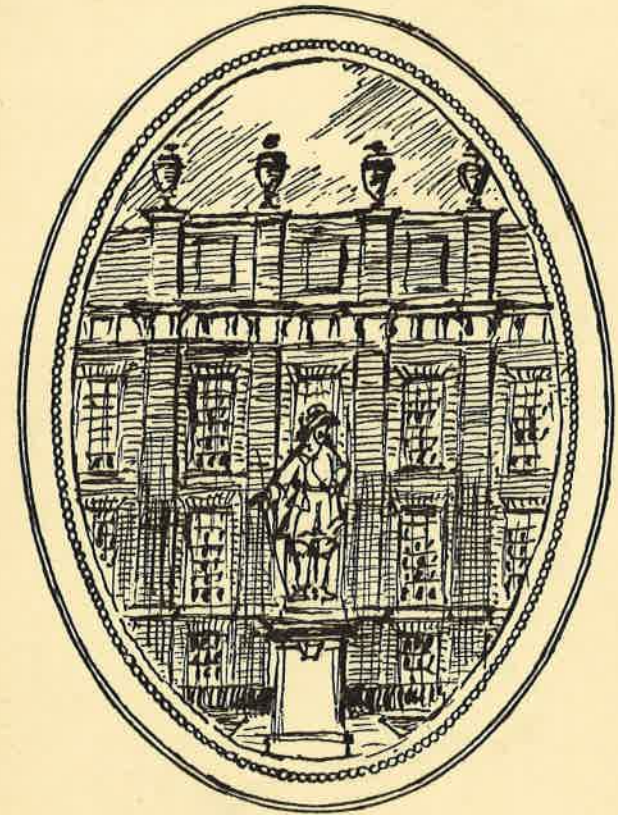


THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY



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Annual Report
1961-1962.

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

Year 1961 - 62

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

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Hon. Treasurer: E. Norman-Butler, Esq.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. G. Christiansen
18 Kensington Square, W.8. Tel.: WEStern 0931

Hon. Auditors: Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd



Kensington Church Walk.

FOREWARD

It is always an annual pleasure to summarize the continuous activity of the Kensington Society. All intelligent English people like to belong to a powerful minority group, struggling, by no means always unsuccessfully, against the blind forces of barbarism. We know that we have right upon our side, and that "development" has become a bad word, standing only for the profitable exploitation of site values in a Borough famous for interesting and historical traditions. The struggle is fierce, and great tenacity and pugnacity is required from the happy few who, assisted by a Secretary who has both these qualities, are prepared to fight for the preservation of what is left of the ancient charm of Kensington.

Last year we thought we had saved Plane Tree House, in the Duchess of Bedford's Walk and indeed our enemies abandoned the 180 feet tower block. But only to return to the attack by trying to get the same amount of money out of a building less high but nearly twice the length. Fortunately our opposition to a seven-storey block of flats at 13 Melbury Road was successful. Once again the Borough Council was against us, and the L.C.C. was on our side. Planning permission was refused. The L.C.C. have a good record this year, having also turned down an application by a "developer" to build 80 lock-up garages on the Square garden of Lexham Gardens. But there is no end to the commercial attempt to revolutionize residential Kensington. In Ashburn Place and Courtfield Road there is a scheme to erect offices, shops, garages and a hotel. Another to demolish Cornwall House and Cornwall Gardens House. A third to erect a six-storey slab block of flats and destroy a pleasant row of fine Victorian houses in Holland Villas Road. In all these cases we support the residents, people who love the place and do not want its character changed. The reservation of part of Pembridge Square garden as a children's playground is a typical example of change for the worse. The splendidly equipped Kensington Gardens children's playground is only 100 yards away. Why then destroy the peace and amenity of Pembridge Square? The peace and quiet of residential life is everywhere in danger. For that reason the Society has steadfastly opposed the Minister of Transport's scheme of One-Way traffic in Kensington. Faster and faster, noisier and noisier, is the turmoil of traffic through streets where it used to be possible to lead a civilized life. "Keep things moving" says the Minister. The only thing that the Society, representing the residents of our quiet streets, wants to move is the Minister of Transport.

(Sgd.) ESHER.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Public Library in Hornton Street on 5th December, 1961, with Mrs. Mary Stocks, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last A.G.M. were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

The adoption of the Report and the Accounts for 1960-61 was moved by Mr. Gandell and seconded by Mr. Norman-Butler and carried unanimously.

A vacancy on the Executive Committee had been caused by the resignation of Mr. Hugh Shillito, and as more than one nomination to fill the vacant place had been received, a ballot for the entire Committee was necessary. This was accordingly held and the following were found to have been elected.

Mr. Agnew, Mr. Boxall, Mr. Carter, Mrs. Christiansen, Mr. Corfield, Mr. Gandell, Mr. Gibbs-Smith, Mr. Seeley, Mrs. Stocks, Miss Ward, Mr. Wilmot.

Mr. Gandell then moved, and Mr. Carlyle seconded, the reappointment of Mrs. Christiansen as Hon. Secretary and Mr. Norman-Butler as Hon. Treasurer of the Society. This was carried unanimously.

The re-election of Messrs. Wright, Stevens and Lloyd as Hon. Auditors was moved by Miss Langdon, seconded by Mrs. Judah and carried unanimously.

Mr. Gandell moved an amendment to Rule 7 by inserting the words 'and Vice-Chairman' after the word 'Chairman'. At the time there was nothing in the Rules to indicate how the Vice-Chairman was elected. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Christiansen, and carried unanimously.

The meeting was followed by a lecture by Mr. Michael Robbins on "The History of Earl's Court".

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the first Executive Committee Meeting after the Annual General Meeting, it was necessary to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the year. Mr. H. Gandell was unanimously elected Chairman and Mr. C. H. Gibbs-Smith as Vice-Chairman.

Vice-President

The recently elected Bishop of Kensington has kindly agreed to take the place of his predecessor as Vice-President of the Society.

Miss P. M. Ward

In April a letter was received from Miss P. M. Ward who, owing to pressure of other commitments, found that she would be unable to continue serving on the Executive Committee.

The Committee accepted her resignation with regret and expressed its gratitude for the work she had done for the Society.

It was agreed that Mr. P. E. Clarke, who was nominated for the Committee last year, should be asked to fill the vacancy, and Mr. Clarke accepted.

Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A., has very generously designed the cover of this Report.

Kensington Society Publication

One of the many objects of the Kensington Society is to stimulate interest in the history of the Borough. It was with this aim in mind that the Society sponsored the publication of a booklet entitled "Phillimore Estate, Campden Hill, Kensington" written by W. G. Corfield.

It deals largely with the ownership and development of the area north of Kensington High Street lying between Hornton Street, Observatory Gardens and Airlie Gardens on the east and Holland Walk on the west.

While the book will appeal particularly to those residing in the area, we hope that other residents in Kensington will find it of great interest.

It can be purchased at the Thackeray Bookshop, Thackeray Street, Kensington, W.8, and the cost is five shillings.

We hope all our members will support this effort to stimulate interest in the history of the Royal Borough.

Holland Park School Prize

This year the prize was won by Nina Clark with an essay entitled "Kensington".

The Society offers its congratulations to the winner. We would also like to congratulate Richard Blackburn, the winner of our prize last year, on being awarded this year an open scholarship in History to St. John's College, Oxford.

This year's essay is printed in full on pages 21-23

Trees

In view of the fact that the L.C.C. are going to plant trees in St. Mary Abbot's Terrace, the sum of £10 which the Society intended

to donate for the purpose has now been given to the Kensington Borough Council towards the cost of planting trees in Cromwell Road. A letter of thanks and appreciation for the donation has been received from the Council.

Noise Abatement

We would like to record our appreciation for the help we have received from the Noise Abatement Society during the past year. This Society has secured the abatement of various noises which have been the subject of complaint by our members.

The Noise Abatement Act came into force in November, 1960, and the Noise Abatement Society has, on our behalf, taken prompt action for the enforcement of the present laws. We would urge residents in Kensington to join in the war against noise by becoming members of the Noise Abatement Society. The address is No. 6 Old Bond Street, London, W.1, and the annual subscription is 21/-. Mr. John Connell, Founder and Secretary, is lecturing to members on January 29th, on "The Abatement of Noise".

Christmas Cards

We have a number of Christmas cards from last year which we are selling this year at 3d. each.

The new card is from a drawing by Miss L. A. Allsop of Kensington Church Walk. Price of card is 6d. each.

The Secretary would welcome volunteers for selling Christmas cards.

A SELECTION OF CASES DEALT WITH

Camden Hill Court

A late Victorian block of 97 flats is at the corner of Holland Street and Hornton Street extending from Holland Street to Observatory Gardens and covering over two acres of ground.

