

H. L. Gaudell  
10

# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY



*Notting Hill Gate ~ 1855*  
*Which stood 100 yds. west of Church St (Old Engraving)*

The Firs Printing Company  
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10<sup>th</sup>  
**Annual Report**  
**1962-63**

## OBITUARY

It was with deep regret that the Society learned of the death of its very much revered President, the Rt. Hon. Viscount Esher, G.B.E. He was President since 1956 and took a very keen interest in all our activities, and was ever ready to rush to the defence when the beauties of our borough were threatened.

Members will recall the vigorous and stimulating Forewords which he contributed each year to our Annual Reports. The Foreword in this year's Report was received only a week before he died.

He was an outstanding figure in the amenity world and one of the first to fight for the preservation of the past and to put up a stiff resistance against the destruction of such beauties as remain. Not only the Kensington Society, but amenity societies throughout the country have suffered an irreparable loss.

The National Trust, which he served for over thirty years was one of the greatest interests of his life. Among his many activities he was chairman of the Trustees of the London Museum, the Friends of the National Libraries and the Victorian Society. He was Life President of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and President of the London Society.

The country owes him a great debt of gratitude for his long and devoted service on behalf of historic buildings and the amenities.

At the memorial service held in the Chapel of the Order of the British Empire in St. Paul's Cathedral, on October 24th 1963 the Society was represented by the Chairman, Mr. H. Gandell and the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. G. Christiansen.

## THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

### ANNUAL REPORT Year 1962-63



William M. Thackeray

# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

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G. Dearbough, Esq.	R. T. D. Wilmot, Esq.

*Hon. Treasurer:* Keon Hughes, Esq.

*Hon. Secretary:* Mrs. G. Christiansen

18 Kensington Square, W.8. Tel.: WESTern 0931

*Hon. Auditors:* Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd

## FOREWORD

In an age when military power cannot be used at all there is a lot of facile talk of a country's grading as first or second class. I have always had the illusion, probably senile, that England, having been Ancient Rome for the last 150 years, would be Ancient Greece for the next 150. Members who read, as I hope they will, the discouraging Report of the energetic and persistent Secretary of our Society are not likely to arrive at such an optimistic conclusion. No doubt we have our successes; here and there we put a spoke in the destructive wheel of "development"; here and there fragments of Old Kensington, and the quiet, civilized life which it represented, are saved from the clutch of the money-makers. Sometimes the victory is small enough. The tall building that is going to overlook Lord Cholmondeley's garden will be 128 feet away instead of 40. Sometimes there are resounding results from our activities. The proposal to build a high office block on the site of Adam and Eve Mews and another on the corner of Church Street and the High Street were refused planning permission by the L.C.C., a body so habitually on our side that it is naturally being replaced by a Pharaoh that has never heard of Joseph. But our little Society, which should be large and powerful enough to prevent our select and civilized community being perverted by modern commercialism into a forlorn copy of the American Middle West, seems to a reader of this Report like King Canute facing the indomitable tide. For London, and with it, Kensington, gets worse and worse. Every tall office building, every block of flats, brings more harassed and bewildered people, longer bus queues, and ever-increasing motor cars into the restricted areas of urban life.

Local Authorities believe in inevitable change, but it is their business to see that it is not a change for the worse. The English have always loved their gardens, and in the new suburban estates one can observe the care and affection given to the small patch in front of the modern house. But in Kensington the lovely green Squares, so characteristic of London's ancient charm, are falling into decay. The residents, reduced in number, and knowing that any day they may be "developed" by a notice to quit, are indifferent. Why should they not be. The Square, once a place of peace and reflection, is now a noisy garage, part of the seething turmoil of London life. Only the members of the Kensington Society know and have the courage to say that what is going on is not "progress".

ESHER, *President.*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Ninth*

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Kensington Public Library on 5th December, 1962, with Mr. Carew Wallace in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, previously approved by the Executive Committee and circulated to members in the Annual Report, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

Mr. Gandell, Chairman of the Executive Committee, moved the adoption of the Report and outlined the work done by the Society during the year. He expressed the Society's grateful thanks to Mrs. Christiansen, the Hon. Secretary, for the work she continued to do for the Society, and also to Mr. Boxall for the assistance he had given during the year.

The adoption of the Report was seconded by Mr. A. E. Le Riche, and carried unanimously.

The adoption of the Accounts for the year 1961-62 was moved by Mr. E. Norman-Butler and seconded by Miss Gandell, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Norman-Butler proposed an amendment to Rule 4 of the Constitution to make provision for Corporate Membership of the Society, and that the annual subscription for Corporate Membership should be £5 5s.—payable on the 1st October each year. The proposal was seconded by Mrs. Christiansen and carried unanimously.

The re-election of the Officers of the Society and the Executive Committee was moved by Mrs. Norman-Butler and seconded by Miss Gandell and carried unanimously.

The re-election of Messrs. Wright, Stevens and Lloyd as Hon. Auditors was moved by Mrs. Christiansen, and seconded by Mrs. Le Riche.

The meeting was followed by a lantern lecture given by Mr. Peter Clarke, entitled "Victorian Kensington—Past and Present".

