

"News Chronicle"

20/6/45

Eros statue will return to Piccadilly Circus in about three months.

Co
ty

*Met Office of Works
Write to C.C.*

20th June, 1945.

Dudley Vernon, Esq.,
Publicity Officer,
Ministry of Works,
Lambeth Bridge House,
Albert Embankment, S.E.1.

Dear Mr. Vernon,

I saw a couple of lines in the "News Chronicle" to-day which stated that the Gros statue will return to Piccadilly Circus in about three months.

This may make a newsreel story, especially if some ceremony is to take place to mark the occasion. Is there any suggestion that something on these lines will take place? Personally I think it would be a good idea if something real good were done. Perhaps you will bear this in mind and, in any case, let me know in good time when it is returning.

Yours sincerely,

F. J. Partington.
Assistant News Editor.

FJP/JP.

21st June, 1945.

The Press Officer,
London County Council,
County Council,
Westminster Bridge, S.E.1.

Dear Sir,

We are interested in the announcement that the Gros Statue will return to Piccadilly Circus in about three months. We have approached the Ministry of works, who advise us that this particular statue is your responsibility.

As you will realise, this may make a newsreel story, especially if some ceremony is to take place to mark the occasion. Is there any suggestion that something on these lines will take place? Personally I think it would be a good idea if something were done. Perhaps you will bear this in mind and, in any case, let me know in good time when it is returning.

Yours faithfully,

F. J. Partington.
Assistant News Editor.

FJP/JP.



LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL
THE COUNTY HALL, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, S.E.1

Telephone WATERloo 5000; Extn. 6233

~~IMPORTANT: In any reply please quote~~

Press Officer.

Replies to be sent to

~~The Clerk of the Council.~~

25th June, 1945.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter (FJP/JP) of 21st June, I will not fail to keep you posted about developments in the matter of the return of Eros to Piccadilly Circus.

Yours faithfully,

C. H. SMITH,

Press Officer.

Phoned 1/16/45.

F. J. Partington, Esq.,
Assistant News Editor,
British Paramount News,
School Road, N.W.10.

Check.

see latest cutting.



Aren of the World

30/9/45

* * * * *
Statue of Eros will be soon re-
erected in Piccadilly-circus after
nearly six years' absence
* * * * *

"Daily Mail" 17/6/47

HOME TO PICCADILLY AFTER 7½ YEARS

Eros, with silver wings, will be back in June

AND THE JOB COSTS LCC £450

By MURRAY EDWARDS, Daily Mail Reporter

EROS, the Love God, and London's own symbol, will be back on his Piccadilly-circus pedestal by the end of June at the latest. This was promised by the London County Council's Town Planning Committee yesterday.

He will be an Eros of silver wings, for skilled polishers are to clean the marks of 7½ years' hibernation from his aluminium body before he is replaced. Several coats of varnish will protect his gleaming surface from the ravages of London air.

The job will cost £450, and take 1,000 manhours to complete—most of the time will be spent on cleaning the 4cwt., 10ft. high figure, and mending its broken bow.

Behind locked doors

In a shaft of sunlight which shone through the torn white canvas covering the window of the former members' reading-room in County Hall, I saw Eros yesterday lying on a pile of A.R.P. mattresses and sacks.

It takes four strong men to lift the figure, but they keep the doors double-locked.

The L.C.C. say that Eros would have been returned long ago, but the job was not considered to be a priority one.

The "Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain" (Eros's official name) was put up to the memory of Lord Shaftesbury in 1893, was designed by Sir Alfred Gilbert, who lived in poverty in Belgium for 26 years after a quarrel over its cost.

Original price was to have been £3,000. Altogether Eros cost £7,000. After the quarrel was patched up Sir Alfred returned to England, was elected an R.A., and died in London in 1934.

This will be Eros's second return to Piccadilly-circus. He was removed in 1925, when the new Underground Station was built, and, after six years in the Embankment Gardens, was polished up and put back in 1931.

Few people remember that when Eros was first put up he was a dull silver colour. London air turned the figure green, and most people thought it was made of bronze.

June note for diary

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE PRESS.

Drawn 9.6.47.
JR

London County Council.

Drawn → REINSTATEMENT OF EROS IN PICCADILLY CIRCUS.

The date for the reinstatement of the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus has now been fixed for Saturday, 28th June, between 2.30 and 3.30 p.m.

There will be an informal ceremony at the reinstatement, beginning at about 3.30 p.m. and presided over by the Chairman of the London County Council (The Lady Nathan). The President of the Royal Academy (Sir Alfred Munnings) has accepted an invitation to take part in the ceremony.

The wooden hoarding which at present surrounds the fountain, and the tubular scaffolding above it, cannot be dismantled until after the actual reinstatement of Eros, and the work of dismantling will begin on the Monday following reinstatement and is expected to take two or three days.