Early in the year an application was made to demolish the existing flats on the site and build two 23-storey tower blocks, containing 168 flats. The Kensington Society deplored the erection of two high tower blocks in this area. Planning permission to build this block was refused, but five months later a revised application for redevelopment was made. The proposal is to erect a 12-storey slab block of flats 150 feet high with a basement garage for some 187 cars.

The Society feels that this is still an undesirable development.



View of Holland Villas Road



No. 13 Melbury Road

Holland Villas Road

The Society has supported the protest made by the residents of Holland Villas Road against the erection of a six-storey slab block of flats above ground level on the sites of Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12. The plan provides for 64 flats, 54 garages and for gardens sunk nine feet below road level in front.

Holland Villas Road is a very pleasant road of fine mid-Victorian houses, and in the opinion of the Society the erection of this development on the sites of these four houses would ruin the character of the road. Any new development should not be higher than the eaves of the surrounding houses.

As we go to print we are very pleased to learn that planning permission for this development has been refused by the London County Council.

No. 13 Melbury Road

The London County Council propose making a Building Preservation Order in respect of this house. The Kensington Society supports this preservation order.

In October, 1961, the London County Council rejected an application for permission to demolish the house and to erect on the site a seven-storey block of 20 flats with 14 garages.

The house was built for Graham Roberts in 1893 and is of considerable architectural merit. Its architect was R. D. Oliver who was also an artist and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1883 to 1899: there is a portrait of him in the Tate Gallery by Sargent. He was a great benefactor to the Tate and National Galleries.

This house is a fine example of his work and provides, with other houses in Melbury Road, part of an interesting oasis formed by the artists' colony there in the late nineteenth century.

The Kensington Borough Council are opposing the order.

Lexham Gardens

The Society has taken an active part in the campaign to save the garden in Lexham Gardens. Mr. Marcus King, an estate agent of Aldgate High Street, applied for permission to build 80 lock-up garages with a first-floor level garden, a tennis court, children's playground and a tea-room over the Square gardens.

The Society vigorously opposed this scheme. Subsequently, the L.C.C. refused planning permission.

The developer lodged an appeal against the L.C.C.'s decision and the Minister ordered a Public Inquiry to take place at Kensington Town Hall on February 21st, 1962.

The Society briefed Mr. E. Money, Barrister-at-law, to represent the Society at the Inquiry. Several well-known authorities agreed to give evidence in support of our case.

Only two days before the Inquiry was due to be heard, it was learned that the Inquiry had been postponed at the request of the developer.

Notification has now been received that the appeal has been withdrawn.

Cornwall Gardens

The threat of redevelopment hangs over Cornwall Gardens. The houses were built at intervals between 1864 and 1870 and are an excellent example of a Victorian Square.

Planning permission was sought to demolish Cornwall House and Cornwall Gardens House at the west end of Cornwall Gardens and to erect a six-storey block of flats on the site. The application was refused because the scheme encroached on the Square gardens.

A new application has been submitted to the Planning Authority.

Island Site bounded by Cromwell Road, Gloucester Road, Courtfield Road and Ashburn Place (including Gloucester Road Station).

This is a proposal for a comprehensive redevelopment of this site including the provision of offices, shops, a garage and an hotel, without any residential accommodation. The Executive Committee have had the opportunity of seeing the plans and deplores the scheme from every point of view. It is proposed that there should be two two-storey shopping blocks with a pedestrian area between them and providing 52,000 square feet of floor space; a six-storey block of offices 84 feet high on the eastern side of the site bridging the pedestrian area and providing 65,000 square feet of floor space; a 17-storey hotel block rising out of a two-storey garage building at the southern end of the site and having a total height of 190 feet; a basement car park approached from Ashburn Place providing space for about 130 cars; and two underground station entrances.

The Society strongly opposed this scheme. We have just heard that planning permission has been refused.

Holland House

The Society suggested to the London County Council that a large copy of the portrait of Henry Rich, 1st Earl of Holland, should be affixed to the wall at the Kensington High Street entrance to Holland Park, along with an historical note. The London County Council thought it would undoubtedly interest a great many people, but did not think it would be very practicable. The London County Council have, however, placed a large noticeboard at the entrance



Henry Rich, 1st Earl of Holland

to the Park, and this includes, on one panel, not only a reference to the association of Holland House with Henry Rich, but also a concise account of its other associations and of its building history.

Proposed development on the site of Plane Tree House, Duchess of Bedford's Walk

The latest proposal is to erect a seven-storey block of flats on the site, 72 feet high and 152 feet long. The previously proposed 180 feet high tower block, which was strongly opposed by the Society, has been withdrawn. The developers now propose to cram on to the site a similar amount of accommodation by making the building less high, but more than twice the length. This will convert the existing pleasant site into a completely built-up area. The long slab building will be prominently obtrusive and appears to be sited so that it will not be parallel with either Phillimore Gardens or Duchess of Bedford's Walk, and will be out of harmony with everything adjoining it.

In the opinion of the Society this is not a site for intense development both on account of road traffic and the amenities of the Park and neighbourhood; and we have opposed the scheme.

Pembridge Square

Application was made for the reservation of part of this garden Square as a children's playground. The Society felt that the gardens were originally intended as a quiet and peaceful retreat for residents, and the need for such is much more needed today. It was also felt that should permission be given, it would create a precedent for other Square gardens. The Society therefore supported the residents in opposing the application.

As we go to press we have been notified that the application has been refused.

Roads—one-way working in Kensington

The Society has been very disturbed about the Minister of Transport's one-way traffic schemes in Kensington.

The Executive Committee has long felt that the Minister has shown a complete disregard for the amenity value of residential areas. It has been apparent that other local societies in the London area feel much the same; it was therefore decided to sponsor a conference in the form of a Public Meeting. Nine London Societies were invited to submit a paper on the theme of Greater London and the Motorways.

The object of this meeting was to consider how best London could be linked with the motorway systems coming to her boundaries,

and matters relating to traffic management and improvement. The points covered by the meeting included the following:—

- (1) Urban motorways in Kensington and Chelsea.
- (2) The Dover radial projected through Kidbrooke and Blackheath to Lewisham.
- (3) The Ministry of Transport lorry route through Highgate and Islington.
- (4) The impact of one-way workings on residential streets.
- (5) Parking meters and off-street garaging.
- (6) Protecting the character of area of high amenity.
- (7) Provision for pedestrians in all major redevelopment.
- (8) The need for a first class transport system and larger car parks on the outskirts of Central London.

A full report of this meeting appears on pages 24-39

Ballet Rambert Theatre

In February last an application was made to the London County Council for permission to build a new theatre in Ladbroke Road, Notting Hill Gate, opposite the present Mercury Theatre, the administrative headquarters of the Ballet Rambert. It is intended that the new theatre should, ultimately, provide a new home for the Rambert company and be known as the Ballet Rambert Theatre.

The Committee have seen the plans and agree that they are very pleasing. The building would be octagonal in design, clad with glass in an aluminium frame, so becoming a prominent feature when lit at night. It would seat 1,100 people, and have a large restaurant with tables for 240 people on the roof, which would have a second and smaller stage where intimate productions could be given.

This plan has been turned down by the L.C.C., chiefly because not enough parking facilities were provided. A revised plan is being prepared.

Mr. Ashley Dukes, the late husband of Dame Marie Rambert, was a founder member of the Kensington Society and a member of our Council. His last years were filled with the dream of building a really great theatre at Notting Hill Gate. The Society hopes the plans can be modified to meet the L.C.C. requirements, and that we shall see Ashley Duke's dream fulfilled.

Art Centre Plan for South Kensington

Application has been made by the property tycoon, Felix Fenton, to build a multi-purpose arts centre on the triangular site at the corner of Exhibition Road and Cromwell Gardens. The site is opposite the main entrance to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The building proposed is 70 feet in height with four floors above ground level with an escalator tower rising to 102 feet in height on the south-west side, together with six levels below ground, descending to a depth of 79 feet.

The accommodation proposed would be office and exhibition space on the ground, first and second floors; a headquarters for the Institute of Contemporary Arts on the third and fourth floors, with an open air exhibition of sculpture at roof level. The first basement level would be for administrative work and there would be a 720-seat concert hall for the Henry Wood Trust at the second basement level with a "Museum for the Theatre" on two floors below this. The remaining two basement floors would be for car parking with access via two car lifts to Thurloe Place.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the winter months the lecture series included the following:—

- 'Splendour of Heraldry' by Mr. J. P. Brook-Little.
- 'Nineteenth century London' by Mr. James Kennedy.
- 'Town Planning in History' by Mr. W. Collier.
- 'Town Planning To-day' by Mr. L. W. Lane.
- 'Holland House' by Dr. Stephen Pasmore.
- 'History of Earl's Court' by Mr. M. Robbins.

