



THE ST MARYLEBONE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2025 Number 375

www.stmarylebonesociety.org

Registered Charity 274082

REGENERATING CHURCH STREET



The Church Street Redevelopment Project proposes large scale, radical urban reconstruction for mass housing, not dissimilar to that post WW2. It will involve the demolition of 3.84 hectares of 1960s buildings across three urban blocks. The first phase on 'Site A' boarded by Broadly Street, Penfold Street, Church Street and the rear of buildings fronting Edgware Road has been cleared, with a loss of 145 flats. The new design will deliver 482 new flats (of which 50% will be affordable) in towers up to 14 storeys; an increased density that reflects the urgent need more housing in London. The development will also provide community space, a new library and market storage on this site.

The demolition has exposed the rear elevations of the mixed-use 19th century properties fronting Edgware Road and shows the extreme change in scale of the recently completed Paddington Green development opposite. Harm to these unlisted historic buildings and significant loss of daylight, sunlight and privacy for existing for their occupants has been deemed acceptable due to the public benefits and high quality of the new design that the proposals will bring. The development will also necessitate the loss of a large number of mature trees, conditioned to be replaced within increased areas of private and public open space.

The summary of all consultation exercises between 2013 – 2022 concluded that the principal issues raised accorded with the objections made by the St Marylebone Society at the outset; inadequate library provision within the scheme and the impact of the tall buildings on the townscape. We added that the orientation would result in overshadowing the market, making it less attractive and potentially leading to its decline. The developer assured local residents and stakeholders that these concerns would be taken on board.

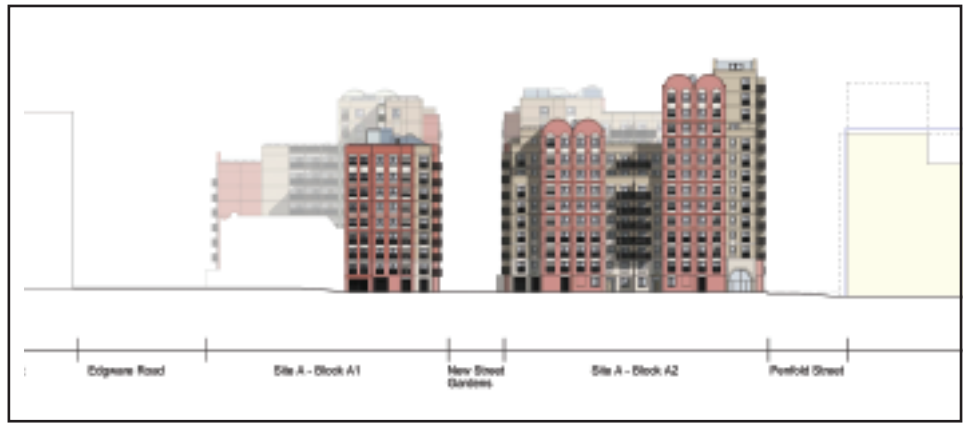
Today, few will mourn the loss of Lambourne House and the surrounding blocks which were typical of 1960s, built

Continued overleaf

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in a modernist idiom, with large areas of glazing, flat roofs and communal private courtyard gardens. But some of you may remember the Church Street estate when it was new, you may have family or friends who lived there and loved their well-appointed, bright new flats. Just 70 years later these are being replaced by high density towers to meet housing need. Will they stand the test of time or perhaps be considered low rise by 2100?

For more information and updates visit:
<https://www.churchstreet.org/>



21/08160/COOUT Proposed Broadley Street Elevation - EPR Architects.

THE CHURCH GARDEN PROJECT

Last month, at the Parish Church, the Rector, the Revd Canon Dr Stephen Evans, launched the Church Garden Fundraising Campaign to restore the historic Church Garden, a cherished green space since 1810. In partnership with J & L Gibbons, the plan is to transform this long-neglected site into a sustainable, inclusive sanctuary that honours its Regency heritage and enhances the setting of the Grade I listed Parish Church as well as providing a much-needed community space.