### *Chairman and Vice-Chairman*

At the first Executive Committee Meeting after the Annual General Meeting Mr. H. Gandell was elected Chairman and Mr. C. H. Gibbs-Smith Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee.

### *Lord Gorell*

It was with deep regret that the Society learned of the death of Lord Gorell. He was the Society's first President and for a number of years he took a keen interest in the Society.

### *Mr. Edward Norman-Butler*

The sudden and untimely death of Mr. Norman-Butler came as a great shock to the Society. He was a founder member and had acted as Hon. Treasurer since the foundation of the Society.

His interest in architecture and local history was deep and practical. In 1951 he wrote an excellent article on "Kensington New Town" which was published in a book entitled "Christ Church, Victoria Road, 1851-1951".

He was a keen gardener and created an astonishingly beautiful garden in the very heart of Kensington. He was on the finance committee of both the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England and the Society of Antiquaries. He served the Church not only as a financial adviser but also as a Churchwarden of St. Mary Woolnoth. He will be greatly missed by his many friends. The Society has conveyed its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Norman-Butler and her family.

### *Hon. Treasurer*

Owing to the death of Mr. Norman-Butler, who was Hon. Treasurer of the Society, Mr. Keon Hughes has very kindly consented to act as Hon. Treasurer. The Committee would like to record its grateful thanks to Mr. Keon Hughes.

### *Mr. Geoffrey Dearbergh*

Mr. Dearbergh, Barrister and Hon. Secretary of the Kensington Residents' Protest Committee, has agreed to fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee caused by the death of Mr. Norman-Butler. We feel sure we shall benefit from his knowledge and experience of traffic problems and we trust he will enjoy working with us.

### *Trees*

The Society has made a donation of £10 to the Kensington Borough Council towards the cost of planting trees in the Borough and has congratulated the Council on its excellent tree-planting scheme.

A letter of thanks and appreciation has been received from the Council.





Holly Lodge, Macaulay's house on Campden Hill

## A SELECTION OF CASES DEALT WITH

### *Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill*

Last year an application was made for outline planning permission to extend the newly erected Sir John Aitken's laboratory by constructing buildings in the open garden at the rear of the laboratory and on the garden and site of Holly Lodge which would be demolished.

A further revised scheme has been submitted for the extension of this laboratory by the erection of buildings to complete the square courtyard of which the existing buildings form a corner. This scheme comprises a 58-foot high slab block for the departments of mathematics and chemistry, erected on the eastern side of the site, 60 feet from the boundary; a continuation of this block on the southern boundary with Sheldrake Place, with an extra storey set back approximately 9 feet; a further continuation of this block to form the remainder of the mathematics and chemistry accommodation and an amenity block on the western boundary with the Holland Park School, the height of the building on this flank being 58 feet at the southern end, but owing to a difference in site levels, 46 feet at the most northerly point; and a continuation, 60 feet in height, of the existing building on the northern or Campden Hill frontage, to be used as a nutrition and amenities building.

The Society greatly regrets the demolition of Holly Lodge and has made a strong plea for the preservation of the maximum possible number of trees.

### *Metropolitan Water Board Site, Campden Hill*

An outline plan for the development of the site was made available for inspection at County Hall in July.

At the south end of the site it is proposed to erect an L-shaped block with six storeys on the Airlie Gardens frontage and four storeys on the Campden Hill Road frontage. The large block is to contain 66 flats. Included in the plan is a restaurant and other rooms. A separate club-house would be provided for the adjoining tennis courts, and squash courts or games rooms would be constructed under the club-house. The site adjacent, which at present is occupied by buildings of the Metropolitan Water Board, would be redeveloped by the erection of a four-storey building of offices for the Metropolitan Water Board.

The Society feels that this is an exceptionally large and important site and whatever is erected here will completely dominate Campden Hill and affect its character. Campden Hill has retained a great deal of its old-world charm and quiet atmosphere and no development should be allowed which would detract from these qualities. The Society considers this important site is not suitable for specu-



Plane Tree House. (Published by kind permission *Kensington Post*.)

lative development, and any building should be of a high standard of design, and special attention given to trees and landscape. The London County Council and the Metropolitan Water Board have been informed of the views of the Society.

#### *Plane Tree House—Campden Hill*

In the last two years several planning applications have been made to redevelop Plane Tree House, at the corner of Holland Walk and Duchess of Bedford Walk, by demolishing the house and erecting a high block of flats. These have been strongly opposed by the Society.

A high building on this site would be obtrusive on the edge of Holland Park and would injure the amenities of the park by increasing the sense of enclosure. The original plan was for a block of flats 80 feet high. A revised plan for the redevelopment has made provision for the maximum number of trees to be preserved, and for the new building, a block of flats 58 feet in height, not to form a sheer wall facing Holland Walk. Many visitors to Holland Park pause to admire this well-built house set amid trees.

It is with regret that we learn that planning permission has been approved and that this very fine house will be demolished.

#### *Betting Offices*

The Society supported those protesting against the opening of a betting office in Kenway Road. *Application has since been turned down.*

The application to open a betting office at 172 Kensington Church Street was also opposed by the Society. The application has since been refused.