During the summer months visits were made to the following places of interest:—

Messrs. Whitbread's Brewery

The party was received with kindness and courtesy and the guides who showed members round made the process of brewing clear and interesting; and the beautiful coloured films shown in the cinema were much enjoyed. The party was afterwards entertained to luncheon.

Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore

The party was received by Sir Hugh Casson, who gave a talk about the architecture of this new building. Here the cream of the country's designers-to-be are working for their diplomas. They are studying furniture design under a team led by Professor Russell, ceramics with the Marquess of Queensberry, textiles with Professor Roger Nicholson, engineering design with Professor Mishal Black and interior design with Sir Hugh Casson and his team. Some of the best work was seen in the textiles, where the girls were

turning out wonderful coloured fabrics. In the furniture shop the boys were working on a "practice chair" which can be angled at almost any line. Looms, kilns, and printing machines are all available for the students.

Loseley House, Nr. Guildford, Surrey

Loseley is a fine example of Elizabethan architecture, dignified and beautiful, set amidst fine parkland scenery. Inside are many Works of Art, including panelling, paintings and magnificent ceilings and chimney-pieces. Tea was taken at Godalming.

Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley, Surrey

The rose gardens and herbaceous and mixed borders were at their best. Lilies were prominent in the wild garden and on Battlestone Hill. Tea was taken at the very pleasant tea-house in the Gardens.

Goldsmiths' Hall

Members were shown the various spacious rooms with their magnificent chandeliers. The Hall contains some notable pictures of sovereigns, and a goblet out of which Queen Elizabeth I is said to have drunk at her Coronation. Members showed great interest in the collection of old and modern silver plate on view in the Exhibition Room.

Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate

The new Headquarters of the Boy Scouts movement. Members were shown over this bright airy modern building and given a talk on the excellent work done by the Scout movement. An exhibition of Baden-Powell relics was on view.

Skinnners' Company

Members were told something of the history of the great Company and its important work to-day. The fine Hall with its famous collection of historical paintings by the late Sir Frank Brangwyn, R.A., was much admired.

London County Council Record Office

The party was received by Miss I. Darlington, Archivist to the Council, and shown some most interesting records.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

October 17th

A Public Meeting at the Kensington Town Hall at 7 p.m. to discuss Greater London and the Motorways.

Chairman: Mr. J. Wentworth Day

Speakers:

Mr. R. Edmonds (London County Council, Chairman of the Roads Committee), Mr. G. B. Palmer (British Roads Federation), Mr. B. Rogers (Road Campaign Council), Mr. E. H. Doubleday, O.B.E., P.P.T.P.I., F.R.I.C.S., M.I.Mun.E. (County Planning Officer for Hertfordshire), The Rt. Hon. Lord Mottistone (Chairman of the Council of The London Society), Mr. R. Vigars (London County Council Representative for South Kensington).

Light refreshments will be available in the Small Hall from 6-7 p.m.

November 28th

At the Kensington Town Hall at 8 p.m. a Lecture with slides, by Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A., entitled "London's Villages". *Chairman:* The Earl of Euston.

December 5th

At the Kensington Public Library, Hornton Street, at 6 p.m. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by a Lecture by Mr. Peter Clarke entitled "Victorian Kensington—Past and Present". *Chairman:* Mr. Carew Wallace.

January 29th

At the Kensington Town Hall at 6.30 p.m. a Lecture followed by a discussion on NOISE, by Mr. J. Connell, founder and Hon. Secretary of the Noise Abatement Society. *Chairman:* Captain H. J. Delargy, M.P.

January 30th

Visit to the Russian Cathedral, Emperor's Gate, S.W.7, by kind permission of the Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. Meet at the Cathedral at 3 p.m. Please apply for tickets.

February 5th

At the Kensington Town Hall at 8 p.m., a Lecture by Mr. W. H. Williams, entitled "The Green Belt". *Chairman:* Mr. Langley Taylor.

March 12th

At the Kensington Town Hall at 8 p.m. a Lecture by Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, entitled "The Church and Art". *Chairman:* The Bishop of Kensington.

April 10th

A visit to the new building of the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W.8 (next to the entrance to Holland Park). Meet at 3 p.m. Please apply for tickets.

KENSINGTON SOCIETY NOTES

We regret to report the death of the following members, who were founder members of the Society, and who have always shown tremendous interest in the Society:

Lt.-Col. George Crosfield.

Miss Edith Pye.

Subscriptions for the year 1962-63 were due on October 1st.

Extra copies of the Annual Report can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, price 2/-.

It would be appreciated if letters requiring an answer were accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

When visits are arranged to properties of the National Trust, it would help the funds of our Society if those who are members of the National Trust would kindly bring their membership tickets.

Will members taking part in visits please make a point of being on time to avoid keeping the host and party waiting.

Visits involving payment must be paid for at the time of booking. No payments can be refunded, but tickets may be passed on to non-members. Members wishing to cancel any visit previously booked, where tickets are issued and the numbers limited, should advise the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible, as others may be on the waiting list.

The Society is affiliated to the London Society, the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association and the Noise Abatement Society.

Members are reminded of the aims of the Society and are urged to inform the Secretary as soon as possible if they hear of any plans or proposals, which conflict with the objects of the Society.

Essay by Nina Clark, pupil of Holland Park School, winner of the Society's prize

KENSINGTON

Kensington was the first part of London with which I ever became acquainted. I arrived there at the end of the gloriously hot summer of 1959 and went to live in a flat just off the High Street. At that time, being a complete stranger in London, I had no idea of the fashionable present and the historical past of the borough of which I was now a resident.

The first thing I noticed was that the name plate of my road bore the words "The Royal Borough of Kensington". This struck me as rather odd, since, on my quick journey through London to Kensington I had not seen another borough with "royal" in its name. A little later I discovered that Queen Victoria in 1901 decided to confer this royal title upon Kensington as a favour. She was born in the palace in Kensington Gardens and as she said in 1872 "My earliest recollections are connected with Kensington Palace where I can remember crawling on a yellow carpet spread out for that purpose". Because of its associations with royalty and her personal love for the palace the queen must have decided to turn Kensington into a royal borough.

As I walked along the High Street for the first time I was overwhelmed by the crowds of rushing shoppers and the large shining shop windows. My interest in this fascinating borough had been aroused and I had by then read several books on Kensington's history. It seemed hardly possible that this busy street was once one of the two high roads to London built by the Romans. Until 1860 there were turnpikes along them and at the top of Earl's Court Road, I could picture a muffled coachman jumping down to pay the toll at the gates of the turnpike. Bayswater Road was the other road to London and there was also a turnpike at Notting Hill Gate.

But the history of Kensington can be traced much further back than to the days of turnpikes. It is probable that Kensingtown was a Saxon settlement founded by the family of Kensingas. After the Norman Conquest the property was taken over from the Saxon thane, Edwin, and fell into the hands of a Norman, Aubrey de Vere. Part of it, including the church and 270 acres of land, was later given to Abingdon Abbey and called Abbot's Kensington. I now realised why the parish church and hospital were called St. Mary Abbot's and why numerous streets were named after Abingdon. My reading also gave me the origin of Earl's Court and Earl's Terrace: one of the family of de Veres, by virtue of his marriage, became Earl of Oxford and the part of Kensington he still owned was named Earl's Kensington. When Henry VIII dissolved

the monasteries, Abbot's Kensington in 1526 went to the crown and, some time later, Earl's Kensington passed from the de Veres and became united with Abbot's Kensington.

These thoughts about a medieval Kensington were passing through my mind as I approached the underground station. It was rather late in the afternoon and the rush hour crowds pouring into the station quite terrified me. Having crossed the road to avoid them, I wondered how many of those hurrying travellers knew the history of the site of their underground station. It is the spot where William Cobbett, a celebrated political writer, used to live. Leigh Hunt in "The Old Court Suburb" writes that it was in this area that Cobbett went on many of his rural rides about which he wrote a book. In the fields behind the house, Hunt mentions that Cobbett experimentally "cultivated Indian corn and American forest trees". Today those fields and woods through which Cobbett rode are a railway station, shops and flats.

Some of the shops, too, have interesting stories behind them. I looked in vain at the department store, Pontings, for any signs of Scarsdale House, parts of which are allegedly still visible. Scarsdale House was a small mansion built by the Earl of Scarsdale who occupied it for only a short period. It was then bought by the family of Curzons who later allowed it to be turned into a boarding school. Cobbett, a neighbour of the school, did not appreciate it and the Curzons soon rebought the house and lived in it themselves. In 1893, however, the house was engulfed by Pontings.

The stained glass windows of St. Mary Abbot's Church now came into view and as I looked at the Victorian Gothic building, I could not recognise any resemblance to the old Kensington Church I had seen in books. The original building was very plain according to Bowack who wrote in 1705 that it was "built of Flint and rough Stone with little Art or Order". William III and Mary, while living in Kensington Palace contributed to a general rebuilding of the church in 1696. The new church was considered very ugly by all and in 1869, Sir Gilbert Scott received an order to design and rebuild it. The new design completely obliterated the older church and St. Mary Abbot's as it is today, was consecrated in 1872. I was surprised to discover that it has the highest church spire in London—278 feet.