As St Marylebone's only permanently open green space, the Church Garden is vital to the local community, those who live, work and study in the area, as well as the thousands of commuters and visitors who pass through it each day. Once revitalised, the gardens will –

- Enhance community well-being
- Offer a safe, beautiful space for rest and reflection
- Support biodiversity and improve air quality
- Provide more seating, accessible paths and year-round interest

- Offer new spaces for concerts, exhibitions and outdoor learning

Inspired by the Regency 'shrubbery' the redesigned garden will bring new life to the space while honouring its historical roots. The restoration will happen in three stages, beginning this Autumn, to align with optimal planting conditions. Each stage will enhance different areas of the garden.

Stage 1: The Central Garden – the focal point: Estimated Cost: £325,000

To protect and celebrate the 200-year old Marylebone Plane by encircling it with a new ellipse-shaped Regency style bench providing 60 metres of seating for up to 120 people.

The addition of biodiversity features: a stumpery, bird boxes and traditional shrubbery.

Stage 2: The Borders – along the School, the High Street and Ferguson House: Estimated Cost: £379,000

Enhanced soft landscaping, the installation of curvilinear benches and the creation of

a Discovery Zone with log seating.

Stage 3: The Wildlife Garden:
Estimated Cost: £96,000

The restoration of the heritage railings and gate, the planting of multi-stemmed trees and soft landscape features, the addition of a tree seat for rest and reflection.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Funding is in place for the first stage to commence but there are opportunities to sponsor this essential community project by –

- Sponsoring a section of the ellipse-shaped bench
- Sponsoring a perennial and shrub planning area
- Sponsoring a discovery zone with log seating
- Sponsoring biodiversity features – a bird box, stumpery, etc.
- Sponsoring a linear garden bench

For further information please contact:
janebamber@stmarylebone.org



**The Baker Street/
Allsop Place
water fountain** will be turned
off soon and wrapped for the
winter months.

Thanks to
Cllr Robert Rigby and
Ringway Infrastructure Services
for their careful restoration of
this facility which has served
residents and tourists
throughout the summer.

PLANNING WALK 2025 TO LONDON ZOO



Attendees in the Tiger Territory.

London Zoo presented a fascinating and complex planning and conservation destination for our annual walk. We were joined by Lord Mayor Paul Dimoldenberg, Regent's Park Cllr Robert Rigby, Head of WCC North Planning Jerry Bell and over 30 planning and conservation officers.



Snowdon Aviary, now Monkey Valley.

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Baker Street Quarter Partnership
Blandford Estate Residents' Association
Chiltern Court (Baker Street)
Residents Ltd
Clarence Gate Gardens
(Freehold) Limited
Crown Estate Paving Commission
Fellowship of the School of
Economic Science
Howard de Walden Estate
Ian Wylie Architects
Marylebone Theatre
Old Philologists
Portman Estate
Runaway Athletics Limited
St Marylebone Parish Church
The Fruit Garden
The Seashell Restaurant
Wallacea Living
Ward & Burke



Grade I listed Penguin Pool by Tecton 1934.

We thank London Zoo for facilitating the visit and were fortunate to have expertise from their development team Claire McKeown (Director of Estates), Lewis Robins-Grace (Development Manager), Betty Key (Project Manager) and Laura Innes (Capital Projects).

It was a great opportunity for us to meet and discuss the Zoo's buildings, landscapes and its wider conservation and scientific work. The restoration and repurposing of the 20th century iconic and Grade 1 listed Gorilla House and Penguin Pool is difficult, if not impossible, as the regulations around zoos have radically changed over the last century. Successful recent animal enclosures, such as the Tiger Territory and new Penguin Pool, (by Wharmby Kozdon Architects) respond to

the animals' natural habitats whilst allowing accessible public viewing.

The walk ended on a high with a chance to visit the Snowdon Avery, (Grade 2* by Cedric Price and Frank Newby, 1960-65) restored and repurposed as the Monkey Valley. Foster & Partners, and later Purcell, elegantly adapted the classic design to meet contemporary animal and visitor requirements. The discussions continued over refreshments at the Albert Public House in Primrose Hill.



www.londondonzoo.org



John Wilman, Lord Mayor Paul Dimoldenberg, Head of WCC North Planning Jerry Bell.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 2025

Patron: Lord Montagu

President: Lord Adonis

Chair: Gaby Higgs

Hon. Secretary: Mo Parkes

Hon. Treasurer: Liz Queenan

Council Members

Joseph Dangoor (Planning Co-ordinator)

Robert McAulay

(Newsletter and Membership)

Mike Wood (Local History)

Ian Wylie (Planning)

Patricia Kleinman (Planning)

Johan van der Merwe (Events)

221B BAKER STREET – WHAT WAS ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE THINKING?