#### *St. Mary Abbot's Church Vicarage Site*

The proposal to build a new Vicarage and Church Hall and a large block of flats on the site of the old Vicarage and on its garden has come to the notice of the Kensington Society. The Society has supported the protest made by the Marquess of Cholmondeley and the Dutch Ambassador against a high block of flats only 40 feet from the boundary wall at the bottom of their gardens. As a result of this protest the developers have modified their plans, the high block is now set back 128 feet to the south instead of 40 feet.

This may meet the requirements of the resident of No. 8 Palace Green, who is the Dutch Ambassador, but not so the Kensington Society. The Society feels that a high block of flats anywhere on this site is undesirable. Such a building would adversely affect the view of Kensington Palace from Kensington Gardens.



### *Kensington High Street and Kensington Church Street Corner Site*

Another application has been made to build an office block on this site. The Society has opposed it because such a building would greatly aggravate the traffic problem at this corner. Planning permission was refused by the L.C.C. but the developers have appealed to the Minister and we learn as we go to press that a Public Inquiry is to be held on 9th October. The Society will be represented at this Inquiry.

### *Adam and Eve Mews*

Application was made to build a 15-storey office block on the site of Adam and Eve Mews. This was strongly opposed by the Society. The L.C.C. refused planning permission, the developers have appealed and a Public Inquiry is to be held at a later date.

### *Kensington High Street—Widening—St. Mary Abbot's Terrace*

The scheme is to widen Kensington High Street by St. Mary Abbot's Terrace. The Society feels that the widening of this part of Kensington High Street is quite unnecessary as traffic jams do not occur on this stretch and deplores the potential threat to the two lodges in Earls Terrace. The Society has made a strong protest to the L.C.C. against the scheme.

### *Nos. 239-253 Kensington High Street and 1-19 Earls Court Road*

Application has been made for outline planning permission for a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole of this corner site by the erection of shops and an hotel. A two-storey podium is proposed, covering the whole site, it would be 30 feet high and would contain shops at the northern end. At the southern end communal and administrative rooms would be provided, connecting to an hotel. Two basements would provide shop storage space, ancillary hotel accommodation and a loading bay, and parking space for 105 cars. There would be a service road, 16 feet wide, with entrance and egress to Earls Court Road, the southern entry also giving access to a ramp approach to the basement car park and loading bay.

The hotel, of 266 bedrooms, would be placed centrally on the podium and would rise to a height of 165 feet above street level.

The Society has not thought it necessary to raise any objections to this scheme.

### *Plans for the redevelopment of the Gloucester Road Station, Ashburn Mews, Courtfield Road, part of Cromwell Road and Gloucester Road and Ashburn Place*

A number of applications have been made for outline planning permission to redevelop these sites.

(1) *59-79 (odd) Cromwell Road site.* It was proposed to demolish the buildings and to erect a block of flats which would rise to a total height of 80 feet. The main block, seven storeys high, would front Cromwell Road, with a single-storey block at the rear, overlooking Stanhope Gardens enclosure.

(2) *Gloucester Road Station site.* It was proposed that ground and first floor shops should be erected over most of the site with a shopping arcade over the District Railway tunnel running between Stanhope Gardens and Gloucester Road; a three-storey office block, which would include a residential penthouse and would be 64 feet in height, would be erected over the shops along the northern half of the Gloucester Road frontage, opposite Gloucester Road Station; a 10-storey block of 44 flats, with penthouse, would be erected over the shops at the southern end of the site, with a total height of 132 feet and car parking and servicing facilities would be provided at basement level with access from Stanhope Gardens.

The Society opposed this scheme because it includes excessive office space and the tower block would overshadow adjoining property. The proposed access from Stanhope Gardens would result in heavy traffic using that road, thus causing harm to the character, aspect and amenities of the garden square. Also the proposed arcade would be out of place in Stanhope Gardens.

(3) *Nos. 97-109 Cromwell Road; 1-23 Ashburn Place and the Ashburn Gardens Enclosure.* The plan is to build a block of flats mounted on a three-storey podium on a site bounded by Cromwell Road, Ashburn Place and Ashburn Gardens garden enclosure. Under this plan, both the flats and probably an hotel would rise to a height of 204 feet. Also included is a two-storey building for the Royal Thai Embassy and a road system linking the site with the B.E.A. Terminal by means of a flyover crossing Cromwell Road. Part of the two tower blocks and podium and the Embassy building along with a section of the road system would be situated on the garden enclosure which would result in a quarter of an acre of the enclosure being built on. A further one-tenth of an acre would be overshadowed by the roadways.

The Society is strongly opposed to any development or road works encroaching upon the area of the garden square or affecting trees which are subject to a preservation order. The L.C.C. are endeavouring to get the three architects together in order to produce a coherent scheme.

### *Institute of Contemporary Arts, South Kensington*

The site is bounded by Exhibition Road, Thurloe Place and Cromwell Road. Last year an application was made to the L.C.C. for permission to redevelop this site by the erection of a multi-purpose arts centre, comprising a building 70 feet in height, with four floors



above ground level, and an escalator tower rising to 102 feet in height on south-western side and with six levels below ground, descending to a depth of 79 feet. This scheme was turned down by the Planning Authority.