It is thought that the Press will wish to have this preliminary announcement for their own convenience and for publication, and further details will be announced in due course.

J. R. HOWARD ROBERTS,

Clerk of the Council.

The County Hall,
Westminster Bridge, S.E.1.
9th June, 1947.

London County Council.REINSTATEMENT OF EROS IN PICCADILLY CIRCUS.

As already announced, the statue of Eros will be reinstated in Piccadilly Circus this coming Saturday afternoon, 28th June.

The lorry carrying the statue will arrive at the Circus at about 2.30 p.m. and the work of hoisting the statue into position will begin at once.

The statue should be in position by about 3.30 p.m., when the Right Hon. the Chairman of the London County Council (The Lady Nathan), accompanied by the President of the Royal Academy (Sir Alfred Munnings), the Vice-Chairman of the London County Council (Mr. E.C. Sherwood), the Deputy Chairman of the Council (Mr. J.M. Oakey), the Leader of the Council (Lord Latham), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Henry Brooke), the Chairman of the Council's General Purposes Committee (Mr. J.R. Oldfield), the Chairman of the Council's Town Planning Committee (Mrs. I.M. Bolton), the Mayor of Westminster (The Hon. Greville Howard), the Clerk of the London County Council (Mr. J.R. Howard Roberts) and the Clerk of the Westminster City Council (Sir Parker Morris) will assemble on a platform erected at the base of the fountain facing Lower Regent Street and Piccadilly.

The Lady Nathan will make a brief speech introducing the President of the Royal Academy. Sir Alfred Munnings will then speak for about ten minutes and the ceremony will end with a short speech by Lord Latham.

The speeches will be amplified to the spectators and from 3 to 3.30 p.m. there will also be amplified music from gramophone records.

A statement giving further details and the timetable of the proceedings is attached, together with a note about the statue of Eros.

The police will divert traffic from Piccadilly Circus between 2.30 and 3.50 p.m. as necessary.

The pavement surrounding the fountain will be reserved for members of the London County Council and others, and for the Press, and Press representatives who would like tickets for this enclosure are asked to apply to the Council's Press Officer (WAT. 5000, Ext. 6233).

Ticket
herewith

The Eros flower girls will of course also be admitted to the enclosure and it is hoped that they will grace the occasion with their presence.

The wooden hoarding which at present surrounds the fountain, and the tubular scaffolding above it, cannot be dismantled until after the actual reinstatement of Eros, and the work of dismantling will begin on the Monday following reinstatement and is expected to take two or three days.

J. R. HOWARD ROBERTS,

Clerk of the Council.

The County Hall,
Westminster Bridge, S.E.1.
23rd June, 1947.



LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

THE COUNTY HALL, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, S.E.1

23rd June, 1947.

Telephone WATERloo 5000; Extn. 6233.

IMPORTANT In any reply please quote L.

Replies to be sent to: The Press Officer.

Note re balloons

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in forwarding herewith the attached notice about the detailed arrangements for the reinstatement of Eros in Piccadilly Circus this Saturday afternoon, 28th June.

I have been in touch with the Police on the question of accommodation in the Circus for news reel vans and we hope that it will be possible to make satisfactory arrangements for all concerned. The Police have, however, asked me to make this point (and it is a point which occurs also to me) that news reel vans will tend to obscure the view of some of the spectators and we therefore feel that the less vans there are the better, so that if you can get the shots you want through the medium of hand camera operators, this will be all to the good. As I say, we shall be glad to do our best to accommodate those news reel vans that wish to be present and for the purpose of discussing this I am holding a meeting with the Police and the News Reel Companies at Piccadilly Circus at 3.30 p.m. this Friday, 27th June. We will rendezvous by the police box in the Circus. Perhaps you could drop me a line or telephone me to let me know whether or not you will be sending a representative to this meeting.

I am enclosing two tickets to the enclosure which you may need for your pedestrian operators. If you need any more, please let me know. I am also enclosing two windscreen labels which will facilitate the approach of your news reel van to the Circus.

Yours very truly,

*Solent
Ash*

C. H. Smith

C. H. SMITH,
Press Officer.

The News Editor,
Paramount News, Ltd.



CONTACT:-

FRI. 3.30 P.M. (POLICE)

Flower girls. (Emma Baker)
dozen of flower girls.

MUSIC (records.)

A.P. TIP:-

500 Balloons to be dropped
from roof (Munich Cafe side.)

London County Council.

REINSTATEMENT OF THE STATUE OF EROS
IN PICCADILLY CIRCUS -
SATURDAY, 28th JUNE, 1947.

Proposed timetable and other details.

About 2.30 p.m. The lorry carrying the statue will arrive in Piccadilly Circus (leaving the premises of J. Starkie Gardner, Ltd., 267, Merton Road, Southfields, S.W.18, where it is being renovated, at 2 p.m. and travelling by way of Wandsworth Road, Vauxhall, Albert Embankment, over Lambeth Bridge, Millbank, Whitehall, Pall Mall and Lower Regent Street).