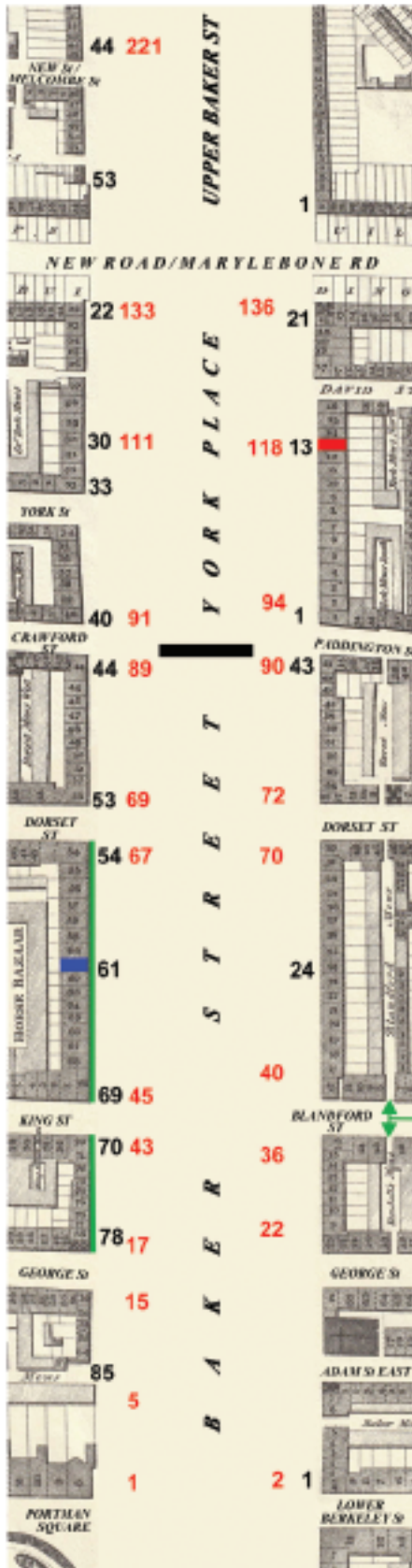


Fig 1: Schematic map of Baker St, York Place and Upper Baker St based on Potter's 1832 map of Marylebone. Original street numbers are in black, current numbers are in red. No. 61 (a candidate for 221B) is marked in blue, 'Camden House' is marked in red and the route taken by Holmes & Watson in 'The Empty House' is marked in green.

Sherlock Holmes famously lived at 221B Baker Street. This article attempts to locate that elusive address in terms of modern-day Baker Street, by getting inside Conan Doyle's¹ mind, via his fictional and autobiographical writings plus other sources. Spoiler alert: Conan Doyle was not always consistent in the clues he left as to the location and layout of 221B, over the 41 years (1886 – 1927) his Sherlock Holmes stories were written.

Our starting point is that '221 Baker Street' was a fiction, but it was also a hybrid fact. Baker Street undoubtedly existed in 1886 when Conan Doyle was writing "A Study in Scarlet" – which contained the first mention of Holmes's address. However, the address No. 221 did not then exist. At that time, 'Baker Street' only ran from Portman Square to Crawford/Paddington Street. The section north of that was named 'York Place' and, beyond Marylebone Road, it became 'Upper Baker Street' (see Fig 1). Each of these three streets was numbered separately in the Georgian fashion, up one side and down the other. As can be seen from Fig 1, initially Baker Street only reached No. 85. Ironically, not long after Conan Doyle's death in 1930, 221 ceased to be a fictional address when Upper Baker Street was renumbered as part of Baker Street and a No. 221² was created for the first time.

That Conan Doyle had an actual Baker Street location in mind, is suggested by an evasive remark he made in his *autobiography*: "Many have asked me which house it is, but that is a point which for excellent reasons I will not decide".