A little later, when I had settled into Kensington having made myself familiar with the High Street, I went to explore Church Street. The books told me that this picturesque street used to be a little rural lane connecting the Bayswater Road with the High Street. Although the fields which used to be on either side have disappeared, the street still twists and turns in a curious manner. The fields have been replaced by small shops, many of them con-

taining fascinating antiques. Somehow this part of Kensington conveys a pronounced historical feeling, quite unlike the busy High Street. In the little cul-de-sacs and side streets off Church Street I found the first mews I had ever seen; it was a wonderful thing to stand there and imagine the grooms wiping down the horses in the stables beneath, with their wives and families above. Now, however, they have brightly coloured doors and are expensively redesigned inside.

Wandering around the small streets behind the High Street on other explorations of Kensington, I used to be surprised to find so many well-kept gardens full of flowers. Once or twice I have seen vines creeping above front doors and the sight of a green bunch of unripe grapes reminded me of the mention of Kensington in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Among the property of Kensington Manor which was valued at a total of £10, were three acres of land used for the growing of grapes.

Now, having lived in London nearly three years, I can see that Kensington has a much more interesting past than many other boroughs of London. The fact that it contains a great palace, the famous Holland House, several churches and many old museums and colleges, is self-explanatory of the district's past. However, it is the lesser known antiquities that attract me and on my way to school, I often wonder how many of the people going to work every day in Kensington High Street have ever bothered to go and see the figures of the two children on the old parish Charity School behind the Town Hall.

PUBLIC MEETING

*Report of the Public Meeting held at the Kensington Town Hall
on October 17th, 1962, on Greater London and the Motorways*

Chairman:

MR. JAMES WENTWORTH-DAY

Speakers:

Lord Mottistone, Chairman of the Council of the London Society
Mr. Richard Edmonds, Chairman of the Roads Committee, L.C.C.
Mr. E. Doubleday, O.B.E., P.P.T.P.I., Town Planning Officer,
Hertford

Mr. Basil Rogers, Secretary, Roads Campaign Council
Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, British Road Federation
Mr. R. Vigars, L.C.C. Member for South Kensington
Mr. T. C. Foley, Secretary, Pedestrians Association

Representatives of eleven amenity societies and of numerous
other organisations spoke at a lively meeting which lasted three hours.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. J. Wentworth-Day): We are met tonight to discuss the problem of living in London. This is what the increasing chaos of traffic has reduced us to: Is London going to be any longer fit to live in? (Voices: "No"). Years ago, in the good old golden days, I was able to rent a flat in Pall Mall at a total cost of £156 a year, and I am not as old as all that! Pall Mall was then a quiet, residential street except for the noise of theatrical traffic at midnight. That is a little personal experience of London just before the last war. You who live in the still civilised villages of London know perfectly well how living in London has been made quite impossible for anyone with normal nerves, by the noise and congestion of traffic. What I think we have to face is that London began originally as a series of very charming villages grouped on about seven hills round the central city of Westminster, rather like the seven hills of Rome and those villages grew gradually with all their charm and individuality into the coherent London that we know today: the old mother city of what we were once proud to call the British Empire. London was never designed, as Paris and Berlin were designed, on rather arbitrary military lines. In a way, judged by modern standards, it is rather a pity it was not. It would not have had its old charm and unique character if it had. But it would have had great wide roads and boulevards converging on a central ring or series of rings which made traffic from the viewpoint of the transport of troops, easy. We have nothing like that. What we have to resolve in this present day is the problem arising from the tremendous influx of traffic coming into London, passing round it, coming through it, stopping it partially, using what were once charming, quiet, old village streets that we knew in places as far apart as Blackheath, Highgate, Hampstead

and this old, ancient, royal borough of Kensington, and Chelsea, once a village by the Thames, of artists, and, I think, within the memory of our grandfathers, a place where they still grazed cows. All that, today, is in the melting-pot caused by traffic. What is going to arise out of this maelstrom? Who is going to produce a master plan? There have been a number of master plans, or so-called plans dating from the Bressey Plan up to the schemes put forward today. We are meeting here tonight to sort them out and to hear what is promulgated for our benefit or our worse. You will hear from representatives of many societies representing amenities and from people in residential areas who have to live here and to 'take it' day and night. I think that if it were not for traffic there would be less trade in tranquillizers. We have experts here; papers will be read and at the end of the meeting questions will be invited.

MR. BASIL ROGERS (Road Campaign Council): The importance of urban motorways and the need for them has long been one of the principal points in this Council's programme. As secretary of that organisation I make no apology for believing firmly in the beneficial effects of motorways leading to our principal centres of population and within those centres, to promoting a freer flow of traffic. However, I do not propose to deal with that theme tonight. I propose to deal with traffic management and improvement within the Greater London boundaries—parking meters and street garaging. The entire parking question has become a major factor and will become an even more dominant issue in the immediate future. It is extraordinary how many of those in authority would appear to ignore one of the basic facts of a motorised society: the car spends the majority of its time stationary. We have accepted the parking meter as a step towards the provision of off-street parking space in order to clear streets for the purpose for which they were intended: the movement of traffic. However, the incursion of meters into some residential squares and streets has led to many householders there being unable to park their cars outside their own front doors and to some having to creep out in pyjamas and dressing gowns to buy time in the meter at 8.30 a.m. This, naturally, has not endeared them to the idea of parking meters. In the first six months of this year the 10,000 parking meters in central London took in £257,000. After deduction of all the administrative expenses only £86,000 was left for the construction of parking facilities. As the cost of providing off-street parking accommodation in the centre of London can be as high as £1,000 per car space it would not seem that £86,000 is going to pay for many garages. Furthermore, meter revenue is subject to income tax if the local authority has no parking projects in hand which can be charged to that revenue. Over the last few years an average of over 10,000 new cars came on to the roads every week. The man in the street is prepared to spend £1,000 million per year on his motoring. Motor taxation has soared to over £700 million this year and will rise annually. The Road Research Laboratory has estimated that by 1980 there may well be 25 million

vehicles in Britain or $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the present number. All these vehicles occupy space whether mobile or stationary and the space they take when stationary is rapidly becoming one of the most ignored, or, perhaps, feared, problems of our time. Local authorities are prepared this year to spend £3 million on this problem. If an off-street car space costs on average about £300 a time we could therefore have about 10,000 new spaces by summer 1963, which is one week's production of motor cars for the home market. The Roads Campaign Council has recently produced a nine-point statement of what it believes could form the basis of a national policy on off-street parking. It is devised as an encouragement to local authority to take the initiative and attack realistically the problem of the vehicle parked in the street. Parking spaces can be provided without destruction of amenity, as instanced by the car park under Hyde Park, opened on Monday. This can be ensured by adequate planning. It is up to conferences of this nature to see that it is so. There are certain basic facts of life in a motorised society which we would do well to accept and not try to ignore: that the motor has become an integral part of modern living; it occupies a minimum of 70 sq. ft. of space; and people quite obviously intend to buy more and more of them.

THE CHAIRMAN: I now call upon Mr. Foley to put the point of view of those of us who walk in daily fear of death.

MR. T. C. FOLEY (Secretary, Pedestrians Association): When I used to visit Hyde Park it was to get a breath of fresh air. Now, if you visit Hyde Park you may get the expelled fumes from the thousand cars parked under the sward. However, we will see how it works out. As pedestrians we do not like parking meters. They impede the footpath and the Ministry of Transport should lay down a minimum width from an inner boundary below which they should not be placed on a pavement. They should be so placed as to leave the footpath clear. Already, our attention has been called to people injured by running into these meters. We have an enormous number of complaints about cars parking on pavements. It is unfair and an offence but it appears to be tolerated by the police; or, if it is not tolerated by them, they seem incapable of ensuring that the law is observed. It would greatly help if motoring organisations would campaign among drivers in the interests of courtesy, if not observance of the law so that, for instance, mothers with perambulators do not have to walk in the carriageway to pass cars parked on the pavement. Nor do we like one way streets. The traffic moves faster. But the tendency of the Ministry of Transport is to remove refuges from the centre of the road and the system of public transport is dislocated. There is an abortive attempt by the Ministry to get more traffic on to London streets than they can comfortably carry. There is also a reluctance by the Ministry to provide adequate crossing facilities for pedestrians (Hear, hear). The Ministry say they cannot interfere with the free flow of traffic which must take precedence

over pedestrians. The greatest sense of grievance today is from the movement and parking on public highways of heavy commercial vehicles. They represent only one out of every 40 vehicles but they take an undue proportion of space. The bulk of this long distance traffic which goes in and out of London to all parts of the country should be on the railways (Applause). If there were an equitable system of comparative costs this traffic would be on the railways, where it would make an important contribution to reducing the appalling toll of accidents on the roads for much of which this traffic was now responsible. By passing through residential streets and squares this traffic is turning our towns and cities from pleasant places into squalid traffic slums and it is time that we rose in righteous indignation and put an end to this scandal (Prolonged applause).

