

COMEDY LEGEND PETER COOK HONOURED

Legendary comedian, writer and satirist Peter Cook died in 1995, leaving behind him a comic legacy that has influenced every generation of comedians since. He has been honoured with a commemorative Westminster Green Plaque at the site of the Soho venue known as London's first satirical nightclub, The Establishment Club.

The Westminster City Council Green Plaque was unveiled jointly with the Heritage Foundation, whose president Robin Gibb CBE was also honoured with a Westminster Green Plaque commemorating the Bee Gees in May 2008. Robin Gibb said: "As president of the Heritage Foundation I want to say that we are proud to honour one of the truly remarkable talents of British comedy."

Cook has been described by Stephen Fry as 'the funniest man who ever drew breath'. The Establishment was 'London's first satirical nightclub' where together with business partner Nick Luard, Cook revived the career of Frankie Howerd as well as introducing Melbourne housewife Edna Everage (Barry Humphries) to British audiences. The building, at 18 Greek Street, is now a bar and nightclub called Zebrano.



Wendy Cook and Lord Mayor of Westminster, Louise Hyam

Councillor Robert Davis, Westminster City Council's deputy leader, said: "Peter Cook is a vivid reminder that our city's rich heritage is comprised of extraordinary figures who have left an enduring legacy for generations to come."

"He helped launch a new genre of comedy which is still as valid today as it was half a century ago when, from his Soho base, his savage wit kept the Establishment firmly on their toes. Although the Establishment Club closed many years ago, this plaque will ensure this spot will always be remembered and revered as the place where satire was born, and from where it was indelibly woven into British culture."

Cook's passion for satire even saw him step in to support the magazine *Private Eye* in 1962, investing his own money as well as securing support from his showbusiness friends. For a time, the magazine was produced from the premises of The Establishment Club, and his intervention is credited with reviving the then struggling magazine's fortunes. Ian Hislop, editor of *Private Eye*, said: "Finally Peter joins the establishment and goes from being off-the-wall to being on it."

UK RELATIONSHIPS ON THE BRINK OF GOING UP IN SMOKE

Although taxis are designated as workplace vehicles and come under the No Smoking laws, there are still many drivers who smoke. Perhaps you are one of them who have tried to give up, or one who made a New Year's resolution to give up. According to the results of a new survey, commissioned by nicotine-free smoking cessation aid NicoBloc, smoking can affect family life and relationships in the UK.

In the run up to No Smoking Day this year (March 11th), 353 smokers were questioned in the NicoBloc survey. Over 42% of those trying to quit revealed that smoking causes arguments with their partner and family. For a fifth of respondents, smoking triggers problems with their sex life and relationships and a third of smokers said that they actually lie to their partner about their smoking habits.

PEER PRESSURE

A third of respondents said they started smoking for social reasons as they thought it looked cool or were embarrassed not to smoke in front of their friends, with only 14% admitting to having started because they actually liked the taste. A fifth took up smoking to help



them relax and over 70% of the smokers questioned felt guilty every time they smoked, raising stress levels.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Unsurprisingly, 89% of those who have tried to quit many times before worry about the effect smoking has on their health. 78% of the smokers questioned in the survey, who had all repeatedly tried and failed to quit reported that the habit of smoking was harder to give up than the actual chemical addiction, with 71% stating that they missed having something in their hands when they were trying to quit. It's estimated that an average 20-a-day smoker will make the 'hand-to-mouth' action 73,000 times a year, adding extra psychological pressure on the would-be quitter.

GIVING UP

Dr Lynne Dawkins, Senior Psychology Lecturer at the University of East London comments: "The hand-to-mouth action of smoking through associative learning mechanisms can become a deeply entrenched habit. The habitual act of reaching for a cigarette, coupled with reduced impulse control during a quit attempt, may constitute a strong relapse factor. Any smoking cessation aids which more closely resemble a cigarette could help more smokers to quit."

NicoBloc is a two-step approach, first helping to break the addiction to nicotine and then helping to give up the physical cigarette and hand-to-mouth habit. An alternative to NRT (Nicotine Replacement Therapy) and drug-based smoking cessation methods, NicoBloc is a fluid applied to the end of a cigarette filter immediately before smoking. The fluid works by moistening the cigarette filter, cooling the smoke down as it is drawn through. The tar and nicotine vapour molecules condense back into solid form, sticking to the filter material instead of being passed through to the smoker. Lita Huckle, a former smoker from Berkshire, finally quit with the aid of NicoBloc having repeatedly failed to kick her 20 year 20-a-day habit. She says: "I had previously tried to quit before but found the lure of social smoking got in the way. When I used NicoBloc I didn't have to quit straight away and it gave me a chance to get used to not smoking so much over a period of time before making the final break."

NicoBloc (£19.56) is available in independent pharmacies and online with each pack including an instructions DVD, progress chart and a 15ml bottle which provides two weeks supply for a typical 20-a-day smoker.