From 1882 to 1890 Conan Doyle was living in Southsea (now part of Portsmouth) when he first conjured 221B into existence. This was before the brief period in 1891 when he practiced ophthalmology at 2 Upper Wimpole Street in Marylebone. Nevertheless, Conan Doyle had stayed in London previously as a tourist in 1878, while visiting relatives at Clifton Gardens in Maida Vale and he would have had access to street directories, so he probably knew that Baker Street did not have a No. 221.



Fig 2: Holmes and Watson take up a position in an empty house opposite 221B Baker Street.

'The Empty House' – with a view of 221B

One of the key clues in narrowing down where in Baker Street Conan Doyle imagined No. 221 was located, appears in "The Adventure of the Empty House".

In that story Holmes sets up an effigy of himself in the window of 221B as target for an assassin's bullet (see Fig 2). Holmes and Watson take a circuitous route that ends up in an empty house opposite No. 221 in order to observe. They get out of a carriage in Cavendish Square and walk, largely through back alleys, via Manchester Street, to 'Blandford Street'. From there Holmes "turned swiftly down a narrow passage, passed through a wooden gate into a deserted yard, and then opened...the back door of a house". Conan Doyle does not specify if the pair turned left or right off Blandford Street, nor how far along the narrow passage they went. All we can deduce from this, is that 221 must be located in one of the two blocks edged in green in Fig 1.

The 'Camden House' conundrum

A further clue in 'The Empty House' story is, as Holmes explains, they are standing in "Camden House, which stands opposite (No. 221)". According to Richard Green in *The Uncollected Sherlock Holmes* (1983, p132) "An American, Dr Gary Chandler Briggs, who mapped Baker Street, found Camden



Fig 3: The photograph on the left: 'Camden House' (the doorway on the right) at 13 York Place - in modern numbering 118 Baker Street. The photograph on the right: the current 118 Baker Street (in Conan Doyle's day, 13 York Place, and at that time, the location of 'Camden House').

House³ as No. 118, with No. 111 opposite to it. In a letter to Frederic Dorr Steele, on 30th October 1921, he explained that he had revealed his discovery to Conan Doyle, who was 'amazed' to learn that Camden House really existed: 'He told me...that he did not believe that he had ever been on Baker St in his life and if he had it had been many years ago - so long that he had forgotten!'" Leaving aside Conan Doyle's disingenuous reply, it transpires that there is a photograph of 'Camden House' held by Portsmouth City Museum, which it captioned: "14 Baker Street (sic) and the adjacent Camden House which stood opposite 221B Baker Street".

There is clearly some confusion in these accounts of 'Camden House' stemming from the 1920/21 renumbering of York Place as part of Baker Street. Dr Briggs is no doubt right in describing Camden House's location as 118 Baker Street, after the renumbering, but the relevant date is when Conan Doyle first wrote about 221B, in 1886. At that date '118 Baker Street' was in fact 13 York Place i.e. not in Baker Street at all (See Fig 1, where Camden House is marked in red at 13 York Place). The number '14', can actually be read on the door of the house next to Camden House in the photograph (Fig 3, left), but this is an old photograph and the door in question is 14 York Place not 14 Baker Street⁴, notwithstanding the original caption. So, not only does an identification of the

current 111 Baker Street with 221B, contradict the route described in 'The Empty House' story, it is based on a failure to take account of the 1920/21 renumbering of York Place as part of Baker Street - so no wonder Conan Doyle was non-plussed.

Although Camden House turns out to be a red herring, there is evidence for a specific address in Baker Street that is consistent with 'The Empty House' story. As related by Green in 1983 (ibid pp 131-2), Conan Doyle and Sebastian Lamb, a writer on legal matters, were walking in Baker Street, 'when Doyle pointed to No. 61 and said that that was where Holmes lived' (see Fig 1, where No. 61⁵ is marked in blue - this is part of the block currently known as 55 Baker Street). Of course, that story could have been apocryphal, but this is currently my best bet as to where Conan Doyle imagined No. 221 was.

Postscript: Did 221B have a bow window?