THE CHAIRMAN: You have heard a fighting speech from a man after all our hearts. I only wish that Mr. Marples had been here to hear him. Mr. Marples was invited three times. He said, or, rather, one of his minions wrote to say "The Minister asks me to thank you for your letter of 24th July but he already has an engagement for 17th October"—on a bicycle, no doubt (Laughter)—"nor would he think it appropriate that officials from the Ministry should attend to take part in the discussion. The Minister would be very happy to arrange for an official to attend as an observer"—a sort of private eye—"and report to him if that would be in accordance with your wishes". I sincerely hope that a private eye from that political mountebank, Mr. Marples, is here tonight because he is the architect of most of our troubles (Applause).

MR. PALMER (British Road Federation): This conference of so many London amenity societies must surely be one of the most significant they have held. The British Road Federation is wholly in favour of motorways. To some people the difficulties appear intractable but the Federation is certainly not pessimistic about the prospect because there are so many valuable experiences on which to draw. Of course, motorways could ruin amenities; could tear established communities apart. But why single out motorways as the sole potential villain? Bad planning of any above-the-surface development can ruin amenities. But bad planning, like most diseases, can be prevented if caught in the early stages. We are obviously in a very strong position for the question of urban motorways is still in the earliest stage of all. There is no doubt that motorways will come to London and it will be the task of all to ensure that they are properly planned. Such exaggeration as "destroying the soul of" and "tearing the heart out of" our cities is fashionable in some circles but it will be up to all of us to prove the emptiness of these pessimistic statements. Germany and America are advanced in urban motorway planning; we must study their work and avoid their errors. Motorways, far from transforming cities into monstrous motopias, grinding historical buildings into

the dust, can be a positive enhancement. One of their major results is to draw traffic away from existing central routes; the advent of the urban motorway will mean an immediate diminution of congestion and those resident in London will be able to move about their local districts more freely and safely than now. City dwellers elsewhere have already experienced this. After the completion of the Bayshore Freeway in San Francisco an adjoining road showed a reduction in traffic volume of some 62 per cent; another a 35 per cent reduction. In San Antonio, Texas, on routes including both motorways and city streets, traffic moved at between 23 and 34 miles per hour, while on city streets unaffected by neighbouring motorways average speeds were less than 15 m.p.h. The urban motorway can carry two-and-a-half times more traffic than an ordinary road of equal width and is about three to four times safer than all-purpose roads. Existing urban streets, generally, cannot be remodelled to carry more than twice the present traffic without involving the long-suffering local communities in traffic congestion all over again. An increasing number of communities, however, have had the normal functioning of their main street restored to them by an appropriately-located, limited, access by-pass. The best site for an urban motorway is inevitably along an existing dividing line in a city's structure, along river banks or the edge of a large park. The ring motorway which the British Road Federation has proposed for London would follow railway lines for most of its length. Thus the conflict between the demands of traffic and the preservation of scenery and other amenities can find a satisfactory compromise. Further protection of amenity can be ensured by carrying the motorway on viaducts which can be of such slender and light shapes that there is no reason to fear defacement of surroundings; or by containing it at sunken level. Both methods are costly but they do not occupy a great deal of space and the demolition of valuable property can either be avoided altogether or kept to reasonable proportions. Even in the most advanced communities it has been found that 50 per cent of the traffic can be carried on only five per cent of the street mileage when the latter is completed as motorways. Statements that an urban motorway programme would mean the burying of our cities under miles and miles of new roads are, therefore, ill-informed. Development on such a vast scale as in Los Angeles would not be countenanced in Britain; it would not be needed here and, in any case, there would not be the space for it. But experience in America shows that urban motorways had just the opposite to an adverse effect on land values. For a number of years before its redevelopment programme property values in the centre of Boston had fallen steadily. Now, communities along the route of that city's motorway report increases in land values of as much as 700 per cent. It is possible to provide mobility of vehicles and to retain the beauties of our cities at one and the same time. This will be the task of the immediate future, a task which will be helped, not hindered, by advice from organisations such as your own.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have heard a very practical statement. I am sure we are glad that Mr. Palmer stressed that if we are to have motorways, for God's sake, let us have beauty with them for we are living in an age of grab, mediocrity and all-pervading materialism. I now call on Mr. Vigars, the Kensington member of the London County Council and a leading member of its town planning committee.

MR. VIGARS: I gather that there is some strong feeling about Mr. Marples (Laughter). Nevertheless, I think we must try to keep a sense of balance. Before the London Traffic Management Unit was set up by Mr. Marples—that is the one we think is doing all the damage—the biggest subject in my mailbag was “Why don't we have a proper traffic engineering scheme in London? Why is not something done to speed traffic?” Since Mr. Marples started his scheme that correspondence has died away and, instead, it has been replaced by the flood of protest about one-way schemes in the Earl's Court Road and the like. Perhaps 50 per cent of people want traffic to be speeded and the other 50 per cent of my constituents—almost 99 per cent judging by those in this hall tonight—think traffic should have a relatively low priority and amenity should have it all. So, although some rather extreme things have been said already tonight, I think we should get a sense of balance. Perhaps a revitalised Transport Commission may be able to do more about direct traffic by rail. But throughout the world road transport is growing because it is flexible, efficient and convenient and rail transport is contracting because it is much less of these three things. Some of you may think you could not care less about an efficient flow of traffic in the capital city in order to keep our competitive place in the world but I dare say most of you are able to live in this most fashionable and expensive part of London because of our competitive place in the world. So perhaps you will think about that, too. I represent a minority opposition party at county hall. I detected a certain feeling that county hall and the Ministry are just groping in the dark, nibbling at this and that without really knowing where we are going or what we are doing (Applause). I thought that was your impression (Laughter). We are not really quite so stupid, whatever you may think. I wonder how many of you have taken the trouble to find out, because it is your duty as citizens in a democracy to find out, and tell us where you think we are going wrong. Do you appreciate that there is a 20-year plan for road traffic improvements? It is no use saying there is no plan; why isn't there one? In the long term we know where we are going and what we are trying to do. The difficulty is that you, the taxpayers, will not allow us to spend the £200 million necessary to do it, in one year. It has to be spread over 20 years. The strategy is to link the capacity of the highways entering London to the parking facilities provided within London. That is the broad aim. I am not suggesting that at the end of 20 years everything will be perfect. There will be

fresh problems; there always are. The problem now is what to do while that 20 years master-plan is being worked out. If the motorways of the future—in the plan—for example, the western avenue coming in alongside the railway at Paddington station, linking up with the Euston road; and the Dover radial (which Blackheath people are rather hot about, naturally), which will be partly tunnelled and, whenever possible, alongside the existing railway, are built in that fashion, I hope this meeting will be satisfied that, long term, there will be no damage to amenities. But what are we to do in the short term, in the next 20 years? That is what this meeting is worried about and what has caused all the furore in Kensington and other places where one-way traffic schemes have been introduced. None of the papers before us from the various amenity societies suggest any solution at all. They talk merely of planning roads and building new routes. But, in the meantime, what? It is no use talking about new roads unless you realise that they cannot be built in less than 10 or 20 years. (Voices: Why not?) Even if all the money were made available in one year, it would still take about ten years from start to finish to build a major road.

A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: They should have been started years ago.

MR. VIGARS: I could not agree more but other people wanted houses and schools. Where one-way traffic schemes disturb residential quiet and amenity, or where they pass through a busy local shopping area, as in the Earl's Court road, they should not be permitted. (Hear, hear.) That I have urged, and shall continue to urge. Over 50 per cent of my constituents are concerned with getting about quickly. My general answer is: I am sorry, I am afraid you will have to wait but, in waiting, I hope you will bring pressure to bear on your M.P.s and everyone in authority to give us more money to get the long term plan carried out sooner. That is the real solution. In the meantime, the motorist must, to some extent, wait. This is essentially a matter for compromise between the preservation of amenity and the need for commercial traffic to get about London. Where, in the Earl's Court road scheme, the balance is heavily against amenity, it is wrong and should not be allowed (Applause). Nevertheless, something should be done and I do not want to sound defeatist on this. I think, for a start, very much more could be done by the police. I am sorry they are not represented here as far as I know because it would be nice to have an answer to the remarks I am going to make about them. The police take the view that they should not harry motorists. I do not know why motorists should be such a privileged class that they should not be harried a bit. Despite notices prohibiting parking there are long lines of cars parked, some dangerously on corners, where there is no visibility for pedestrians and other motorists. Regulations made to sort out these problems are disregarded

because there is no police enforcement. If the police did more and if the motorist knew that if he transgressed he would be sat upon firmly, I believe he would co-operate more. But at the moment, 90 per cent of motorists get away with it. If we had no parking or waiting in the Earl's Court road and many residential roads around it, the flow of traffic would be faster and there would be less need for one-way traffic schemes. To sum up: There is a long term plan; do everything you can to get it speeded up by urging that more money should be spent on it; recognise, however, that there must be short term expedients to fill the gap; support your Kensington representatives in urging that if short term expedients are wholly destructive of amenity they must not be allowed; but at the same time urge the police to do more to enforce the regulations to get a free flow of traffic.

