

# REPORT from Jeremy Corbyn MP

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## Mordechai's Release

Although the appalling situation in Iraq carries on, and perhaps it should headline, my latest visit to Israel/Palestine was one of the most memorable moments in my life and I am not willing to let anything stand in the way of my telling you about it.

We waited in the heat and dust outside Ashkelon prison, with 500 international supporters, and some Israeli supporters of Mordechai (Israel's nuclear whistle blower). Not surprisingly, for Mordechai is a contentious individual in Israel, we were opposed by a group of extremely intolerant ultra nationalist Israelis. Mordechai finally emerged after 17 and half years in prison, for merely telling the world the truth about Israel's nuclear weapons. He made an amazing statement in which he stood by everything he'd done, dedicating his life to the cause of peace, and calling for justice for the Palestinian people. Later that day I travelled to Jerusalem to meet with him in the Anglican Cathedral where he is currently living, and I also renewed my acquaintance with the bishop there. I had a long conversation with Mordechai who, when I asked how he knew who I was, ruefully said he had had 17 years of looking at pictures of his friends!

Since my return I have been to the Foreign Office, and raised in parliament the question of Mordechai's virtual house arrest by the Israeli authorities, and subsequently, the scandalous arrest of Peter Hounam. To their credit, the Foreign Office acted extremely quickly regarding Peter (well known as the reporter in Mordechai's original Damona story), and they did pressurise the Israeli government to release him and he is now safely home. At

The above photograph is of Chris Holmes (paralympic swimmer) of Westminster Mile, congratulating Jeremy on his run – see Athletics

the time he was in prison I kept in touch with his wife who lives in Scotland, together with his own MP Pete Wishart. The EDM is included in the Parl' Interventions section.

Mordechai specifically asked me to thank everyone who has ever done anything towards his release, whether it be simply signing (a) petition/s, sending post cards etc, embassy protesting or similar. He said he was given heart by these small actions. There is more in my Morning Star article dated April 28<sup>th</sup>.

## PALESTINE

27/04: Islington PSC (Palestine Solidarity Campaign) held a public meeting at Hargrave Hall which I chaired in my role their honorary chair. One of several speakers was Jenny Tonge (Richmond Lib Dem MP). I reported on my recent visit to Israel/Palestine and Jenny talked about what she believed to be the causes of suicide bombing and the need for peace and justice in the region.

29/04: I attended a debate in Westminster Hall on the DFID (Department for International Development) Report into the Palestinian Territories. I was not called to speak in this debate but I enclose a couple of interventions I managed (see Parl' Interventions). There was a brilliant exchange between Quentin Davies and Gerald Kaufman if anyone wishes to consult the web (or ring my office), though whether or not the reading stands up to the actual chamber performance, I'm not sure.

04/05: Adjournment Debate in Westminster

Hall on the future of the Israeli Occupied Territories in the West Bank (David Winnick).

10/05: I chaired the PSC launch of an economic sanctions campaign against Israel whilst human rights violations continue. There were a number of speakers including Roger Lyons and Gerald Kaufman.

12/05: Dr Mustafa Barghouthi (prominent leader of the Palestinian struggle) spoke to a large number of MPs in the House of Commons (HOC) on the current situation in Palestine. His talks are always very informative so if ever you can only make one Palestinian event in a year, try to prioritise something with him heading the bill!

15/05: I spoke at the PSC rally in Trafalgar Square.

22/05: PSC Demonstration outside Downing St.

14/06: With Ernest Rodker, Nicolette, and Colin Breed, I met Baroness Symons (of Vernham Dean) who said she would do what she could to remind the Israeli government that the British government would be watching developments relating to Mordechai and the very many restrictions which are placed upon him very closely.

19/06: Nicolette attended the Palestinian Executive Meeting on my behalf and we shall plod on doing what we can to raise awareness of this very neglected and tragic situation. Incidentally, if anyone heard Clinton (in advertising his autobiography) blame Arafat for the Middle East Process going haywire, don't believe it; Ehud Barak has much to answer for from that period!