The applicants have now submitted an amended scheme. In this plan the building above ground level would be the same as that in the original application, but there would be one basement level only and the proposed uses for the various floors would be altered, the principal alteration being the omission of a concert hall. The ground floor would provide a main entrance hall with exhibition space; the first and second floors would be used as showrooms and exhibition space; and the third and fourth floors would be the headquarters for the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Provision for car parking would again be made in the basement.

The Society is not very happy about this scheme and hope that planning permission will be refused.

#### *Nos. 10-12 Melbury Road*

In November last permission was sought to demolish these two houses and to erect on the site a seven-storey block of 12 flats. The L.C.C. refused planning permission. A revised scheme for the development of this site by the erection of a five-storey block of ten flats and two maisonettes with a small sixth-floor penthouse on the rear part of the roof and a garage in the basement has been considered by the L.C.C. and planning permission granted. The Society opposed the demolition of these houses. The houses were designed by artists and architects of the late Victorian era. They demonstrated the best of Victorian design of the artists' own merits and as an expression of the leading artists of that time. They formed the nucleus of the artistic world and are therefore rich in historical associations.

#### *No. 14 Holland Park Road and No. 6 Melbury Road*

Application has been made to the L.C.C. for approval in principle to the redevelopment of these sites by the erection of 11 three-storey houses with garages and a six-storey block of 19 flats with basement parking for 19 cars. The six-storey block of flats, 60 feet in height, would be erected on the site of No. 6 Melbury Road; one block of five three-storey houses would be erected fronting Holland Park Road and one block of six three-storey houses would front a new private roadway to be constructed alongside the boundary with Leighton House. We urged the L.C.C. not to approve this scheme.

No. 6 Melbury Road, also known as Little Holland House after the earlier farmhouse, was the first house of a group to be built in 1875 and was owned by G. F. Watts. It is remarkable in that the architect, F. P. Cockerell, largely avoided period detail and was obviously concerned to produce a style which would be characteristic of its own age and no other. Fronting the street is a large studio

raised above a high basement which contained the kitchens. Behind lies a shallow, three-storeyed block with a lobby and a single living-room on the ground floor, and two rooms on each floor above. These are reached by a staircase and corridor across the rear which also formerly gave access to a gallery in the high, sculpture studio to the east. A small third studio lay to the west of the entrance and in 1881 this became the ante-room to a large new picture gallery, which, with a new porch and probably a conservatory, formerly existing on the garden front, was the work of Leighton's architect, George Aitchison, Cockerell having died in the meantime. Aitchison also carried out further alterations and redecorations to the house after Watts's second marriage in 1886.

The picture gallery in Watts's lifetime was open to the public on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

It is with regret that we learn that planning permission has been given.

#### *Parking Meters*

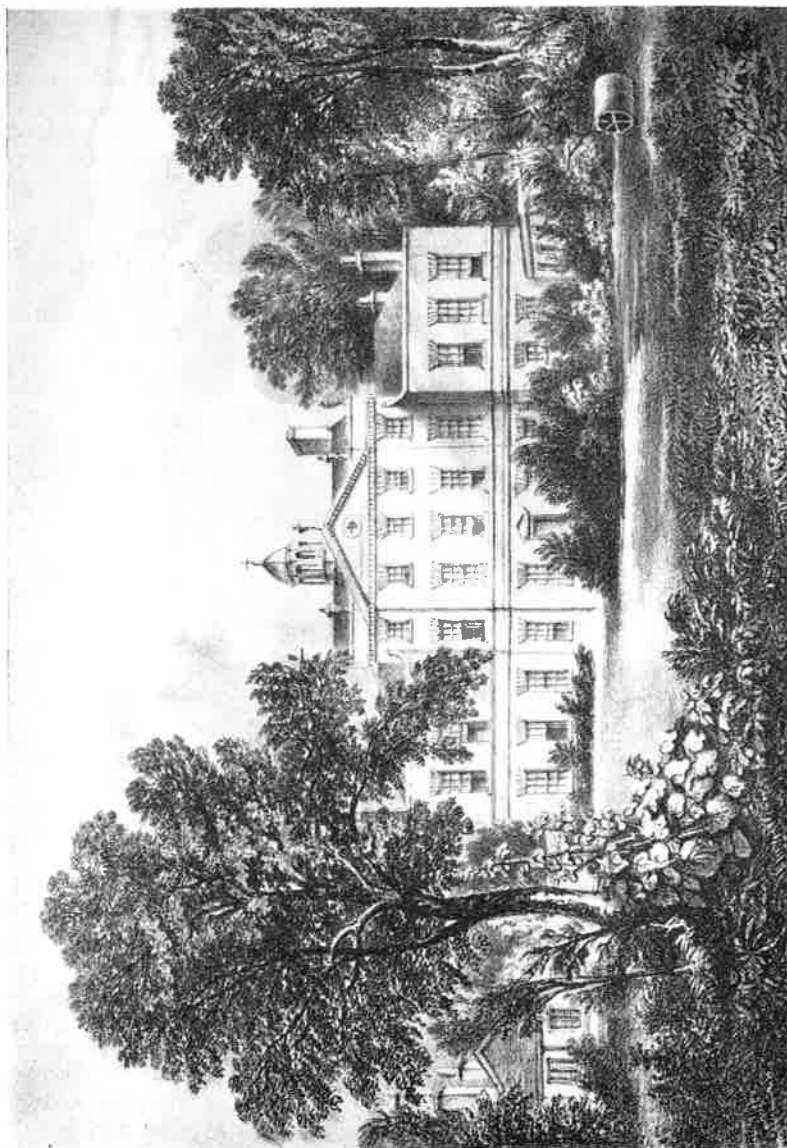
The establishment of parking meters in the borough has been discussed by the Committee from time to time. Kensington is a predominantly residential area and residents should have some form of priority parking rights if a parking meter scheme is introduced. The Society will oppose the establishment of parking meters unless provision is made for residents.

