

TAXI DRIVER HAILED A HERO

London taxi driver Frank Dignum has been described as a hero after trying to save a neighbour from a burning house just before Christmas. Frank has been a taxi driver for 22 years and was walking his dog towards his home when he saw flames coming from the house of his neighbour, Terri Murphy, a wheelchair bound mother suffering from multiple sclerosis. He told Taxi Globe: “As I was coming back with the dog, I saw the flames and immediately my thoughts went to whether my neighbour was home. I called 999 for the fire brigade and then went to see if Terri was in the house.”

Sadly his neighbour was in the house, but the ferocity of the fire prevented him from getting to Terri. He said: “The heat and the smoke were horrendous. I did all I could in the circumstances. I feel quite inadequate that I couldn’t

save her life. She was always so cheerful, her family were her life and she had been looking forward to Christmas.”

Frank, who has driven on taxi charity outings for The Albany, said that hundreds of people attended the funeral on 16th January 2009. He continued saying: “She was a lovely lady, she used to train dogs. I managed to save her 2 schnauzers from the fire.”

Frank may be playing down his heroic attempts to save Terri, but neighbours in The Close, Dunmow are hailing him a hero. Simon and Joanna Mardell said: “Frank Dignum is a hero. He tried very hard to get to save her but unfortunately at that point the fire had taken hold and he couldn’t get to her. It is a great loss because she was a real community lady.”

CONVENT GARDEN’S OPERA QUARTER

Taxi Globe was recently invited to sample the delights of the Opera Quarter, once part of Covent Garden’s famous fruit market. Comprising of four interconnecting streets adjacent to Covent Garden Market and Piazza in the heart of Theatreland, with seven major theatres containing 9,500 seats in the immediate vicinity as well as 5 major hotels close by, this is Covent Garden’s food quarter. The area is steeped in literary history. Thomas de Quincey wrote Confessions of an Opium Eater here at 36 Tavistock Street and Charles Dickens ran his magazine ‘All the Year Round’ for twenty years.

Although in times gone by, Tavistock Street was busy with ponies and horses being used to deliver to the market. Later on in history, female “traders” bought fame to the street, some being actresses at night in the theatres. Several magazines have been published here too, including The Stage, Vanity Fair and Country Life. Once there was also a small book salesroom which was to relocate and become the auctioneer, Sotheby’s.

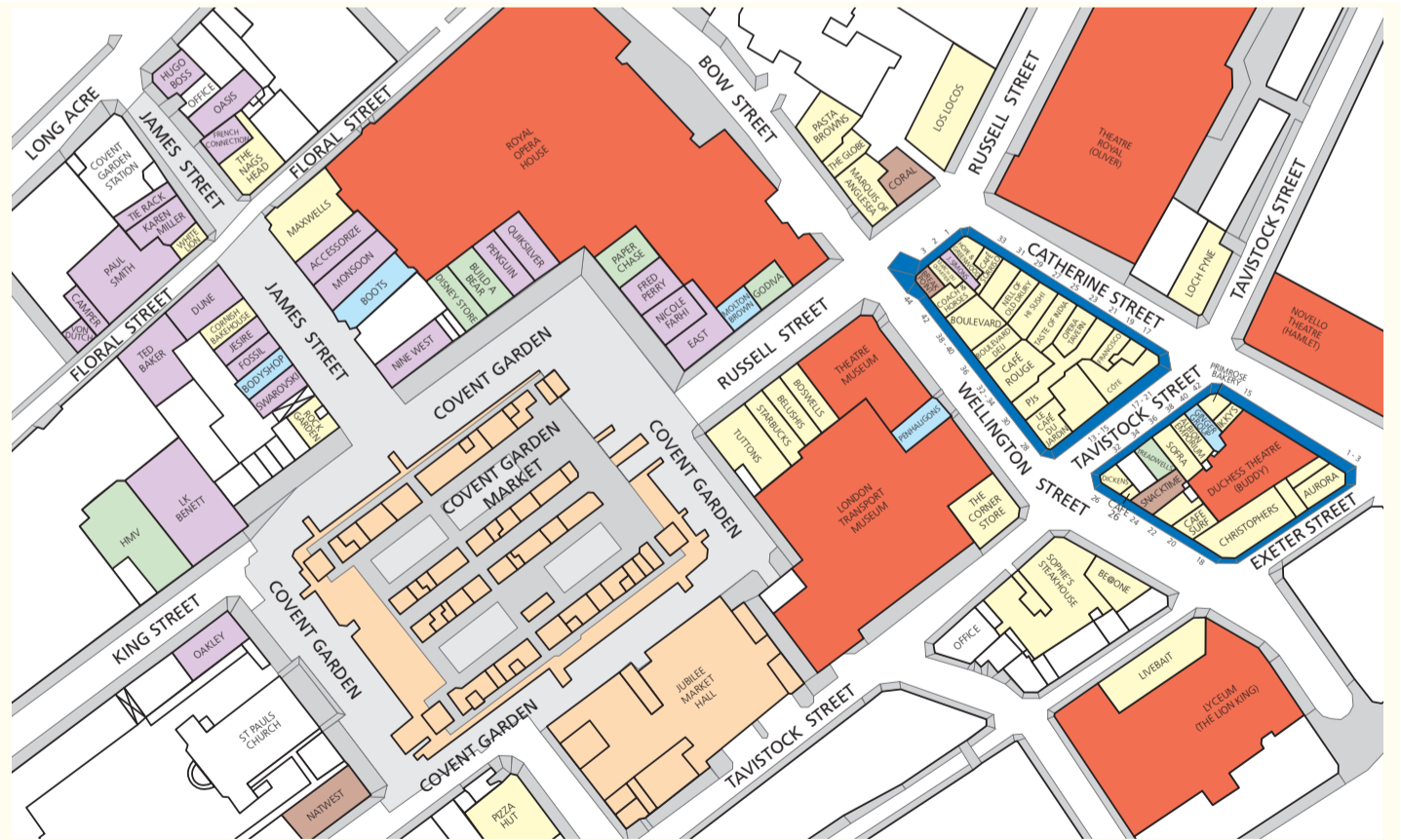
Now the area has undergone a transformation. Tucked in between the Royal Opera House, Theatre Royal Drury Lane and the Lyceum the area has a great buzz about it, particularly during the times when theatre goers are there. But it is not just a place to eat and drink before or after the theatre; here you’ll also find shops such as Hope and Greenwood, Purveyors of Splendid Confectionery. During our visit, we popped into the store where you can find all sorts of confectionery and choccie, with over 185 glass jars on display. If you hanker for the days of Rhubarb and Custard that made the roof of your mouth sore and Army and Navy tablets that made your eyes water then take a step back in time at Hope and Greenwood. Another store sure to bring back good memories is



Primrose Bakery where clients include Kate Moss, Elton John and U2. Specialising in delicious cup cakes and layer cakes, this is cake heaven.

Lunch at Cote Bistro saw delicious simple, freshly prepared French cuisine at reasonable prices. Although the Cote only opened in The Opera Quarter in October 2008, it is already extremely popular both at lunch and evening times. Cote has daily specials and pre and post theatre menus and has already won Winner of Best Value Restaurant In Britain - Good Food Guide 2009.

The new production of Oliver! at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane promises to be spectacular, starring Rowan Atkinson as Fagin an exciting new Nancy and Oliver - with BBC Television’s I’d Do Anything winner Jodie Prenger as Nancy. This show is already sold out for some months and is sure to bring even more visitors to the area.



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