**On July 9<sup>th</sup> the International Court of Justice will rule on the illegality of the apartheid wall Ariel Sharon is building, and depending upon the outcome, events will be organised to mark the decision. Keep abreast via the PSC website:**

- Palestine Solidarity Campaign

[www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)

T: 020 7700 6192 F: 020 7609 7779

"mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org";

- Check out:

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/mustafa/mustafa>

[fas\\_articles.htm](#) - a very informative website by Mustafa Bhargouthi.

- Jews for Justice: PO Box 37402, N3 2XG:  
jffjusticefp@yahoo.co.uk

## IRAQ

This subject just will not go away, despite the government willing it to do just that. I was horrified when the announcement was made to send yet more troops to Iraq, and I received correspondence from my constituents protesting about this. In just over a week's time Iraq will, apparently, be handed back to the Iraqis. Who knows how many more deaths will occur in the short interim leading up to the half hearted handover.

I have articles at the end of this document which relate to Iraq so please glance through them for further comment. We must remember that we have issues closer to home which are directly related to the aftermath of the post September 11<sup>th</sup> axis of evil panic, such as the anti terrorist legislation which has resulted in bringing about our own Guantanamo, which is Belmarsh. If anyone has time to spare please get involved in this cause via my office.

12/05: I spoke at a public meeting attended by Iraqi Democrat's Abroad, all people who were strongly opposed to Saddam Hussein and most have sought exile in this country to avoid his abuse and tyranny.

17/05: See parl' interventions wherein I was able to intervene and vote on the Lib Dem' motion on Iraq.

18/05: I spoke at the Demonstration outside the Landmark Hotel where George Bush senior was staying.

22/05: Trafalgar Sq Stop the War rally

## IRELAND

04/05 - 06/05: I joined the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Committee's three day visit to Ireland during which we met Trade Unionists, Human Rights activists, and community organisations in Belfast. We spent a

fascinating three hours in Stormont listening to submissions and presentations from the Ulster Unionists, Democratic Unionist Party, Social Democratic Labour Party and Sinn Fein, about their hopes and strategies for the reopening of The Assembly. We later had dinner with Paul Murphy, the Northern Ireland Secretary in Hillsborough, which is an amazing building redolent of the high point of Unionism in the early 1920s. We also travelled to Newry (on the border), where we spent time with Seamus Mallon, who thoughtfully provided the delegation with bottles of Bushmills Irish Whisky. Later we spent three hours observing a very interesting peace forum discussion (held under Chatham House rules). A large number of people from all communities and political traditions from Northern Ireland attended, and I left it feeling very hopeful for the future.

The last day was spent in Dublin where we met representatives of the Irish Labour Party and were welcomed to the Dail by the Speaker, and were given a very warm welcome by all the TDs who were present. We concluded with a meeting with the Social Policy Institute, and lunch at the Foreign Ministry, with the team dealing with Irish relations with Britain over Northern Ireland.

## LOCAL

25/04: I took part in the first section of the **Annual Mayor's walk** where all the mayors from 32 boroughs join their colleagues from the City of London to go back to the Guildhall, along the same route that Dick Whittington originally took with his cat.

30/04: I have been involved with the **Friends of Finsbury Park** for a long time and I have a great deal of respect for them. I have supported their application for charitable status, and a representative from the Charity Commission came to a meeting to advise on what changes were necessary to the terms of reference to make this possible. It must continue its valuable work campaigning for an improved and safer Finsbury Park.

30/04: **The Islington Black Socialist Society** held a lovely event at the Islington Africa

Project, which was excellently organised by Talal Karim. Awards were presented to Peggy Dofoo in memory of her late husband Eugene (a very active member of Islington Labour party); to Pansy Jeffrey, in memory of Lionel Jeffery who was an iconic figure in the local black community; Sally Babulall in memory of our great friend, the late Councillor Milton Babulall; Susannah, in memory of Oscar Abrams (a former chair of North Islington Labour party). A Presentation was later made to Sharon Grant in memory of Bernie who was a great supporter of the Islington North Black Socialist society.

03/05: Many thanks are due to all those who supported the **NILP social event** we organised for the party and community on May 3rd. I think perhaps we should make it an annual event, inviting community organisations and supporters to come along. Special thanks are due to Carol Clinton and Tricia Clarke for the efforts they put into this.

16/05: I attended the **Arsenal Victory Celebration**, along with a quarter of a million other people!!