#### *Kensington Square*

The Kensington Borough Council has applied for planning permission to develop the site behind Messrs. Derry & Toms, as approached between No. 24 and No. 26 Kensington Square, as an office block. The Society is opposing the application because it would cause an increase in traffic in an already traffic-saturated area.

#### *Royal Parks*

The Society has received a communication from the Civic Trust and the Pedestrians' Association arising from a debate in the House of Commons on 22nd November, 1962, on the subject of Royal Parks. The Society was asked if it would be interested in a Committee which is being set up to watch proposals that might be detrimental to the Royal Parks. Mr. Nigel Birch, in the House of Commons debate, said the Minister's scheme for a South Carriage Road in Hyde Park would obviously not stop at Hyde Park, because the South Carriage Road now ends at a T-junction with the West Carriage Road which carries on over the Serpentine bridge. This scheme could make no sense whatever unless a substantial slice was taken off the south end of Kensington Gardens. That, said Mr. Nigel Birch, I strongly suspect, is what the plan actually is, to drive a road over what is now the Flower Walk in Kensington Gardens which has given such deep pleasure to many. The Society is giving this Committee its full support.



Aubrey House

### *Aubrey House*

In the Provisional List of buildings of architectural or historic interest for consideration in connection with the provisions of Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, it was found that Aubrey House, Campden Hill, was only Grade 2 on the List. It was felt that Aubrey House was the last outstanding house in Kensington of great historic and architectural importance and should be made Grade 1, and an application was made for its up-grading.

Unfortunately the Society's efforts were not successful. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government has informed us that while they agree that this is an important building they do not consider that it is up to the high standard of architectural and historic interest to justify it being made Grade 1.

### *Square gardens in Kensington*

Great concern is felt about the condition of some of the Square gardens in the borough. Some of the fences have large holes in them or indeed are run down completely. All sorts of unauthorised people trample over what were once flower beds. The grass is uncut, the paths and borders unweeded, the trees unlopped. Broken bottles, rusty tins, waste paper litter the ground, and filth of all kinds allowed to accumulate and no one seems to take the slightest responsibility.

The Kensington Improvement Act puts the control of the gardens in the hands of the owners of the houses fronting on the gardens and also into those of rated occupants living in the houses.

The stumbling-block is that it needs the written consent of two-thirds of the freeholders and long leaseholders to invoke the Act.

The ownership of these gardens sometimes changes frequently and without the householders being notified, with the result that there is no continuity of management, and the residents find it very difficult to ascertain who is responsible for the garden.

The owner of the garden is not always the ground landlord of the houses surrounding it, and so has not the same interest in keeping it up. It is quite wrong that it is possible to own a garden square without accepting responsibility for maintaining it for the benefit of the residents.

The Society has discussed the matter with the Buchanan Development Group, who own a number of these neglected gardens, but they showed little or no concern for the condition of these gardens.

The Secretary has contacted a number of the residents in these squares and urged the formation of Garden Square Committees but found the residents apathetic.

The Society has asked the Kensington Borough Council if these very neglected gardens, gardens which were once the pride and joy of the borough, could be turfed over and maintained by the Council

as public open spaces. We have been told there was nothing the Council could do unless the gardens were handed over in good order and a rate paid. A letter from the Town Clerk said the Council appreciated the efforts being made by the Society to arouse interest in the formation of Garden Committees in the very much neglected Squares in the borough.

At a conference held by the Civic Trust, which was attended by our Hon. Secretary, a scheme for the block ordering of modern iron railings for a large number of London squares was considered. At this meeting it was agreed that Mrs. Christiansen, Hon. Secretary of the Kensington Society, and Mr. Dower should correspond further on this matter. The Civic Trust and the Metropolitan Gardens Association are working on a basic statement about all the squares which lack railings in Central London. As soon as it is clear how many squares may be involved, they intend to make an approach and then to publicize the possibilities after consultation with Civic Societies in the borough concerned. It is felt that if iron railings are provided a great step will have been made to improve the condition of these gardens.

Every effort is being made by the Society to arouse public interest.

### *Traffic*

As a result of our Public Meeting last October on Motorways, the London Society have set up a Traffic Committee with representatives from Amenity Societies in the London area affected by this problem. It is hoped that a useful purpose may be served by bringing together these Societies with a view to joint action.