An American writer, Russell Stutler, has elaborated a detailed reconstruction of 221 Baker Street (including 221B), based on multiple close readings of the entire Holmesian canon over a period of 30 years⁶. He tries, but ultimately fails, to reconcile the contradictory accounts in the stories. My interest here, because it affects identification of the building's exterior, is his conclusion that No. 221 had a bow window in its façade. The

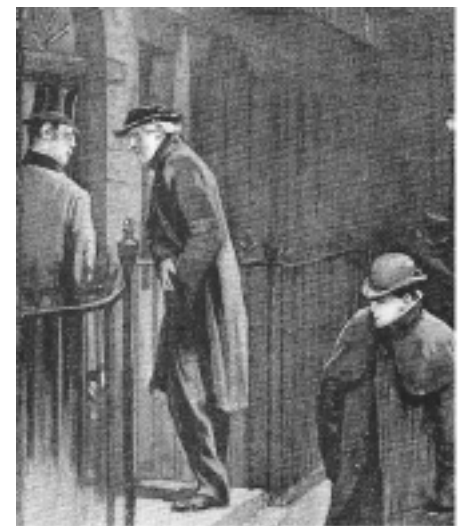


Fig 4: An Illustration from "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891) showing the front of No. 221 Baker Street (NB: a non-bow-fronted house).

evidence for this comes primarily from "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone", published in *The Strand Magazine*. The story is largely the same as Conan Doyle's play *The Crown Diamond*, which was first performed in 1921. His stage directions contain the clearest description of Holmes's room: "It presents the usual features, but there is a deep bow window to it, and across there is drawn a curtain running upon a brass rod fastened across eight feet above the ground, and enclosing (the) recess of the window". Integral to the plot is that there is a second door to the bedroom at the end of this curtained off recess, through which Holmes can come and go



Fig 5: An old photograph of the west side of Baker Street – the block to the south of Dorset Street (current Nos. 55 to 67). The projecting entrance to the Baker Street Bazaar is in the centre, No. 61 – old numbering and a candidate for the fictional 221 – is the next property to the one on the left (just out of shot).

unseen to position a wax effigy of himself. It seems likely that the introduction of a bow window helped to create a plot twist in a play that essentially takes place in one room⁷, but it flies in the face of the evidence from the illustrations in *The Strand Magazine* (see Fig 2 & Fig 4) and the actual houses in Baker Street (see Fig 5). Since the houses in Baker Street did not in fact have bow windows on their façades⁸, this feature is of no use in locating the imagined No. 221. Conan Doyle's reference to a bow window should perhaps be viewed as a forgivable lapse in continuity, given his vast output of Sherlock Holmes stories spanning more than four decades⁹.

Mike Wood

Notes

¹ The author's surname was 'Doyle' but he latterly appended his middle name of 'Conan' to it, in relation to his published works - styling himself 'A. Conan Doyle'.

² The current residential block known as '219 Baker Street' spans No. 221. The Sherlock Holmes Museum, at 239 Baker St, has unilaterally adopted No. 221 and put up a faux Blue Plaque to Sherlock Holmes there.

³ Portman Estate Archivist, Sarah Charlton,

could find no reference among their leases to Camden House, but it could be a name used by a sub-lessee. Having consulted street directories at Westminster Archives, I found no mention of Camden House at 13 York Place, but a school at that address run by a Miss Fanny, might have been named Camden House.

⁴ Examination of the cornices and string courses of the two houses, which still exist, shows that they became 120 and 118 Baker Street and were not 13 and 14 of the pre-renumbered Baker Street further south.

⁵ We can never know what was swirling around in Conan Doyle's unconscious, but the placement of a wax effigy of Holmes in the window of No. 221B features in two stories. Is it just a coincidence that No. 61 Baker St stood in front of the Baker Street Bazaar, where Madame Tussaud displayed her waxworks until 1883, and which Conan Doyle may have visited as a tourist in 1878 or at some other time?

⁶ His reconstruction of No. 221 can be seen at: www.russellstutler.com/other/misc/baker_street.html

⁷ There is one other reference to 221B having a bow window. "*The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*" (1892) opens with Holmes and Watson standing in the bow window looking down at the street. It

seems that the window acts as a device to showcase Holmes's powers of deduction concerning a person walking towards their door.