22/05: **Liberation's 50th anniversary** event at Conway Hall: I hosted the event, and among the many present were Stan Newens MEP, Yvonne Ridley, Lee Jasper, Jacqui MacKenzie (Caribbean Labour Solidarity), Tony Benn ... Maggie Bowden was presented with a vase as a token gift for all her hard work over the years.

28/05: I was a guest at the annual meeting of **Holloway Sure Start** at Andover, helping many young parents get support and advice and return to work though decent child care provisions. This is a very creditable government initiative which has done an enormous amount to help inner city families in Britain.

03/06: Along with a Dr Massani, myself and other residents, we visited Islington Police Station with a petition regarding illegal car sales and untaxed vehicles in my immediate area. This issue has been taken up by local residents including the Dr.

07/06: Barbara Sidnell held a barbeque at her home to thank **Inspector Steve Biollo** for his work in the Problem Solving Team at Holloway

police station. He is departing.

08/06 **Peter Bedford** - I was guest speaker at this Trust which is celebrating 35 years of helping people with learning difficulties and mental illness in Islington and Hackney. The centre provides accommodation, workshop facilities, education, support and advice, and was originally founded by the Quakers, and does well at its place in Legard Works and is really a credit to its organisers.

11/06 I lunched at the Laundry, at the **Hanley Crouch Community Project** in Sparsholt Rd.

11/06: I met **Turkish and Kurdish parents at Highbury Quadrant School** to do some advice work with them.

14/06: I visited the **Haven Club** for people (Camden or Islington) suffering and/or recovering from drug or alcohol addictions. I was very impressed with their work and promised to support their funding requirements with the local health services.

15/06: **The Migrant Training Unit** (Errol Smalley et al) was a well attended reunion of those who had begun the company ten years ago, and Val Veness joined me there. Despite their best efforts, the Tory attacks over the years and Lib Dem attempts to sell their buildings were fought off, and the organisation has grown and prospered and is now in a new building in New North Rd providing excellent advice for new migrants in this country.

16/06: I attended a local **Trade Justice Campaign event at St Joan of Arc School** organised by Cafod. It was well attended and we discussed local campaigning on trade justice issues, and attitudes towards Africa by the media, as well as by the political establishments of Europe.

17/06: I took part in **National Carers Week** meeting the public outside Boots at the Nags Head.

17/06: **(Highbury) New Park Day Centre** has been refurbished and I visited there to see users who are over the moon about the improvements at the centre, and we had a grand re-opening party.

18/06: I attended the **Islington Law Centre** party (at the Guardian Newsroom, Farringdon Rd) to celebrate three decades of their history

and work in the local community. Chris Smith and I joined others (including Steve Hitchens) to say a few words of commendation for this brilliant and resilient organisation which deserves nothing but the best of praise from all those of us who send them endless constituents for legal advice.

## **Refugee Week**

14/06 I opened the **Law Centre Refugee Forum at Islington Central library** as part of Refugee week. Among others, Syd Bolton of the North Islington Law Centre was there.

17/06: Refugee Week at the **Factory Community Centre** was combined with Child Safety Week, and I joined David Vandiver's crew for an awareness raising event there (the Factory itself is under threat from Council funding cuts!).

17/06: **City and Islington College** (Ulrike Schmidt) invited me to an event during Refugee Week, on victims of 'War and Conflict'. Included was a very moving description of abuse of young people by a young Ugandan woman, herself an asylum seeker.

18/06: I launched an Open Day for Refugee Week; it was an International Day of Support of the Victims of Torture at the **Refugee Therapy Centre at Manor Gardens**. Organised by Aida Alayarian (Clinical Director) this was essentially a get together of people who have suffered the injustices and torture that forced them to seek asylum in this country, and who want to make the best of their lives.

## **EDUCATION/HEALTH**

23/04: I was invited to take part in a **school assembly at Holloway School** (Hilldrop Rd), which is a vastly improved local comprehensive, and a great credit to Dr John Hudson and all the staff there. The assembly was dedicated to celebrating ten years of democracy in South Africa, and as one of the speakers, I drew attention to the local anti-apartheid movement and the fact that the ANC and SWAPO had their international offices in

Islington. Many South African exiles lived in Islington, and some of them are now ministers in South Africa. I have since learned that Dr Hudson is retiring and this will of course be a huge loss to the school.