Mrs. Christiansen serves on this Committee. The Society supports the action of the Kensington Residents' Protest Committee and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Transport and to the Chairman of the L.C.C. deploring heavy traffic being routed through residential areas, which must inevitably alter the character of areas.

### *Theatre at Notting Hill Gate*

A scheme for this theatre, reported in our last Annual Report, was turned down by the L.C.C. and this scheme has now been abandoned.

It is now proposed to build a theatre which will become the permanent London home of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Ballet Rambert.

Sir Basil Spence, architect of Coventry Cathedral, is to design the theatre. The Society welcomes the scheme and awaits the design with great interest. Mr. Ashley Dukes, the late husband of

Dame Marie Rambert and who was on the Council of the Society since its foundation, filled his last years with the dream of building a really great theatre at Notting Hill Gate.

### *Street lighting*

The Kensington Works Committee are recommending the Council to instal "standard" street lighting—concrete columns with fluorescent lighting—in Pembroke Square and Royal Crescent. These are streets for which standard lighting has been vigorously opposed on the grounds that it would clash with the architecture.

We are glad to learn that the Council has finally decided that "old type lanterns" shall be mounted on existing columns or brackets and fitted with fluorescent rings in Cottessmore Gardens, Eldon Road, Kensington Square, Stanford Road, Thistle Grove (southern part) and Victoria Road south of St. Albans Road. In McLeod Mews, Onslow Mews, Osten Mews and Petersham Mews the Committee are recommending G.E.C. fluorescent lanterns on brackets. The recommendation for Calcott Street is that the two swan-necked lanterns should be retained "for the time being".

### *Tower House, Melbury Road*

The Society is much concerned about the deterioration of this house. At a Public Inquiry two years ago the L.C.C. in their evidence stated "this must be one of the most minutely recorded as well as one of the best preserved houses of its date in the country".

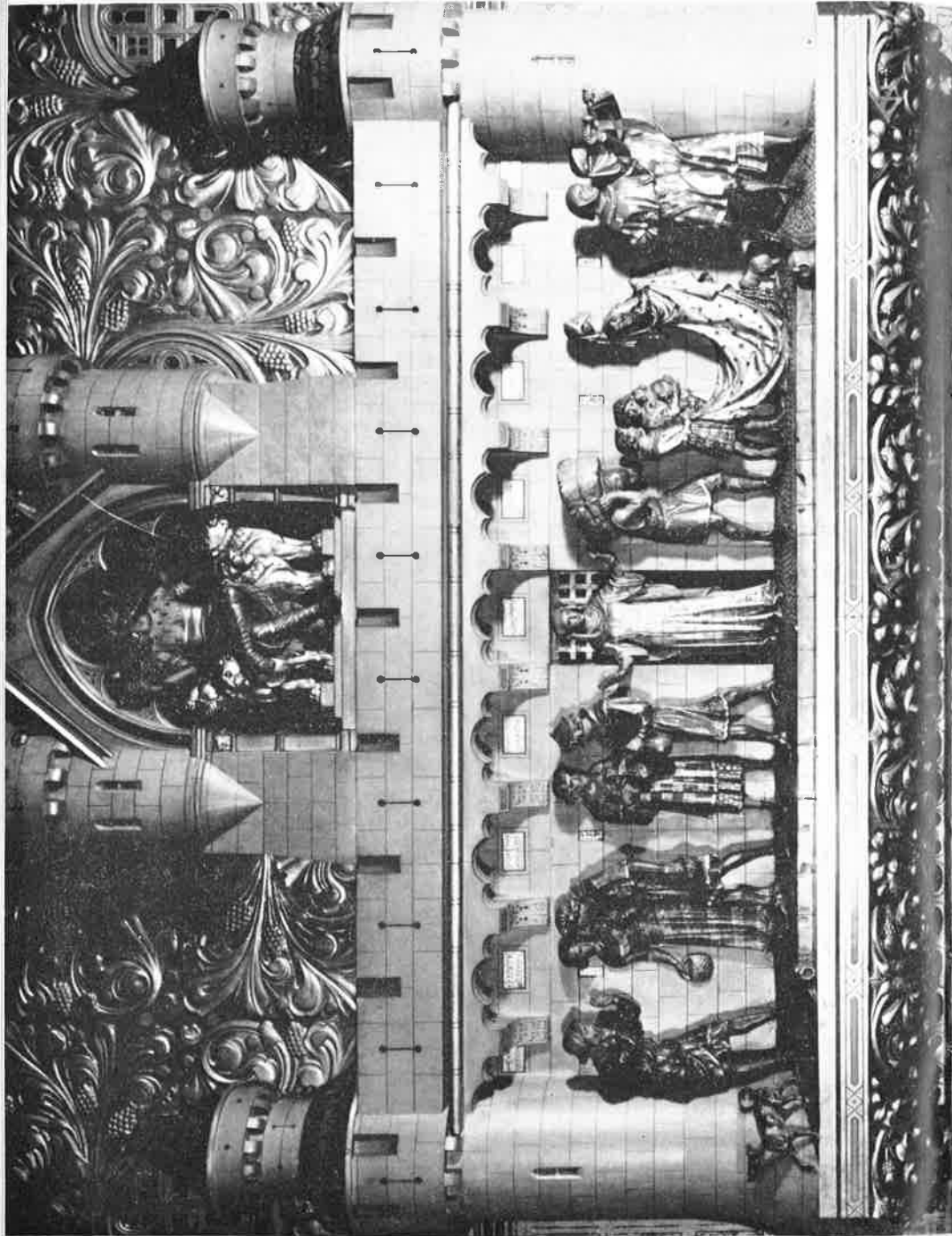
Since the late leaseholder, Mr. Graham, died, the house has been unoccupied and considerable damage has been done in the house by vandals. Messrs. Seeley and Paget, architects, have a potential tenant who if successful in obtaining a long lease of the house intends to restore it to its original condition. We hope that they will be successful in obtaining a lease. Tower House is a unique house, it was designed by William Burgess, A.R.A., 1827-1881.