⁸ Bow windows generally occur in Georgian-era buildings in Marylebone at the end of terraces (e.g. in Sarah Siddons's house at 27 Upper Baker St) or at the backs of houses (e.g. 113 & 115 Baker Street, which still exist today). Bow windows on the façade are rare. There are some in Montagu Square, which are marked on the Potter map of Marylebone (used as the base map for Fig 1 because it is of sufficient scale to show house numbers) but Potter does not mark any bow windows on the façades of the properties in Baker St.

⁹ It has to be admitted that Conan Doyle had form when it came to referring to bow windows in his fiction. Another one crops up, for no apparent reason, in a non-Sherlock Holmes story, *The Story of the Beetle-Hunter*, published in *The Strand Magazine* in June 1898: "I lived in rooms in Gower Street. The street has been renumbered since then, but it was the only house which has a bow-window, upon the left-hand side as you go down from the Metropolitan Station".

CHILTERN RAIL UPDATE



Chiltern Railways unveils newest trains to transform customer journeys with 10,000 more seats.

In 2014 Chiltern Railways acquired 5 very noisy and very polluting Class 68 locomotives, to run between here and the West Midlands.

Initially these used to idle for, sometimes, over an hour in the station. A committee of local residents was set up and, by meeting with Chiltern management on a regular basis, we were able to pressure them into reducing these toxic emission times down to a maximum of 17 minutes prior to departure, a period which, they assure us, is needed for the necessary engine safety checks to be carried out.

Following that, with the help of local Councillors and our MP, Nickie Aikin, our representations on the need to further cut the pollution by other means

finally got through, and the locomotive diesel engines were converted to run on hydrogenated oil.

According to Chiltern, their plans for the future are that the current 5 Class 68 locomotives will go back to their original owner, and their existing MK3 carriages, which are over 50 years old will be retired.

The routes to the West Midlands will then be serviced by a fleet of 13, newer Class 68s that will pull almost new MK5A carriages. These will enter service from early 2026, with the full number running from December 2026.

There will be quite a few more departures daily from December 2026 as a) the new trains can only have a maximum of 5 carriages as opposed to the 6 on the old trains, and b) there is a demand for added capacity and additional services on the West Midland lines.

These locomotives will have modifications, including Stop Start technology and noise muffling, installed before entering service. In brief, I have been told that they will shut down automatically after 3/4 minutes to allow passengers off and cleaners to do their

job, and only start up about 5 minutes before departure.

Chiltern tell me that they expect overall idling time at Marylebone will not be significantly higher than it is currently, as each train will be idling for considerably less time.

These locomotives will all run exclusively on Biodiesel, not fossil fuel. This reduces carbon emissions by up to 90%

Existing services to the more local stations will continue to be run as now, using the trains known as DMUs, which do use fossil diesel. The DMU trains currently used on the longer routes and released as the newer locomotives are introduced, will be used to add much needed capacity on the commuter routes.

It is hoped that eventually they too will be replaced, with battery-electric powered trains. Chiltern have begun work on the business case for these, which would be powered by partial electrification on the London commuter routes. Our efforts should be directed at the government to provide the funding for this.



MET
ENGAGE
Community crime-fighting



MORE TRUST | **LESS CRIME** | **HIGH STANDARDS**

Regent's Park (Westminster)

Welcome to Met Engage.

We're transforming the Met to become a service that truly delivers for you.

Through our new platform Met Engage you can get to know your local officers, help shape how we police your local area and have direct access to key information and advice.

This isn't just a platform for us to tell you what we're doing in your area, it's an opportunity for you to tell us what's concerning you most so we can take action on the things that truly matter to you.

Regent's Park - Westminster Safer Neighbourhoods Team

Your Safer Neighbourhoods Team is a group of Met police officers dedicated to serving your community. The team is made up of officers based in your area or 'ward', supported by additional officers from the wider area.

We work closely with local authorities, community leaders and residents to decide our policing priorities for the area. This helps us to find useful, long-term solutions to local problems, while maintaining our wider focus on reducing crime across London.

