a fashion market held in the NCP car park at 32 Brewer Street. Established and emerging new traders include designer and vintage clothes, handmade products, jewellery and accessories, beauty products, antiques, mirrors and art, as well as plenty to eat and drink.

The market is open from Thursday to Saturday from 11am to 8pm.

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## sohoSHORTS

### Soho bar makes the top ten

Milk and Honey at 61 Poland Street has been voted one of the top ten bars in the world by *Drinks International* magazine. The private members' bar polled fifth place. Other Soho bars making the top fifty include Quo Vadis on Dean Street and LAB on Old Compton Street.

### Soho cares

A charity single, "Christmas in Soho", has been released by Soho Cares, a group of Soho singers and performers. Released to help raise money and awareness for the not for profit



group Status, which aims to encourage people to get tested for HIV, the single is available on iTunes in a variety of remixes by some of the gay scene's top DJs.

### Soho wall of light to shine again

At the time of going to press, Westminster councillor Frixos Tombolis is lobbying Westminster Council to fix the fence around St Anne's Gardens, known locally as the "wall of light". The coloured lights around the fence have been dark for some time now, encouraging the return of drug dealers to the Gardens on Wardour Street.

### Trenchard consultation

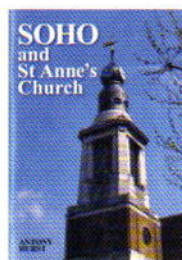
A public consultation has been launched into the redevelopment of Trenchard House, on Broadwick Street. The building, which was built in the 1930s, originally provided accommodation for single police officers in London but has been unoccupied since 1999.

### Soho stars strip off

Some of Soho's most famous females, such as Sadie Frost and Jaime Winstone have stripped off for a series of photographs to raise money for the National Autistic Society. The shoot was organised by Bernie Katz, manager of the Groucho Club on Dean Street, and shot by photographer Andrea Vecchiato. Some of the photos will be hung in the men's loos at the Groucho, following last year when nude studies of some of the club's male patrons were hung up in the ladies'.

### Soho history on sale

A definitive history of Soho has been written by Anthony Hurst. *Soho and St Anne's Church* can be ordered from the Soho Society for just £7 including postage and packing, or from the Society Club shop on Silver Place, Soho.





The restored 30s mosaic floor of the Titanic bar in the new Quadrant development off Regent Street and Piccadilly Circus. Photo: Kaye de Ville

## We're watching...

*Amongst recent Planning Applications examined by the Society's Planning and Environment Committee were the following:*

We objected to a number of proposals in **Brewer Street, Wardour Street and Frith Street** for tables and chairs because the numbers proposed would have reduced the amount of free space left for pedestrians to less than the Westminster policy standard of two metres.

In **Kingly Street** we also objected to the number of tables and chairs proposed at one site because this would have the effect of taking up most of this newly pedestrianised street for commercial outside dining and reducing the real benefit of additional circulation space for people to move about in this much improved street.

We did not object to the further revised proposals for a 475-bed hotel on top of the **Trocadero** site nor to a number of applications for new shop fronts in many streets.

We welcomed proposals for a photovoltaic installation at a property in **Soho Square** and schemes for new housing in **Wardour Street, Great Marlborough Street, Kingly Street and Dean Street**.

We were consulted informally on four separate schemes which will come forward over the next few months for redevelopments on the south side of **Oxford Street**. We were able to make suggestions which we hope will improve these schemes when they are submitted for planning consent and also lead to improvements to the public realm, particularly renewed pavements in this part of **Oxford Street**



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