A complete description of this house appeared in our Annual Report 1960-61, a few copies are still available price 2/6. It will be remembered that the L.C.C. asked for a Preservation Order for this and other houses in Melbury Road in 1961.

The Ilchester Estates appealed to the Minister not to confirm this Order. A Public Inquiry was held at Kensington Town Hall, the Society was represented by Counsel and by Sir Albert Richardson. It was learned later with much regret that the Minister had decided not to confirm the Order.

We have again appealed to the Minister to reconsider this decision with regard to Tower House.





Tower House. Drawing Room.



Tower House. Dining Room.

### *Plaques*

Following a suggestion from the Society the London County Council are going to erect a plaque to Muzio Clementi at 128 Kensington Church Street.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), pianist and composer for the pianoforte, was born in Rome, and was brought to England in 1766 and lived in Kensington. He conducted the Italian opera in London from 1777 to 1780. His life, written by Unger, was published in 1913.

The Society would be pleased to receive from members names of notable residents worthy of commemorative plaques.

## BUILDING PRESERVATION

The Secretary of the Society attended a Conference on Building Preservation on March 30th, 1963. The Conference was convened by the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, which has established an Historical Building Preservation Committee in order to deal as promptly as possible with threats to buildings. The aim of the Conference was to find ways of preserving or protecting buildings more effectively and yet without a blind preservation-at-all-costs policy which could sometimes be a hindrance to social progress, or, at least, a way of losing sympathy.

In the preservation of individual buildings it was thought that the following points should be considered:—

1. That the building is commonly agreed to be a work of art in itself; and that its very existence so enriches our environment as to constitute high claim for preservation.
2. It is a notable example of a particular style or period.
3. That the building holds an historic place in the community.
4. The building has particular historic associations; such claims, however, generally should have an aesthetic, rather than a literary basis.

Mr. Ronald Ditchfield, Principal in charge of Historic Buildings Section, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, spoke on the nature of buildings preservation powers of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1962 [which came into operation in April, 1963] with particular reference to the making of lists of buildings of special historical or architectural interest.

### *Compilation*

Under Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 (Section 32 of the 1962 Act) the Minister of Housing and Local Government is required to compile lists of all buildings of architectural and historic interest to guide local planning authorities

in their preservation. The Minister, when compiling this list, may consult with any person or bodies of persons which appear to him to have special knowledge and interest. Buildings are listed on their merits and irrespective of their present condition.

### *Provisional Lists*

'Provisional' lists are first circulated for comment to Local Authorities and interested public bodies. These place buildings in three categories:—

*Grade I.* Buildings of such importance that only the greatest necessity would justify their removal.

*Grade II.\** Buildings of very great interest which are not quite eligible for Grade I.

*Grade II.* Buildings of considerable historic or architectural importance which have a good claim to survival.

*Grade III.* Buildings of interest, often as a group of or item of townscape, which although not regarded as having a sufficient degree of architectural or historic interest to deserve listing under the Act, nevertheless deserve careful consideration in preparing town-planning proposals.

### *Statutory Lists*

From these, Statutory Lists, which comprise only Grades I, II,\* II, are compiled for certification by the Minister. Supplementary lists of Grade III without any statutory force are for reference only and owners are not notified.

Lists are available for inspection at Council Offices. Listing does not qualify a building for a Historical Buildings Grant.

Under Section 30 (Section 33 of the 1962 Act) once a building has been listed and the owner and occupier notified, two months' notice of the intention to demolish, or of works that would seriously alter the character of the building, must be given to the Local Planning Authority and a copy of this notice sent to the Minister.

This is the legal background of Building Preservation which may be of interest to members.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Lectures

The following lectures were given during the year:—  
Victorian Kensington—Past and Present by Mr. Peter Clarke.  
London's Villages by Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A.  
(printed in full on pages 29-33)  
The Green Belt by W. H. Williams.  
(printed in full on pages 34-37)  
The Church and Art by Ivor Bulmer-Thomas.  
(printed in full on pages 38-40)

### Visits

Russian Orthodox Church, Commonwealth Institute, St. Vedast Church, American Embassy.

