

JAMES STREET THEATRE, Haymarket

1728 In use by this date
1800c Closed

Very little is known about this theatre. It stood in the road which linked the Haymarket to Whitcomb Street, neighbouring the Royal Tennis Court which was demolished in 1863. It was certainly open in 1728, when a playbill announces Fawkes, the conjuror, exhibiting the famous “flower trick” of the Indian jugglers. It was clearly a theatre of some sorts since the admission prices state Boxes were 1/6d and Pit seats were 1/-.

Another bill from 1750 announces “The Wife Well Managed” by Mr Punch and his queer company. Also on the bill were Master Lawrence on the tightrope, Mr Lawrence on the slack wire, and the younger Master Lawrence (aged 7) dancing a hornpipe whilst playing the violin. The pantomime that year was announced as “Harlequin Everywhere” with a new drama called “True Blue or the Pressgang”.

On other occasions it was used for an Exhibition of Mechanics and Engineering. It was probably a multi-purpose hall, sometimes used as a theatre then at other times for whatever purpose it could obtain a rental income. It probably closed before 1800, though it possibly became a “Penny Gaff” (q.v.) which was said to exist in the area around 1820.



JEANETTA COCHRANE THEATRE

1964 Opened

Opened in Southampton Row as a performing space for the Theatre Department of the Central School of Art and Design. It was named after Jeanetta Cochrane, formerly the Head of the Theatre Department. In its early years it was occasionally made available for public performances and was hired during College holidays by professional companies. It gained a reputation for experimental work in the early 1970s, but for most of the 1990s seems to have been used chiefly for student performances. It re-

launched itself as the Cochrane Theatre and made itself available as a national touring house from 2000 onwards. It has 314 seats.



JERMYN STREET THEATRE

1994 Opened
1997 Remodelled and enlarged

A small fringe theatre converted from upstairs staff rooms in the Getti Restaurant (formerly the Spaghetti House Restaurant). Materials, expertise and services to the value of £280,000 were donated by 56 British companies and with a major donation from Laings Builders the theatre opened in August 1994. It is a registered charity, run by volunteers. Its aims are to provide new actors, directors and writers with a West End showcase, and to raise money for worthwhile charitable causes.