MR. DOUBLEDAY (Town Planning Officer, Hertfordshire): There is a considerable amount in the comments of the preservation societies with which I am in agreement and I will comment on one afterwards. Worried, a few years ago, that nothing seemed to be happening in Britain to deal with motor traffic, moving and stationary, I looked at the situation in North America. There, there are systems we could adapt to our advantage and others we should avoid like the plague. We are 25 years ahead of the Americans, and of any other country, in land use control but the Americans are 25 years ahead of us in the control of traffic. Visiting Boston for the first time you might think that if you are lucky you will see one or two tea chests still floating about in the harbour. Instead, you find that the atmosphere of this historic city is completely ruined by two-deck and, in one case, a three-deck overbridge constructed in the residential areas. I was absolutely horrified by the ruthlessness with which they have been driven through the North Bay area. Two-level bridges have also ruined one part of San Francisco and, despite the Americans' passion for tearing down buildings, it will be 60 years before they are considered to be obsolescent. At home, we find that because of the M.1, roads like Watling Street and the A.6 and A.1 have reverted to a certain amount of rurality and it is now a pleasure to drive along them; one feels that they are country roads rather than main traffic highways. The Americans do not hesitate to park cars underground and I was heartened when the Prime Minister, in opening the Hyde Park underground car park, said there would be more under open spaces. Under Union Square, San Francisco, there are 450 car spaces on two levels and accommodation for 800 cars under a square in Los Angeles. In each case tall trees grow above them and you would not know the cars were there. Beneath Grand Circus, Detroit, which is about three times the size of Piccadilly Circus, there are parked 1,000 cars on two levels to the profit of the city authorities. Your Kensington Society comments that the traffic problem can no longer be regarded in isolation from general planning considerations. It is imperative

that there should be closer liaison between the Ministries of Transport and Housing and Local Government (Applause). It seems to me that at the present time we are dragging our feet on co-ordination of transit measures. Dr. Beeching is busy trying to reorganise a system designed for 1880 which, up to two years ago, had had nothing done to it for nearly 80 years. That is not forward looking. Dr. Beeching said on the day of the strike that he regretted that there was not greater co-ordination. I believe he used the word 'rationalisation' of transport measures; in other words, that traffic fit for rail should go by rail. What is needed is a mass transit survey, a study of the best form of transport for the traffic that has to be carried, whether it be goods, vehicles, motorists, or what. I am strengthened in this view when the day after Dr. Beeching's remarks, Mr. Marples announced through his Press officer that £590 million will be released for road improvements, most of which is to be spent in the north east where there is a high level of unemployment. Was there any co-ordination before that announcement was made with the fact that Dr. Beeching proposed to make one of his big slashes in public rail services in the north east? I doubt whether there was. I think it is about time we began to study mass transport and not just isolated forms of travel.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have heard a first-class speech from a practical man who has put this thoroughly well in a nutshell. Mr. Doubleday mentioned, as though it were a modern conception, underground parking facilities at Hyde Park. But if I am not mistaken it was put forward in the Bressey Report many years ago. But nothing was done about it 27 years ago.

MR. RICHARD EDMONDS (Chairman of London County Council roads committee): I would like to congratulate Mrs. Christiansen, of the Kensington Society, on bringing the amenity societies together; and Mr. Doubleday on, in a way, raising the sights for a moment in looking at national policy. I, too, hope that the London travel survey, which includes railways, will be followed by a national survey on the same lines. We need a national appraisal of freight and passenger traffic and all forms of communication. There is need to give a national subsidy where it is most needed to help old railways that still serve a vital economic purpose, and young communications, such as helicopter services, or, maybe, hovercraft services. I hope we shall begin to think again in terms of subsidies and not leave the nationalised communications to bear all the burdens of development. I was upset that the L.T.E. had to bear all the burden of the Victoria tube line. I personally believe that there should be a first rate underground public central transport system for a capital city, particularly of this size, to give the public an alternative to the roads (Applause). I do not criticise Mr. Marples on the money he has given to the road programme, which has been first rate, but I think Mr. Doubleday has shown that we have to look at communications in a much bolder, braver way in relation

to alternatives. We in the London County Council are moving forward to a massive programme of £10 million a year. I assure you that it is not just a series of improvements. It is a unique answer to a unique problem. It is, in essence, a boulevard scheme. Its importance lies in the fact that on the perimeter heavy traffic is likely to be generated. Therefore we have to do something about it. We cherish our park system: we do not want to see a great deal of traffic running through our parks. We are not looking for urban motorways through the heart of London and neither Mr. Palmer nor Mr. Rogers are calling for that: we cherish the central areas of London. Kensington, Chelsea, Putney, Fulham and Hampstead are places which have to be protected. It is part of the policy of the roads committee of the L.C.C. not to build great new highways through the heart of the central areas, nor through the residential areas and particularly residential areas of high amenity. I am prepared for criticism on this point. Maybe it will be justified and maybe it will not. We want to draw away heavy traffic from places like Chelsea and Hampstead. There is nearly £17 million in the pipeline on immediate schemes upon which we are working. They comprise limited access ways, express ways, urban motorways which run along the lines of the railway system. That is something we are fighting to get. I am delighted that Mr. Foley and Mr. Vigers are fighting for real schemes for pedestrian shopping precincts in all the great development schemes because there is nothing unhappier than to have to shop on crowded clearways. With regard to some of the points made by the societies, the Blackheath Society and many people living in Woolwich, Greenwich and Lewisham have expressed grave concern about the Dover radial route. We have chosen it for consultation only because we think it avoids great housing areas and the Well Hall estate and does the least possible damage to property. But the Blackheath Society have some hard things to say. We are consulting the three boroughs and if they are against it and there is a large body of opinion against it, and the route proves to be wrong, we shall have to think again. I think we are very much in agreement about the future of Chelsea. We want a great west cross route with a limited access way coming down from the White City to the river along the line of the railway and through the Kensington canal area and possibly across the river by a new bridge. We want that great new urban motorway to come to pass as quickly as possible because we are convinced it will draw off traffic from the residential streets of Chelsea and perhaps deal with the vexed question of one-way working in Kensington. The Hampstead Society has had hard things to say about the Finchley Road. I assure them that it is not the L.C.C.'s views that streets should be widened. Much more radical solutions are needed but certainly not the disruption of a delightful village atmosphere. The Highgate Society has said some powerful things and my council are deeply disturbed at the impact of lorry traffic on residential roads. The Islington Society also has much to say

about this and the members of my roads committee hope that the Ministry of Transport and the Traffic Management Unit are going to think again about lorries. Finally, the London Society says:

"The Society would ask that the Minister of Transport should appoint a committee to investigate and prepare a comprehensive plan to deal with this most important matter and suspend any further action"—I am not sure about that—"until this committee's report is available and commented upon by all interested authorities, societies or persons".

I think we want co-ordinated action by the Ministries of Transport and Housing and to think in terms of the linking of the great motorway systems as they come into London, and linked in a thoroughly civilised way that does not disrupt communities.

THE CHAIRMAN: Lord Mottistone agrees with me that it might be a good idea to read the terms of a proposed resolution prior to discussion on the views put forward by the amenity societies. (The Chairman read the resolution.)

