

Payne And Payne R.I.P.

By **Alexander Baron** - Nov 17, 2015



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Two women named Payne were in the news this week: one was a young mother who disappeared in 1991 and is presumed murdered; the other, who achieved notoriety for the *right* reasons, has died at the decent age of 82.

Nicola Payne was 18 years old when she disappeared literally off the face of the Earth in Coventry while walking alone to her parents' home on December 14, 1991.

In March 1992, her family offered a £5,000 reward for information on her whereabouts. That reward would later be doubled, but although a man was arrested in 2007 and another two (a father and son) 5 years later, the case remained unsolved. In 2012 also, the **BBC reported** that following new information, the police were preparing to search a wooded area of the city.

Two men were arrested in December 2013, were charged in January this year, and recently stood trial at Birmingham Crown Court. They were not new suspects, the finger of suspicion having been pointed at them since the victim disappeared. The case against Nigel Barwell and Thomas O'Reilly was largely circumstantial although there was what was claimed to have been new forensic evidence, but the jury were not impressed, and on November 16, **both men were cleared** of murder. The case remains open.

Cynthia Payne was known as Madam Cyn, and her claim to fame was that she was a brothel keeper, although the services she provided were far from the usual sordid ones associated with common prostitutes, but there was nothing at all common about Cynthia Payne. Her specialty was organising “sex parties” for elderly men. She was raided by the police in 1978, and in 1980 she received an 18 month sentence, something that caused outrage, especially among politicians of a certain age! The law in the UK is complicated; although prostitution is technically not illegal, keeping a brothel is. That was not the last time the law crossed her path but a subsequent police raid led to her standing trial and being acquitted.



Cynthia Payne with the actor and ant-censorship activist David Webb at Kensington Town Hall, June 29, 1988

Two films were based on her life, she made **many TV appearances**, published her autobiography, and even stood for Parliament. In later life she became an after dinner

speaker. She died on Sunday.

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