TITLE INFORMATION
Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/uk



Fitzrovia, 1900-1950

An Artist's Domain

Ruth Artmonsky

ISBN	9781738501625
Publisher	Artmonsky Arts
Binding	Paperback / softback
Territory	World excluding USA & Canada
Size	175 mm x 215 mm
Pages	80 Pages
Illustrations	57 color
Price	£12.00

- A social history of the area of London known as Fitzrovia and the artists that frequented and inhabited it

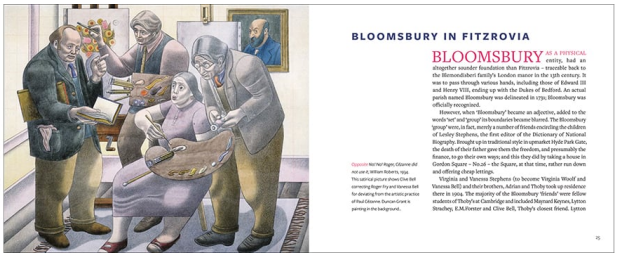
Fitzrovia is a notional area not to be found on any official document and, indeed, was not so called until the 1940s, named by a habitue at the Fitzroy Tavern, the journalist-cum-member of parliament, Tom Driberg. It was, for some half century, a haven for artists. This was partly due to the cheap accommodation it offered, along with cheap cafes and food shops, many run by French and German refugees, several of generous nature when it came to impoverished artists. But even more significant was the siting of the Slade School of Fine Art, just across Tottenham Court Road, in Gower Street. Founded in 1871, it offered a more liberal education than that provided by the Royal Academy Schools.

Although many artists of the period lived and worked independently in Fitzrovia, others clustered round charismatic personalities – Walter Sickert in Fitzroy Street, Roger Fry in his Omega Workshops in Fitzroy Square, Wyndham Lewis with his Vorticist plotters at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel in Percy Street; and, into the 1930s when some artists became activist, establishing the Artists International Association in Charlotte Street.

Many of these artists would be able to get their supplies at George Romney &Co. and Windsor & Newton in Rathbone Place and Percy Street.

And then there were the imbibers, Nina Hammett and Augustus John frequenting the various taverns of Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street, centering on the Fitzroy. Fitzrovia was awash!

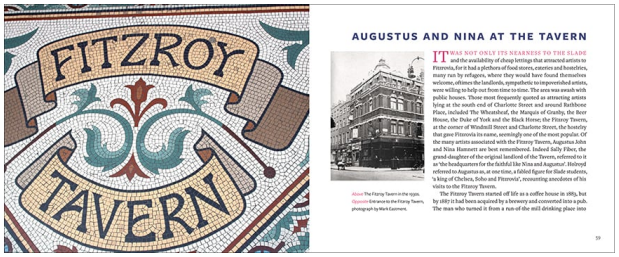
Ruth Artmonsky trained as a psychologist. On her retirement from her associate directorship of a leading psychometric consultancy she ran a small art gallery. To date she has written over 30 books. She has written and published a number of books on British mid-20th century art.


BLOOMSBURY IN FITZROVIA

BLOOMSBURY AS A PHYSICAL entity, had an altogether sounder foundation than Fitzrovia – traceable back to the Hemondisbert family's London manor in the 13th century. It was to pass through various hands, including those of Edward III and Henry VIII, ending up with the Dukes of Bedford. An actual parish named Bloomsbury was delineated in 1731; Bloomsbury was officially recognised.

However, when 'Bloomsbury' became an adjective, added to the words 'set' and 'group' its boundaries became blurred. The Bloomsbury 'group' were, in fact, merely a number of friends encircling the children of Lesley Stephens, the first editor of the Dictionary of National Biography. Brought up in traditional style in upmarket Hyde Park Gate, the death of their father gave them the freedom, and presumably the finance, to go their own ways; and this they did by taking a house in Gordon Square – No.46 – the Square, at that time, rather run down and offering cheap lettings.

Virginia and Vanessa Stephens (to become Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell) and their brothers, Adrian and Thoby took up residence there in 1904. The majority of the Bloomsbury 'friends' were fellow students of Thoby's at Cambridge and included Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, E.M.Forster and Clive Bell, Thoby's closest friend. Lytton



AUGUSTUS AND NINA AT THE TAVERN

IT WAS NOT ONLY ITS NEARNESS TO THE SLADE and the availability of cheap lettings that attracted artists to Fitzrovia, for it had a plethora of food stores, eateries and boozeries, many run by refugees, where they would have found themselves welcome, ofttimes the landlords, sympathetic to impecunious artists, were willing to help out from time to time. The area was awash with public houses. Those most frequently quoted as attracting artists lying at the south end of Charlotte Street and around Rathbone Place, included The Wheatsheaf, the Marquis of Granby, the Beer House, the Duke of York and the Black Horse; the Fitzroy Tavern, at the corner of Windmill Street and Charlotte Street, the hostelry that gave Fitzrovia its name, seemingly one of the most popular. Of the many artists associated with the Fitzroy Tavern, Augustus John and Nina Hammett are best remembered. Indeed Sally Fliter, the grand-daughter of the original landlord of the Tavern, referred to it as 'the headquarters for the faithful like Nina and Augustus'. Holroyd referred to Augustus as, at one time, a fabled figure for Slade students, 'a king of Chelsea, Soho and Fitzrovia', recounting anecdotes of his visits to the Fitzroy Tavern.

The Fitzroy Tavern started off life as a coffee house in 1885, but by 1887 it had been acquired by a brewery and converted into a pub. The man who turned it from a run-of-the-mill drinking place into

Published 1st Jul 2025