LORD MOTTISTONE (Chairman of the Council of The London Society): I am honoured to have been asked to make a synopsis of the points raised by the amenity societies which have each written a report of which you have copies. I will deal with them alphabetically because they are all equally important. The BLACKHEATH Society is filled with foreboding. They say that the proposed route ought to avoid the old village. They ask if it is possible to destroy and then recreate the spirit and atmosphere of such a place. The CHELSEA Society feel strongly that east-west traffic should by-pass Old Chelsea. On one-way traffic they refer to the intolerable nuisance and danger of having a stream of transit traffic. They say that parking meters should not be installed in residential streets and that householders should have long-term parking facilities outside their own houses. (That is a difficult but interesting suggestion.) They plead for outskirt parking and a greatly improved public transport system. The HAMPSTEAD and HAMPSTEAD PRESERVATION SOCIETY feel strongly that no through routes should traverse the Heath; parking meters should only be temporary until there is a total prohibition of street parking. They fear most strongly the permanent loss of amenity through *ad hoc* improvement measures and they call for an overall plan for car parks and pedestrian reservations. From the HIGHGATE PRESERVATION SOCIETY and "SAVE HIGHGATE" COMMITTEE is violent opposition to the route leading to the M.1 and A.1 up Highgate Hill, which if it were carried out, would mean that 5,000 or 6,000 lorries a day would use it. That suggestion is a lunatic proposal and I think everyone should support those who are against it (Applause). They are not alone in their objection because they have the strong support, I understand, of the London and Middlesex County Councils, eight borough councils, the Royal Institute of British

Architects; the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; the Pedestrians Association; the Transport and General Workers' Union; The London Transport Executive; the A.A. and the R.A.C. Their committee considers it wrong that the Minister of Transport should have a decisive voice on plans which very closely affect other Ministries. The ISLINGTON SOCIETY has the same feeling about that very route because the route through Highgate would also go along the Holloway Road and Upper Street. They suggest that urban motorways should be under or over existing railways and the compulsory re-routeing by rail of all the heavy goods now using lorries. The KENSINGTON SOCIETY say they are against one-way streets as they are working and as they are proposed in Kensington residential roads which, they feel, would become tracks for fast-moving heavy vehicles. They would also like to prevent commuters parking all day and they call for close liaison between the Ministries of Transport and Housing. The KENSINGTON ARCHITECTURAL GROUP similarly urge such co-operation. They have repeatedly asked for such a meeting of the Ministries and I saw in yesterday's papers that at long last a meeting of the officials of both Ministries has been arranged. The LONDON SOCIETY deals with the whole of Greater London and pleads for a master-plan. They feel that hitherto we have had piecemeal road improvements and one-way streets. They call for ring roads for traffic not coming into London. The London Society is the only one that has mentioned the intolerable noise of lorries. Some people, regrettably, glory in the noise they make to the pain and grief of the rest of us. It was I who told John Betjeman, who has often repeated it, that I had seen a man using a road drill and wearing a hearing aid. The MILL HILL PRESERVATION SOCIETY has the problem of traffic from three major trunk roads, the A.1, A.5 and A.6 converging in their area. I believe they have had some success with the objections they have raised which shows that these societies are useful. They urge the need for maintaining contact with planning and highway authorities and they ask what are the Minister's plans for dealing with the distribution of motorway traffic at the urban terminal points. The NEW HAMPSTEAD SOCIETY ask for plans for urban motorway systems and welcomes the London traffic survey which has just started. Mr. Edmonds tells me that it is now completed. That is wonderful. They also say that roads should go over or under railways. They propose a tunnel under Hampstead Heath and that pedestrians and motor traffic should be separated. Parking meters should be only a temporary expedient. All parking should, eventually, be off-street. This is a forward looking society and I was glad to see that they look upon all these difficulties as opportunities for imaginative replanning. The WESTMINSTER SOCIETY wisely point out that opinions must be based on adequate data otherwise more harm than good is done. Their main thesis is that they accept in principle Mr. Colin

Buchanan's analysis put forward by him at the R.I.B.I. conference this year. He is an official of the Ministry of Transport and therefore the Minister says it is inappropriate that he should speak here. The chairman read out that letter. I say: why is it inappropriate? I am appalled that it should be inappropriate: I cannot understand it. In his analysis Mr. Buchanan says that traffic is a function of building—buildings develop traffic—and he points out that there are two kinds of traffic: long movement and what he calls development, which is short movement, to the final destination. He says they must be separated within existing towns. So he obviously agrees with a great deal that has been said and it is a pity that we could not have heard it from his own mouth. What emerges from these papers is the need for the closest possible liaison between the Ministries of Transport and Housing; a plan that we can all see and understand and the avoidance of panic measures. It looks to me as if both local authorities and the police are in danger of becoming branch offices of the Ministry of Transport at the expense of their other functions. If an overall plan is produced one of my comments on it would be that it must prevent the entry of lorries that are too big for small streets and which subject residents to appalling dislocation while they are unloading. My motto is: speed the day when all stationary cars are off the streets and underground; and the railways take the big loads.

THE CHAIRMAN: Everyone is sad that the Minister thought it inappropriate that Mr. Buchanan should be here. Mr. Buchanan cannot be blamed for his absence. I will now call upon representatives of the various societies and then there will be a general discussion and questions.

AMENITY SOCIETIES' VIEWS

MISS CHESTERTON (Hampstead Preservation Society) stressed the necessity for co-operation between the Ministries of Transport and Housing at all levels.

MR. R. S. COLQUHOUN (Mill Hill Society), drawing attention to the last point in his Society's paper, said they had so far been unable to discover the Minister's proposals for dealing with the distribution of motorway traffic at urban terminal points. That seemed to be the whole crux of that meeting.

MR. M. SMEDLEY (Chelsea Society) said the first charge on an industry was to abate the nuisance it created. It ought to be the first charge on the motor revenue, not the ratepayers.

MR. N. BRANDON-JONES (Blackheath Society), declared that Blackheath village was something different from Blackheath. He disputed the planners' contention that by running a road alongside a railway they could avoid forming a barrier. The railway did

not constitute a barrier and people had no sense of living on one side or the other. The most crowded meeting ever held in Blackheath had overwhelmingly opposed the scheme. They called instead for a deep tunnel to protect them.

THE CHAIRMAN said Mr. Edmonds gave assurances that there would be the fullest consultation.

MR. J. LACEY (Highgate Preservation Society) said the awkward point about motorways was when they reached urban areas before they reached the centre. The two-fold problem was the bringing together and keeping apart of through long distance and local traffic. The Ministry of Transport had provided a very bad expedient because it was foolish to send heavy traffic up a steep hill which the L.T.E. could not manage and which a bypass was constructed 130 years ago to avoid.

MR. R. BUTTERFIELD (New Hampstead Society) was glad that Mr. Edmonds has accentuated that it was absolutely vital to link the national motorways with central areas without disrupting natural communities. He underlined the points already brought out by Lord Mottistone.

MR. L. WOOD, F.R.I.B.A. (Islington Society) said their problem was not that experienced in many other districts. Islington's problem was created wilfully by Mr. Marples and his minions who wanted to canalise traffic from the North and the London docks through Islington's already crowded, narrow shopping and residential streets. The Ministry should not 'muck about' pending a solution. His only criticism of the proposed resolution was to the reference to areas of high amenity. In the 1920's and early 1930's restrictions were placed on light aircraft flying. A little discipline for motorists might help the situation.

MR. G. DEARBURGH (Kensington Society) commented that Pembroke Road, which was once an ordinary, quiet residential street was now hell on earth. He hoped the segregation and precinct planning would be speeded. Motorways were now ending up as ugly roundabouts in Soho or Shepherds Bush. They needed a complete ring road; bits of ring roads did no one any good. He shuddered to think of the time, energy and millions wasted on an antiquated system and how much more it would cost in ten years' time at the present rate of inflation. It seemed that schemes put forward for the next ten years would never be completed, or in 50 years, by which time many of them would be dead, which would be the easiest way out.

MR. LANGLEY TAYLOR (London Society) said that once again England had put the cart before the horse. There should have been ring roads around London before motorways were brought into it. Now, the best contribution was to take a wide view covering all the boroughs and all the problems and to tell the Minister

of Transport that, without more delay, he should establish a committee with representatives of the L.C.C. and the amenity societies to thrash out the problem in the way it should have been done years ago. Doubtful that their individual problems could be dealt with satisfactorily, he suggested that they should put the whole lot together and each society should write to the Minister demanding that there should be one sound comprehensive solution.

ALDERMAN MRS. P. M. HAYWARD (Secretary of the Bond Street Association) spoke of the adverse effects on shopping of a one-way street.

At the Chairman's suggestion, the meeting agreed to take a resolution before general questions. Proposed by MR. H. GANDELL and seconded by MRS. CHRISTIANSEN, it read:

"Resolved: That the Government be asked to examine the problem of linking the national motorway system with the Greater London area, bearing in mind the vital need to preserve London's central area and residential areas by providing urban motorways which will not disrupt communities and that the Government should establish a closer co-operation between the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government."

THE CHAIRMAN declined to accept a proposed addition calling for a mitigation of the threat of diesel smoke and fumes, and the resolution was carried with one dissident.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Asked about the possibility of making better use of the Thames, either on the water or by bridging over the river, MR. EDMONDS said this had been examined. A route along the river might be possible in the docks area but further up it could be a great disturber of amenity. He hoped the London Travel Survey might indicate what might be done. MR. EDMONDS agreed with another questioner that something should be done about 'the appalling excrescences of street furniture'.

