

# THE CLIFFS OF DOVER STREET

Dover Street and the immediate neighbourhood of the new HQ for PESGB has two distinct 'geologies'. First, Dover Street runs along the top surface of a Thames Valley Pleistocene river terrace, the same one which runs into the high side of Trafalgar Square. This flat surface extends under Albermarle Street and Bond Street, but is trenched by small stream in Bruton Street and Berkeley Square. Note the steep descent of Hay Hill to Berkeley Street. As the terrace has yielded Hippopotamus and a good Ipswichian fauna, we always hope for deep foundationing or pipelining into this area of Mayfair, but have had few excitements recently.

The other 'Geology' is what we can make of the buildings, and will be our main purpose in this walk.

Dover Street is something of a survival from the 18th century plan for the area of grander town houses set in continuous terraces, the form of which survives in the much rebuilt houses at the northern end towards the corner into Grafton Place. One of this series was the home of Lord Brougham in the early 19th century. The oldest building in Dover Street is actually the pub, The Duke of Albermarle on the corner of Stafford St but not much can be seen of its material substance from the date of 1696. As we all know it, it masquerades beneath external painting meant to suggest that it is walled with serpentinite; the pattern, however, is too perfect to convince.

Real antiquity stands more clearly in Ely House, directly opposite PESGB. This Portland Stone building, recently cleaned, was built in 1772 by the Bishop of Ely for his town residence by the architect Sir Robert Taylor on very classical lines. It could be our starting point, offering all we need to know about massive Portland Stone, fossils and all.

Mann-Egerton showrooms allow us to read the patterns in Italian Marble an insight which we shall extend in the surround to the restaurant Chez Gerard. Hereditary House, oddly named as it has long been vacant, will test our recognition of the real from the phoney.

Hay Hill offers us a recent prize-winning piece of architecture with some original features worked out in granite and Portland Stone. If we dare peer into the salon which is No.14, we may see an aspect of Tethys which they do not know of ( yet ).

At the bottom of the hill, we face the mass of Lansdowne House and the heart of Saatchi & Saatchi - more granites and an exotic, truly exotic stone from Brazil. Nat. West. Bank on Berkeley Square needs to be seen in oblique sunlight to get the full appreciation of the black igneous rock which faces the building. A I B Bank next door takes us to Devon and fossils. If we can view the foyer of Berkeley Square House we see Norwegian igneous combined with Italian freshwater spring limestone. We may not want to buy a Citroen or a Rolls Royce, but their adjacent showrooms may tempt us with more Tethyan limestone or a Carboniferous sabkha to the dismay of the salesmen.

Bruton Street is heavy with serpentinite and so represents the deep roots of mountain chains all the way past the Coach & Horses, until we reach Time-Life House and real stone once again. Spring deposits and Norwegian igneous rock, but let's not forget a sculptural frieze at roof level ( Portland Stone again ). Round the corner into Old Bond Street as we meet the Festival of Britain-stone in Ballantynes. Think of the stairs to the Festival Hall.

Across the street and on the corner of Clifford Street, Watches of Switzerland bring us a splendid Rapakivi Granite without the need to go to Finland. What follows in the narrows of Old Bond Street are the jewel like premises of Asprey, Cartier and, best of all Tiffany, all well-known to PESGB-ers. Chatila, Gucci, Versace produce a flurry of stones of interest. Whether we get past the Scylla and Charybdis of The Goat and Shelleys; is up to you! Let's hope for a fine evening ( weather

*Eric Robinson*

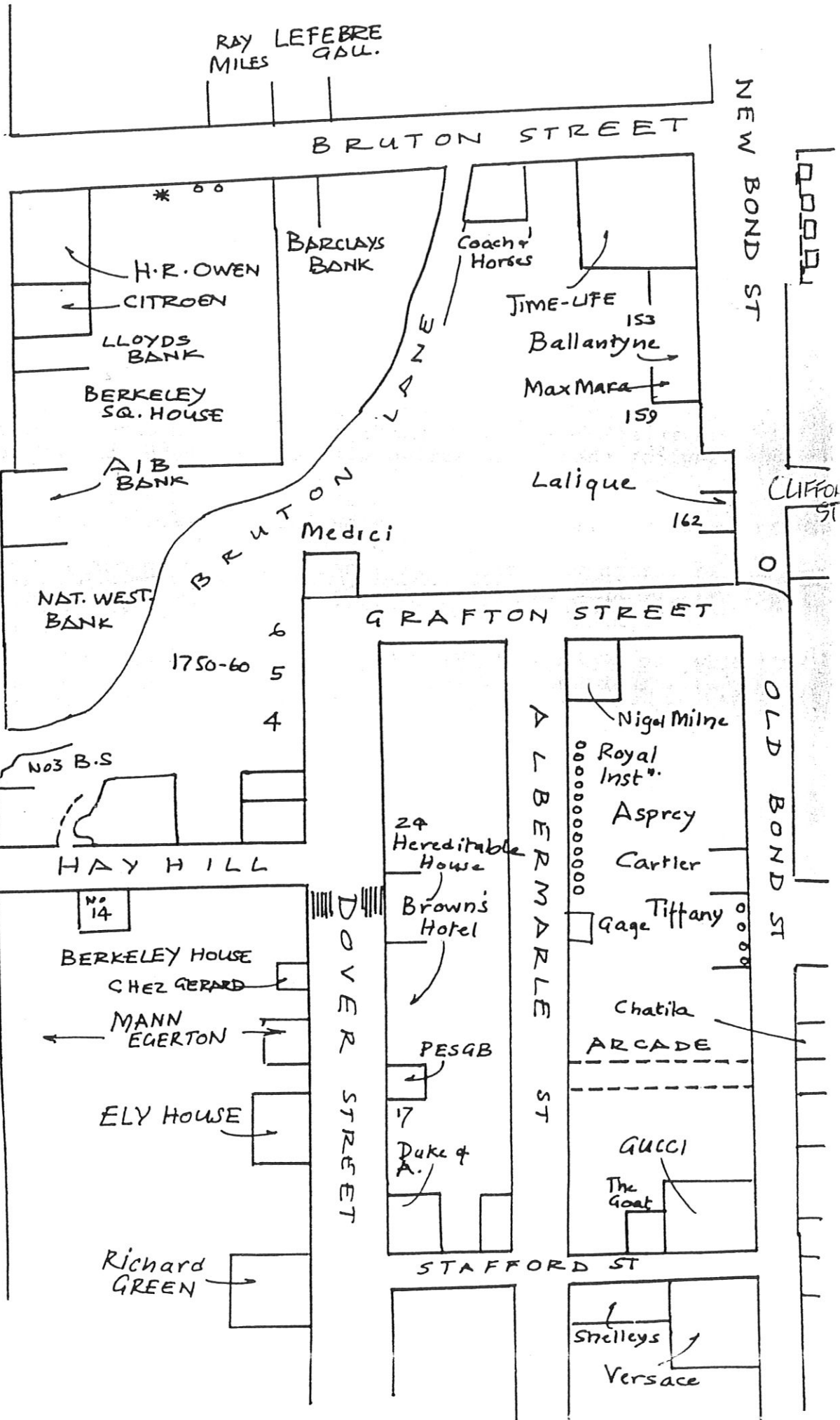


# THE CLIFFS OF DOVER ST.



RAY LEFEBRE  
MILES GALL.

BERKELEY SQUARE



AATCHI & SAATCHI  
NSDOWNNE  
HOUSE

