

Londoner's Diary

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Naipaul speaks well of Treason

SIR Vidia Naipaul spoke highly of his friend David Pryce-Jones's new book, *Treason of the Heart*, at its launch at Daunt Books, Marylebone, last night.

"What is treason?" he said of the book, which is about British people who have taken up foreign causes for ideological reasons. "It's a clever way of approaching a complex subject."

Perhaps surprisingly, Unity Mitford, an admirer of Hitler and subject of an earlier book by Pryce-Jones, scores only a passing mention.

"Dick White [head of MI6 in the Fifties and Sixties] once suggested she might be a double agent but I don't believe it," said the author. "She was an innocent in every sense, and too eccentric."

Mostyn-Owen and scruffy Boris

BORIS Johnson's former father-in-law, William Mostyn-Owen, one-time head of Old Masters at Christie's, has died. He married Gaia Servadio and their daughter, Allegra, who knew the future Mayor of London at Oxford, was Boris's first wife.

"Boris and Willie got on well with competitive conversations about Eton, where Boris's school career was more successful but Willie embodied smartness and elegance while Boris was fantastically scruffy," says a friend.

"I think Willie was particularly disappointed when Boris forgot his trousers for his grand wedding in Shropshire and had to borrow a pair from local Tory MP John Biffen."

■ DOWN at the British Journalism Review there are signs of Stockholm Syndrome – the psychological condition which leads captives to start sympathising with bullies. The Review is holding an evening awards ceremony tonight at the University of Westminster which will conclude with a "conversation with Alastair Campbell". Given that the former Downing Street spin doctor was so obstructive to journalists, it is, to put it mildly, a surprise to find him being feted by the supposed cream of the Fourth Estate.

Frayling remembers some cutting remarks

MUCH Frayling and Grayling at Foyles bookshop in Charing Cross Road last night when Christopher Frayling, former chairman of the Arts Council, was debating arts cuts with philosopher AC Grayling and theatre direct Mick Gordon.

Professor Grayling had to abandon his talk when protestors set off a smoke bomb but before that Frayling offered his thoughts on the arts cuts.

"It's hard, but the decision needs to be made," he said. "When I did it years ago all hell broke loose. Now they are cutting 29 per cent and everyone is fine. I think it's because these days people are so used to cuts they are almost relieved it's not more. I'm jealous of that. I have a file full of angry letters from celebrities. I'm not going to name names but some really famous people were livid at my cuts."

■ JAMES Hart Dyke, commissioned by MI6 to produce artwork for them, exhibited his works to the public last night. "MI6 liked the more traditional ones but they weren't so sure about the more funky ones," said Hart Dyke at the opening at the Mount Street Galleries in Mayfair. There was at least one secret MI6 agent there but his cover wasn't blown. "It's always the person you'd least expect," said James.

■ CONGRATULATIONS to Anna Scott Carter, wife of Vanity Fair editor Graydon Carter and now made a chief contributing editor to *Tatler*. Toby Young, whose *How To Lose Friends and Alienate People* was his memoir of working for Graydon at *VF*, also happens to be a contributing editor. When it comes to meetings, it may be less a case of "pass the biscuits" and more "taking the biscuit".

Let's va-va-voom to Vamizi

WHAT is it with the Royal Family and the Indian Ocean? After William and Kate's honeymoon in the Seychelles, I hear that last night Tom Parker Bowles and Helen Taylor were at an exhibition of photographs of Vamizi Island, which lies in the Quirimbas Archipelago off northern Mozambique. The show is on at the Timothy Taylor Gallery in Carlos Place. "Vamizi is Robinson Crusoe chic," says travel company Scott Dunn. "It's billed as the new Mustique," said one guest. "Which hasn't left Mustique very happy."

■ BBC director-general Mark Thompson recently described *Newsnight* presenter Emily Maitlis, right, as an "older woman" but she looked nothing of the sort at the Glamour Women of the Year Awards, held in Berkeley Square Gardens last night. Sarah Burton, designer of Kate's wedding dress, was there, as was US model Kim Kardashian, pictured below with Pixie Geldof after winning the Entrepreneur of the Year award. Go get 'em, girl.



PICTURES: DAVE BENNET



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