23/04: This was a busy day, and as well as other events listed here I went to an Oxfam back to school event at **Drayton Park school** where the children speculated about what life might be like if living in a 3rd world country. One of their teachers is off to Ghana on an exchange program later this year, so we talked about Ghana and I have also asked a **question on Ghana which is listed in the attached Parl' Interventions.**

23/04: I joined **Education International** at County Hall to present their annual awards. This organisation (previously World University Service) have very good human rights training programs for asylum seekers in Britain, and I gave a lecture to their course.

I wish the normal British media would report events like this, which show the very positive contribution made by people who have sought safety in this country.

26/04 I had an interesting discussion with two scientists (Dr Roy Rutherford and Wynford Dore) on the subject of **dyslexia**, and the medical causes of it rather than the educational solutions to it.

15/05: I attended a big cultural event at **Highbury Grove School**, with the Somali Speaking People's Association. Emily Thornbury and Jeanette Arnold were also there. In the evening I met parents at Kokayi supplementary school who were campaigning against funding cuts. I am strongly in support of the school and think the behavior of the Lib Dem council is appalling in cutting their funding. The school has done much to improve the chances of black children in achieving their potential.

18/05: I was invited to launch **City and Islington's Adult Learners Week** at their new Centre for Lifelong Learning, with Terry Staples as coordinator at the new Blackstock Rd building. About 200 students and staff were there and it is in keeping with the traditions of the best of adult education in

Britain.

20/05: Ann Boater brought a group of recently qualified overseas teachers/students to talk to me about the work of parliament (as well as to give them awards) and to show them around and host them going in to watch a debate.

20/05: **Islington Schools Advice Project** presentation at Highbury Quadrant: this is a government funded initiative organised through the Law centre, and IPR (Islington People's Rights), providing advice in schools for parents who would normally not be able to get along to Advice Projects. Lora Reid deserves congratulations for her efforts in organising it.

22/05 **City and Islington College held their Open Day**, and conclusion of Life Long Learning week at their building in Blackstock Rd.

14/06 Val Veness and I met the outgoing Chief Executive of **the Whittington**, Andrew Riley, and discussed with him the future of the children's facilities in the hospital. We then visited the A & E Department, and the paediatric and neo-natal care unit which we were both very impressed with, later seeing the ongoing construction of the new section of the hospital fronting on to Magdala Avenue, which unfortunately is running 6 months behind schedule.

13/06: **The annual NILP fund raising lunch for Islington North Labour Party** was attended by 40 or so members and Frank Dobson said all the right things following soon after what was quite a gloomy election day if you subtract the positive bits = Ken, Claude, Jeanette, Mary Honeyball, Robert Evans. Well done to the winners. Well done to all the organisers in both events especially Carol, Gill, Jan and Laurie.

## **HOUSING:**

28/04: Housing debate: You will see from the Hansard extract that I spoke at some length in this debate.

29/04: I joined Chris Smith and Cllr Catherine West (our new Labour Leader, congratulations on this) and tenants from the Packington Estate to speak with **Keith Hill MP** of the office of

the Deputy Prime Minister, to talk about housing needs and the estate, and Chris inquired about funding for the tenants to have their own independent assessment of the safety of the estate.

30/04: Along with Catherine West I visited the **Holly Park Estate** and Montessori school.

07/05: We (Ruth Clarke) visited **Isledon Rd housing office** and had a long discussion with David Selenius on estate management, improvements and investment, particularly in the Tollington Estates.

12/05: I attended a very large lobby of parliament on '**Defend Council Housing**'. As at that date, 25 Councils had sent in their support for the Fourth Option Campaign which has at its core, direct government investment in council housing (and estate improvements). This was an open session organised by Austin Mitchell who has been extremely active on this subject about which there is an EDM (430) signed now by 110 members.

15/05: I spent the morning doing a walkabout in **Aubert Court** with the TA looking at their living conditions and the need for investment and improvements in the estate.

26/05: **Defend Council Housing** Austin Mitchell - Nicolette attended this meeting at which MPs approved the document Austin Mitchell has worked so very hard on with the backing and research of Defend Council Housing's Alan Walter.

12/06: I spent the morning with the **Quill St tenants visiting the Estate** and hearing about their problems and lack of youth facilities in the area. I am taking these matters up with the plethora of housing associations who are supposed to be managing the Quill St development.