To contact your team about local policing issues, email us at Regent'sPark-Westminster@contact.metengage.co.uk or pick an officer to email below. (Please do not use this contact method to report crime, in an emergency always call 999 or you can report crime online at www.met.police.uk or dial 101).

THE ST MARYLEBONE SOCIETY AGM 2025

**Wednesday 26th
November**

**The Samworth Hall
(Crypt)**

**St Marylebone Parish
Church**

From 6.00 pm

Meeting starts 6.15:

7.00 Talk by

Rachel Barrett

“Marylebone Workhouse”

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SMS CONSTITUTION AT THE AGM

Notice of proposed amendments to the SMS Constitution at the AGM.

By design, our Constitution is light on administrative detail. A flexible approach that has served us well over the years. However, every so often it needs updating to reflect a changing world.

1) In relation to banking it is overly prescriptive. Clause 4, in relation to the Honorary Treasurer, says: “He/she shall be responsible for all payments on behalf of the Society and no disbursements shall be made except by cheque signed by two officers, of whom one shall be the Honorary Treasurer.” SMS Council are proposing that this be amended by putting a full stop after

Society and continuing “Cheque payments up to £250 shall be signed by one member of Council, payments over £250 shall be signed by two members of Council, of whom one shall be the Honorary Treasurer. The foregoing amounts may be varied from time to time as may be decided by the Council”. 2) In light of Clause 11, which allows for ten members to call a Special General meeting by giving fourteen days written notice, the Council are proposing that Clause 9 be amended by deleting the second sentence, i.e. removing the requirement that “not less than three Ordinary meetings are held per year”.

EVENTS IN MARYLEBONE

ST MARYLEBONE PARISH CHURCH

17 Marylebone Road, NW1 5LT
www.stmarylebone.org

FREE LUNCHTIME CONCERT on
14th November at 13.00 -14.00

THE KRIUS COLLECTIVE CLASSICAL
CONCERT on 28 November 2025 at 19.30

HANDEL'S MESSIAH –20 December at
17.00. Following the stellar success of last
year's *Messiah* performance, St
Marylebone Festival collaborates once
again with Waterperry Opera Festival to
perform Handel's masterpiece. Performed
with soloists, full orchestra, and the Choir
of St Marylebone Parish Church conducted
by Bertie Baigent.

MARYLEBONE THEATRE

www.marylebonetheatre.com

THE WANDERERS 17 October – 29
November. Inspired in part by true events,
The Wanderers makes its highly
anticipated London premiere, following
critically acclaimed, sold-out performances
in New York and across the US.

DANIEL'S HUSBAND 4 December – 10
January.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC
www.ram.ac.uk

The RAM has an extensive programme of
classical, modern, and jazz concerts and
master classes during term time. All are
open to the public. Some concerts are free
entry, but for all concerts tickets must be
booked in advance. The Season ends on
7 December 2024.

ROYAL ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY
7 December at 7pm in the Dukes Hall with
Paul Wee piano, Jem Lowther organ and
Rebecca Miller conductor.

ST MARYLEBONE STATION. REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE - Tuesday 11th November at 10:30am – 12:00pm.

An invite from Chiltern railways for
local stakeholders, colleagues and
Marylebone residents:

We look forward to welcoming you to
our Remembrance Service at
Marylebone Station.

The service will be taking place inside
Marylebone Station in front of the Pret
and the V&A pub.

MERRY MARYLEBONE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON.

Marylebone Village on Wednesday 12
November 2025, from 3–8pm

A special guest will switch on the lights
at 6pm. This year's event will be in
support of local charity The Marylebone
Project.



Westminster Conservative Association.

ST CYPRIAN'S CHURCH,
Glentworth Street, NW1 6AX
www.stcyprians.weebly.com

The Church hosts its next concert on
November 16 – Messiaen's St Francis &
the Angel

**Christmas Tree light-up on Tuesday
18th November at 16.30** on the south
east corner of Dorset Square, with the
lights switched on at 5pm by the Lord
Mayor Paul Dimoldenberg.

We should be joined by our ward
Councillors, Baker Street Quarter
representatives, Dorset Square Trust
and St Marylebone Society members for
an opportunity to meet and enjoy
refreshments, generously supported by
The Dorset Square Hotel.