

LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET

Lamb's Conduit Street, which lies to the north west of Gray's Inn, is a village unto itself, being populated almost entirely by independent shops catering for most needs. It was originally the northern end of Red Lion Street as it crossed Theobalds Road and was renamed in the 18th century, the name coming from William Lamb and the lead conduit he built in 1577 to supply water to the City of London from the springs and rivers in the adjacent meadows. The conduit itself was rebuilt in 1667 to a design by Christopher Wren and eventually disappeared in 1746.

The 'street' was developed residentially in the late 17th century by the notorious Nicholas Barbon (who was often in conflict with lawyers at Gray's Inn), but took on its character as a local high street early in the 19th century when it had a general grocer, shops selling medicines, cakes, tea, cheese, wine, jewellery, stationery, toys, clothes, books and furniture – much as it does today.

Graya News No 17 described several interesting establishments in this rather special street, and here are a few more ...

La Fromagerie

Yes, cheese is the *raison d'être* of this shop/cafe/restaurant, and recent addition to the street, where the *Graya News* team enjoyed some excellent 'toasted sandwiches' – a somewhat inadequate description. They were lovely and provided a most satisfying lunch, accompanied as they were by a perfect glass of wine selected in consultation with the helpful waiting staff. La Fromagerie has quite an extensive menu, obviously centrally featuring cheese (with a French, British and Italian emphasis) but also charcuterie and 'kitchen' specials, and the shop incorporates a wonderful 'cheese room', as well as selling an enticing variety of 'own' products.



Connock & Lockie

These bespoke tailors were established in 1902 in New Oxford Street and moved to Lambs Conduit Street in 2004. Catering for ladies as well as gentlemen, they aim to take customers through the process of acquiring a unique, personally made garment in a minimum of 12 weeks, including 'several' fittings. The shop window featured this intriguing display of Alice in Wonderland characters when *Graya News* spent a sunny and very pleasant afternoon, dipping in and out of some of the varied independent businesses and shops.



Simon Carter

Essentially selling items for men, this delightful shop has an eclectic mix of shirts in Italian cotton – some using exclusive fabric designs from the Liberty archive – ties, cuff links and even some shoes. Well established, the Simon Carter range clearly sets out to offer clothes and accessories which stand out from the mainstream and are of high quality.



And beyond

Pentreath & Hall

Round the corner in Rugby Street is this 'Aladdin's Cave' of antiques, new homewares and numerous exclusive items, all aimed at those 'seeking beautiful, unusual and decorative things for the home'. With their wide-ranging and 'carefully selected' collection of interior accessories – colourful dinner candles to grand tour souvenirs – Pentreath & Hall aim to offer 'an accessory for every occasion in life'. There truly is a vast array of goods – cushions, vases, tableware, candlesticks, prints, stationery, lamps and much more.



L'Osteria 57

Frequented by the *Graya News* team, this friendly and unpretentious Italian restaurant, which is open from mid-morning till late evening, provides simple and classical Italian dishes. A decent wine list – and an Aperol spritz aperitif – is, of course, available. On the Gray's Inn Road, the restaurant is popular with locals (for dine in or take away): indeed, you may well see someone from the Inn there.



Catalyst

Also on the Gray's Inn Road, but closer to the Inn (opposite the Gray's Inn Road Gate), this relatively new coffee shop, with its minimalist but bright interior, attracts a young crowd. Catalyst roasts – and sells – its coffee and receives appreciably good reviews for the various 'coffees' now expected to be on offer. Open from 7am during the week, it is a popular place to breakfast, with food available that certainly seems to be anything but 'run-of-the-mill'. Licensed, Catalyst stays open later on Thursdays and Fridays, serving cocktails, wine, craft beer, etc. It seems to be making a name for itself as an independent outlet, providing a welcome contrast to the abundant 'chains'.

Maggie Owen

Also in Rugby Street is Maggie Owen, selling individually chosen – and innovative – costume jewellery and other accessories to those looking for something special. Her interest in

such pieces stems from when she bought a stunning necklace designed by Philippe Ferrandis, whose work she then chose to sell, together with the work of other carefully chosen designers, including Madrid-based Anton Heunis, Christina Brampti from Athens and Parisian, Samuel Coraux. These eye-catching collections are complemented with a 'carefully edited' collection of beautiful scarves and unique accessories.