## TRANSPORT

12/05: I called for a debate on rail franchises and spoke in it today, along with other concerned Members - refer Parl' Interventions

25/05: I spoke in an Adjournment Debate on London's Transport Needs - see parliamentary interventions. I called for the urgent upgrading of Finsbury Park station, and the opening of a

new station on **the Nth London Line** to allow for an interchange with the Northern line at Tufnell Park. I also called for the funding of the East London line extension to both Highbury and Islington and Finsbury Park.

## OTHER:

### Press Engagements:

11/05: Stop the War Press Conference

14/05: Croatian TV

14/05: Took part in the Jeremy Vine show on BBC Radio 2 to discuss the photographs in the Daily Mirror of abuses at Abu Ghraib prison and the dismissal of the editor of the Mirror for his mistake in printing a contrived photo of British troops abusing prisoners.

14/05: I was also a guest on the Brian Hayes show on the BBC Live - Iraq/Blair etc.

17/05: German TV

19/05: Stop the War Press Conference announcing 22 May demonstration.

22/06: BBC Radio 2 program Jeremy Vine about Belmarsh prison and its imprisoning of foreign nationals indefinitely under the anti-terrorist legislation.

23/06: BBC 2 Daily Politics

01/05: I attended the **Mayday march** and the rally at Trafalgar Square.

12/05: I attended the **Refugee Women's organisation in Haringey** to discuss anti racist activities and the problem of bullying in schools.

13/05: I was guest speaker at the **Refugee Therapy Centre** in Manor Gardens, an excellent organisation at which I talked about the traumas faced by asylum seekers in Britain, as well as the success of the very many who have contributed a huge amount to our community.

13/05: This evening, together with Jeanette Arnold, I attended the **Newington Green Action Group** which has done a huge amount to improve the environment area around Newington Green, successfully campaigning for a police force for this particular ward (part of Ken's agenda)

14/05: I was the guest speaker, after Friday

prayers, at the Muslim Welfare Centre, to talk about elections on June 10th.

19/05: We had a walkabout at **Highbury Fields, as part of the GLA European Election Campaign**. Ken Livingstone, Emily Thornbury and Jeanette Arnold were there.

21/05: At the **Unison Labour Link Committee** I gave my report on activities in parliament and the run up to the Euro elections. I attended a **Mildmay Community Partnership's** event at Mayville community centre - along with Pat Haynes and Jeanette Arnold.

## PARLIAMENTARY

12/05: I attended a **CND Fundraiser in Old St** (organised by Kim Manning Cooper)

18/05: I invited **Heather Pascal and her daughter** to attend a reception for representatives of Caribbean Labour Parties that were held in parliament that evening.

19/05: I spoke at the **NUJ lobby at the House of Commons (HOC)** in support of the BBC, and in advance of the Charter review and possible renewal in 2006. As a member of the NUJ parliamentary group, my position is that I want the BBC to continue as an independent public service broadcasting organisation that maintains a wide range of programmes and choice for its audience. I fear that any diminution of the BBC from being a general broadcasting organisation to a specialist one will result in its decline, and its significance within the life of this country.

I met with **Bill Rammell**, accompanied by Nicolette, and **CND's** Kate Hudson, and Sam Akaki, to discuss Britain's preparations for the non proliferation review and the outcome of the preparatory committee which has just concluded its business in New York. CND were grateful for the help they received from the Foreign Office in New York and we inquired about future decisions being made on a possible replacement for Trident. I hope there aren't replacements!!

25/05: I was elected chair of (the newly relaunched) **Parliamentary CND** at its launch meeting. Among those present were Bruce

Kent (Vice President of CND), Sam Akaki and Kate Hudson, and 12 MPs (among them Simon Thomas, John McDonnell, Alice Mahon, and Angus Robertson.

Irrespective of party affiliation, in the current global political climate, nuclear disarmament issues are very important: the future of Trident and any possible replacements, alongside the US/UK Mutual Defence Agreement, which governs all nuclear cooperation between us ... The whole of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation regime is up for review in 2005!

25/05: Maggie Bowden (from Liberation) joined me as did Nicolette, to meet **Bill Rammell** at the Foreign Office, to discuss a variety of issues: in particular Colombia, the Middle East, Iraq, and arms to Indonesia (Aceh).