The work of hoisting the statue into position will begin at once.

By about 3.30 p.m. The statue should be in position.

The "platform party" for the ceremony will proceed to the platform erected at the base of the fountain facing Lower Regent Street and Piccadilly.

(About 3.35 p.m. The Right Hon. the Chairman of the London County Council (The Lady Nathan) will introduce the President of the Royal Academy (Sir Alfred Munnings).

Speeches
will be
amplified

About 3.37 p.m. Sir Alfred Munnings will speak.

(About 3.47 p.m. The Leader of the London County Council (Lord Latham) will speak.

About 3.50 p.m. The ceremony ends.

Balloons about 3 chips. In Park

All further enquiries should be made to Mr. C.H. Smith,
L.C.C. Press Officer, The County Hall, S.E.1
(WATERloo 5000, Ext. 6233)

London County Council.

RETURN OF "EROS".
28th JUNE, 1947.

Piccadilly Circus has been given a number of high-sounding titles by lovers of London. "The centre of London", "the heart of the Empire", and "hub of the world" are among the epithets conferred. Apart from whatever justification there may be for such terms, certain it is that, in this busy focal point of London life, the central feature, the pivot of interest is "Eros". No statue in London has a more popular appeal. This dainty winged figure, so delicate that a strong breeze will cause it to tremble and sway gently, surmounts the monument properly known as the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain.

The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, whose life and work this fountain commemorates, spent the labours of a lifetime in the promotion of social and philanthropic reform.

The amelioration of the conditions of workers in factory and mine, the alleviation of the state of the poor, the protection of abused and neglected children, of slaves, of the mentally afflicted and of animals were the object of his earnest and greathearted endeavours. He was largely instrumental in securing legislation regulating the hours of work and conditions in industry. Training ships, "ragged schools" and refuges for boys and girls, were established and developed through his efforts. The Dictionary of National Biography describes him as "the impersonation of the philanthropic spirit of the nineteenth century".

On his death in 1885 a Memorial Committee was formed and subscriptions for a memorial fund were invited from the public. Albert Gilbert was commissioned by the Committee to design a fountain for some public site in London.

There was at that time at about the middle of Piccadilly Circus a triangular space which the London County Council desired to adapt for some ornamental purpose. The Memorial Committee offered to provide the fountain on this site. The offer was accepted, and the Council undertook the responsibility for maintenance after erection. In June, 1893, the memorial was unveiled by the first Duke of Westminster.

Gilbert described the fountain as his "crowning glory". The intention appears to have been that the memorial should symbolise the spirit of Love, with the figure discharging a shaft of light into the heart of disordered humanity, penetrating through callousness, while the fountain of generosity overflowed.

Who in fact gave the name Eros to the statue no one knows. In classical mythology Eros seems to have had a multiple personality. Or were there more than one god of that name? In his Latin form, as

Cupid, he is represented as a wayward mischievous boy, identified with the love that is more human than divine. In his primitive form he had a more cosmic character. Born out of Chaos, he represented the harmonising power of a love not merely passionate. In this sense it is perhaps not inappropriate that his name has come to be associated with the memorial to a great philanthropist.

The complete memorial is 37 feet 4 inches high and 18 feet 10 inches wide. The figure itself is 8 feet high. An unusual feature of the statue is that it is of aluminium. It was the first example of the use of this metal for that purpose.

Eros has had many adventures. Although he is generally associated with Piccadilly Circus, he has in fact spent more than 15 years away from that site.

In 1925, when the enlargement of Piccadilly Circus tube station was undertaken, the fountain, with Eros, was removed to the Embankment Gardens. In 1931, it was reinstated, on a somewhat larger and slightly higher base.

He had to be taken away for another and shorter period early in 1932 for repairs after injuries sustained in unofficial public celebrations on the New Year's Eve of 1931. Eros has on numerous occasions been used as the centrepiece of public rejoicing and festivity. His bow has been broken, bent and lost. He has been hugged, kissed, garlanded, dressed up, scratched and dented by roysterers and adorers. He has become a traditional magnet of interest at times of public hilarity, often to the embarrassment of the authorities, and although on occasions he has been subjected to harsh, unfair and thoughtless treatment at the hands of unruly elements in the crowds, he has remained poised above it all, still continuing to symbolise, as his author intended, the spirit of order among chaos, an embodiment of light and sensitivity in the hurrying press of London.

In 1939, he was removed for safety to the country, and has now returned, refreshed and renovated, ready to renew acquaintance with Londoners and visitors, and to grace once more with his attractive presence the London scene.

J.R. HOWARD ROBERTS,

Clerk of the Council.

The County Hall, S.E. 1.
June, 1947.