Another questioner confessed that he was confused about the various surveys of traffic flow. How was it possible for the L.C.C. to have a master plan for the next 20 years without knowing what the problem was? (Laughter). MR. EDMONDS replied that they were not hiding behind the survey in order not to do anything of a radical nature. He outlined future phases of activity.

Another delegate said that children who would have to cross motorways of the future would be in desperate need of all the protection the experts could give them; while another questioner was concerned that improvements to road junctions, such as in

Cromwell Road and the Earls Court Road would allow a faster flow of traffic to the detriment of foot passengers. MR. EDMONDS said that was a traffic management point; if roads became too much like racecourses people should work for a remedy through their local safety committee because it was of enormous importance to school children and shoppers.

THE CHAIRMAN told another questioner who complained that the authorities were showing a cynical disregard of property owners and old people who had invested money, that the experts present had taken the public into their confidence about future plans.

A woman member of the audience declared that if there had been fewer platform speakers they might have heard more discussion which they were all anxious to do. She suggested that Mr. Marples might be invited to ride his bicycle the wrong way up Pembroke Road to see how far he could get. The lights and traffic signs at its junction were the laughing stock of the whole of London. The planners had chosen a road which was designed years ago for horse traffic. It was the one stretch of straight road among all the diversions but it lacked the one sign that was necessary—a 30 m.p.h. limit.

MR. FOLEY said that the Home Secretary had powers to use traffic wardens for traffic control duties but had not yet exercised those powers. He should do so to release the police for other duties.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, you have been extremely patient. This meeting, big to start with, has been a great success. I sincerely hope it will have national repercussions. I propose, from the chair, a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Gay Christiansen for the work, trouble and organising ability she has shown in calling this meeting.

Paper presented by:

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY ONE-WAY WORKINGS IN KENSINGTON

The Minister of Transport's scheme of one-way traffic workings in Kensington has been strongly opposed by the Kensington Society.

- (1) The present two-way route for north and south bound traffic between Shepherds Bush and the Embankment consist of Finborough Road—Warwick Road and Holland Road—in the new scheme this route is to be used by north bound traffic. Traffic travelling south will leave Holland Road at Addison Crescent and will proceed along Addison Road—Warwick Gardens, Pembroke Road and Redcliffe Gardens.

- (2) The Minister proposed to introduce a system of one-way traffic for Brompton Road—Queen's Gate—Kensington Road—Knightsbridge. The scheme would apply to one-way workings to the following streets:—

From West to East: Kensington Gore, Kensington Road and part of Knightsbridge.

From East to West: Brompton Road, Thurloe Place and Cromwell Road.

From North to South: Exhibition Road.

From South to North: Queen's Gate, Cromwell Place, Montpelier Street and part of Trevor Place.

The Kensington Borough Council, the Kensington Society and other representations opposed this scheme. The Minister has now decided to delay the scheme and has instead introduced for an experimental period modifications including one-ways—prohibition of right hand turns at various junctions along the Brompton Road and Cromwell Road, with alterations to traffic lights.

The Kensington Society considers that one-way workings through residential areas of fast moving, and in the main, heavy traffic, increases the danger to pedestrians crossing the road and the necessity to re-route buses makes for considerable hardship, particularly to elderly residents.

It is unquestionable that the character and amenity value of a residential area must suffer greatly by the introduction of the use of such roads as major traffic roads.

Kensington residents are we feel being gradually sacrificed in favour of the increasing number of motor commuters parking their cars all day in our streets causing serious congestion and a growing nuisance to residents.

We acknowledge the need to improve the flow of traffic—but we are certain that this will not be achieved by the present piecemeal method, e.g. local road widening, one-way traffic in residential areas, etc.

We strongly oppose this problem being solved at the expense of people living in these recognised and long established residential areas.

It is the considered opinion of the Kensington Society that:—

- (1) Traffic problems can no longer be regarded in isolation from general planning considerations; it is imperative that there should be a closer liaison between the Ministries of Transport and Housing and Local Government.

- (2) That an overall plan should exist, a carefully planned system of limited access roads linked to the ring motorways.
- (3) To enable purposeful traffic to move more smoothly, commuter cars should be controlled, there should be large car-parking facilities on the outskirts of London, with a greatly improved public transport service.
- (4) Office development should be very much more controlled in the Greater London area.
- (5) Parking in the Royal Parks should be prohibited before 10 a.m. to discourage all-day parking.
- (6) The removal of "islands" from wide one-way streets where fast traffic is moving is dangerous for pedestrians.

CONSTITUTION OF THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

1. The name of the Society shall be The Kensington Society.
2. The objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington by stimulating interest in its history and records, by protecting its buildings of beauty and historic interest, by preserving its open spaces from disfigurement and encroachment, and by encouraging good architecture in its future development.
3. *Members.* Members shall be Life or Ordinary.
4. *Subscriptions.* Life members shall pay a minimum subscription of £10 10s. Ordinary members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of one guinea, payable on 1st October each year.
5. *The Council.* The Council shall consist of not more than thirty members. They shall be elected by the Executive Committee.
6. *The Officers.* The Officers of the Society shall be the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer.
7. *The Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than twelve members and the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be elected annually by the members of the Executive Committee at their first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.
8. The Executive Committee shall be the governing body of the Society. It shall have power to (i) Make bye-laws; (ii) Co-opt members and fill vacancies on the Executive Committee that may arise for the current year; (iii) Take any steps they may consider desirable to further the interests and objects of the Society.

A Quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members.

Not less than three Executive Committee Meetings shall be convened in any one year.
9. *Annual General Meeting.* An Annual General Meeting, of which 28 days' notice shall be given to members, shall be held when the Executive Committee shall submit a Report and an audited Statement of Accounts to the previous September 30th.

10. *Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee.* All members of the Society shall be eligible for election as Officers of the Society or Members of the Executive Committee. Nominations must be sent to the Hon. Secretary, duly signed by a proposer and seconder, within 14 days of the date of the Annual General Meeting. If more nominations are received than there are vacancies, voting shall be by ballot at the Annual General Meeting.
11. *Alterations of Rules.* No rule shall be altered or revoked except at a General Meeting of the Society. No motion shall be deemed carried unless it has been agreed to by not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.
12. The Society shall not be dissolved unless a majority of two-thirds of the subscribing members signify their approval of such a course by means of a postal ballot taken after receipt by the said members of a statement by the Executive Committee setting forth fairly and impartially a summary of the arguments for and against such course and the views of the Executive Committee thereon.

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Statement of Accounts

for the Year

1961 - 62

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY — STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1961-62

1960/61	INCOME		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£386	Balance at 1st October, 1961					523	0	4
	Subscriptions—							
67	Life			42	0	0		
377	Annual			345	8	6		
							387	8
	Other Income—							
	Interest on Post Office Savings Bank							
10	Accounts						11	5
	Balances at 30th September, 1962							
	Martins Bank Limited						1	3
£869						£922	17	1

1960/61	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	London Meetings—						
£5	Lectures, Hire of Hall, Lantern etc.	72	8	6			
10	Cost of Public Meetings	42	7	4			
	Printing, Typing and Stationery other than						
68	Public Meetings	82	5	6			
	Postages and Telephone Calls other than						
79	Public Meetings	66	10	3			
3	Bank charges and cheque books	3	0	0			
	Planting trees	10	0	0			
4	Donations	3	3	0			
140	Producing Annual Report	115	0	9			
8	Sundry Expenses	3	7	6			
—	Book advertising and expenses	6	16	5			
					404	19	3
	Coach Visits—						
29	Net cost of Hire, Meals etc.				7	12	9
	Balances at 30th September, 1962						
66	Martins Bank Limited						
	Post Office Savings Bank Account—						
404	Life Subscriptions	456	6	1			
53	Prize Fund	53	19	0			
					510	5	1
£869					£922	17	1

We have prepared the above Accounts from the books and vouchers kept by Martins Bank Limited, Kensington High Street, London, W.8. Branch, and certify the same to be in accordance therewith.

Norfolk House,
Laurence Pountney Hill,
London, E.C.4.

12th October, 1962.

WRIGHT, STEVENS & LLOYD,
Chartered Accountants.

THE HON. TREASURER, THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY,
c/o Martins Bank Ltd., 208 Kensington High Street, W.8.

I wish to become a member of The Kensington Society. I
enclose herewith the sum of £ s. d. for my annual
subscription, or, I enclose herewith the sum of £ s. d.
for Life Subscription.

Signature

Address

BANKER'S ORDER

To Bank

19

Please pay Martins Bank Ltd., of 208 Kensington High Street, W.8, to the credit of the account of The Kensington Society, my subscription of £ : s. d., and continue the same on the 1st of October annually until further notice.

Signature

Address

(Mr. or Mrs.) (Title)

Annual subscribers will simplify the collection of their subscriptions if they will fill in the Banker's Order. Cheques should be made payable to The Kensington Society.