25/05: Myself, and the delegation who went to Colombia met with **Hilary Benn** to ask for more aid and human rights support in Colombia.

25/05: **World Oceans Day**: Stuart Singleton-White is the Chair of the Wildlife and Countryside Link Marine Campaign and I attended a very enjoyable and productive event and photocall at the HOC to mark their EDM (171) on Protecting the Marine Environment, Wildlife and Countryside Link. Whale Sanctuaries are designated marine areas in which whales including severely depleted and/or vulnerable species, can find a safe refuge from human threats to their survival and I am very supportive of them.

28/05: **The Dalai Lama Atlee Suite**: I had the interesting experience of attending a reception of the Dalai Lama. He was very relaxed and conciliatory towards the Chinese. It is sad that he was unable to meet the Prime Minister during his visit. The event was well attended and Isabelle Hilton (a local journalist) was also there.

21/06: I spent the longest day of the year in Parliament. Among other things I met the **Chagos Islanders, and please refer to my Morning Star column of the 23<sup>rd</sup> for an update on the sly tactics of the Foreign Office (an EDM is also attached).**

## ATHLETICS

16/06: Today was a sporting day: At Westminster, MPs (among them Socialist Campaign Group (SCG) members) Jeremy Corbyn, Alan Simpson (fresh from Portugal and Euro 2004, say no more) took part in the **Westminster annual bike ride** from Tate Modern to Parliament.

Later in the day over 100 MPs and staff took part in the '**Westminster Mile for Sport Relief**'. The SCG were here in force as well with Lynn Jones, Bob Marshall Andrews, Kelvin Hopkins and myself. Lynn ran with style and grace, Bob Marshall Andrews with a full stomach, Kelvin walked in a cloth cap made in Luton, and I concentrated on finishing in the first ten, leaving war secretary Geoff Hoon well behind (very important).

## SENIOR CITIZENS

20/05: **Age Concern** held their Open Day at the newly refurbished Sotheby Mews Centre.

18/06: I attended the **TUC Pensioners Demonstration/Rally** in Trafalgar Square which was organised by Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, and got a good amount of press coverage which was a welcome change. Hopefully it raised awareness and support for a better pensions deal for all.

18/06: I greeted the return of John Ridgway to the UK: John left Scotland last July in his yacht to circumnavigate the globe, and highlight the threat to albatrosses from pirate fishing. The RSPB had organised the event at St Catherine's dock as part of their campaign to **save the albatross**, and in particular to celebrate their acquisition of the 1000 acre Rainham Marshes as a bird sanctuary.

18/06: I attended the launch of the **Refugee Women's Resource Project** at Toynbee Hall (organised by Asylum Aid in E1). I renewed my acquaintance with my old friend Helen Bamber (Founding Director of the Medical Foundation for the victims of Torture in Kentish Town), and met Catriona Jarvis, an Asylum and Immigration Adjudicator.

**3<sup>rd</sup> July: The (Parliamentary) Socialist Campaign Group are hosting a special conference entitled the launch of the Labour Representation Committee.** This conference is important and vital and will be an excellent opportunity for activists from all over the country to come together. A leaflet is photocopied at the back of my report for anyone who is interesting in attending.

## STUDENTS

Mathew Fleischner was an intern at my parliamentary office for six weeks, and was a terrific help in the short time he was here. He also attended the advice surgeries on a regular basis which he found very interesting. I think it's fair to say that he returned to the States well versed on a different way of looking at things, and satisfied with his placement.

**ADVICE SURGERIES** are included overpage and note that from July onward (remembering there are no advice surgeries in August) an additional advice surgery will be held in the Mildmay area on the second Thursday of the month. Telephone 020 7226 5775 for further information about Advice Surgeries.

## Coming up:

**11/07: My Garden Party at Jenny Rathbone's** (if that's not too confusing a concept for any newcomers) – 6 Mercers Rd, N19. 12.30 – 4pm please come along and if you can bring a dish, please tell Carol Clinton ([carol@miranda18freeseve.co.uk](mailto:carol@miranda18freeseve.co.uk)) as it will be most appreciated. Entrance £7 or £5 concession. Pay Bar.