



London: The Wicked City: A Thousand Years of Vice in the Capital

Fergus Linnane

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London has a long history as a vibrant sexual marketplace with a staggering array of sexual wares on offer. This book surveys a thousand years of commercial sex in London, from the Bishop of Bankside's licensed brothels on Bankside to the sleazy massage parlours and suburban brothels of today's city. The author takes us on a tour of the city's colourful past where all sexual desires were catered for. There were brothels with classical paintings and fine cuisine, accommodation houses where one could take one's choice of the pretty street girls, and the bagnios or bath houses in Covent Garden, which were praised by no less an authority than Casanova. For homosexuals there were mollies houses. Expensively equipped flagellation establishments catered for the many passionate adherents of what was described as the English vice. There were many attempts to suppress the sex industry, particularly under the puritans, but it always emerged strengthened. It was flexible enough to respond to peaks in demand (such as the Restoration and two world wars) and reached an accommodation with gangsters, crooked magistrates and police. With vivid portraits of the enterprising bawds and whores who engaged in the oldest profession in the world, this is a fascinating look at the underside of life in the capital. About the Author Fergus Linnane combined a long career in journalism in London (he worked for the Mirror newspaper, among others) with a fascinated interest in the city's various underworlds. Since retiring as executive editor of the European five years ago, he has also written London's Underworld (published by Robson Books) and an encyclopedia of crime. He lives in Kent.

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