Country Houses visited during the summer were:—

#### *Leith Hill Place, Surrey*

This is the home of Sir John Wedgwood, member of the world famous pottery firm. The party was most graciously received by Lady Wedgwood and her daughter and shown over the house.

The house is an Elizabethan manor which was altered along Georgian lines during the 18th century. It contains one of the best private collections of early Wedgwood ware. There are plates from the dinner service made for the Empress of Russia and many other unusual pieces.

The collection of pictures includes works by Reynolds, Romney and Stubbs. Among those by Stubbs are three almost unique paintings in ceramic colours on earthenware plaques.

The house has a noble situation facing one of the widest views in the South of England.

Tea was taken at Leith Hill Hotel.

#### *The Vyne, Hampshire*

This is an early 16th century home built for the Sandys family. Speaker Chaloner Chute made extensive alterations about 1654 when John Webb built the earliest classic portico to a country house in England. The long gallery of linenfold panelling and the chapel with Renaissance glass date from about 1510. The Palladian staircase and some of the rococo rooms date from the 1760's.

Tea was taken at the house.

#### *Knebworth House, Hertfordshire*

Knebworth House is one of the most attractive Country Houses of Hertfordshire. It has belonged to the Lytton family since 1492 and the peaceful home—like atmosphere is one of its most charming features.

The Tudor House was embellished by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton in the early 19th century and contains fine furniture, pictures and possessions of the Earls of Lytton. The Banqueting Hall is particularly impressive and there are pleasant formal gardens.

Tea was taken at the house.

## FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

*October 26th. 2.30 p.m.*

The Friends of the City Churches invites members of the Kensington Society to visit St. James Garlickhithe, near Garlick Hill (nearest Underground Station Mansion House).

*November 27th. 6.30 p.m.*

A Lecture at the Kensington Town Hall, W.8, by Sir Charles Tennyson entitled "William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-1863".

*Chairman:* Mrs. E. Norman-Butler.

*December 4th. 6.30 p.m.*

Annual General Meeting at the Kensington Town Hall, W.8.  
*Chairman:* Mrs. Mary Stocks.

The Meeting will be followed by a lecture by Mr. H. Gandell entitled "The Arms of the City Livery Companies".

*January 9th. 3 p.m.*

Visit to St. James's Palace. Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A., will accompany the party.

Meet at St. James's Palace, Westminster, S.W.1. Tickets required.

*February 15th. 10.30 a.m.*

A visit to the Middle Temple Hall. Please meet outside of Middle Temple Hall, Temple Lane, E.C.4 (nearest Underground Station Temple). Tickets required.

*March 6th. 3.30 p.m.*

A visit to the Stationers' Hall. Please meet at Stationers' Hall, Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.4. Tickets required.

*April 7th. 2.30 p.m.*

A visit to The Guildhall, E.C.2. Please meet at the main entrance. Tickets not required.

*May 22nd*

Visit to the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley, Surrey.

Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m.  
Tickets including coach, entrance fee and tea 15/6.





## CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY—1811-1863

Thackeray was thirty-five when in 1846 he came to live in Kensington. His marriage, through the illness of his wife, was at an end, and his daughters were living with their grandmother in Paris.

He was delighted with the unusual appearance of No. 13 (afterwards No. 16) Young Street at first sight. Early in the following year the first part of "Vanity Fair" appeared and successive numbers followed until its completion in 1848. Among other works which he wrote in Young Street were "Pendennis" and "Esmond". Kensington is the setting of certain scenes in "Esmond". All these works were written in a study at the back of the house. A vine grew outside the windows which looked out on a very fine medlar tree in a little square garden. In Young Street Thackeray enjoyed many friendly dinner parties. It was here that Charlotte Brontë—who had dedicated the second edition of "Jane Eyre" to "the satirist of 'Vanity Fair'"—made her memorable visit to Thackeray.

The house, once the scene of many fascinating gatherings, has been in a forlorn state for a long time, but we are delighted to see that it is just receiving some attention.

The Society has, from time to time, suggested that it should be made into a memorial to Thackeray as 48 Doughty Street has been to Dickens.

## KENSINGTON SOCIETY NOTES

Subscriptions for the year 1963-64 were due on October 1st.

Now that provision has been made in the Constitution for Corporate Membership, it is hoped that hotels and large organizations in the borough will become Corporate Members of the Society. The subscription is £5 5s. payable on the 1st of October each year.

Extra copies of the Annual Report can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, price 2/6.

Copies of the Society's publication "Phillimore Estate, Campden Hill" by W. G. Corfield can be purchased at the Thackeray Bookshop, Thackeray Street, W.8, price 5/-.

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

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

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.

A great number of letters have been received by the Hon. Secretary with various suggestions. These have been carefully considered and where it was felt desirable and possible, steps have been taken to comply with the requests.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank our lecturers, our hosts and our hostesses for making our visits and lectures during the year so successful.

## Three Lectures given by the Society

### THE VILLAGES OF LONDON

Lecture given to members of the Kensington Society by Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A. at the Kensington Town Hall on November 28th, 1962.

I have chosen for my address this evening a subject which is immediately associated with the rise of the English nation. London began as a village on the shores of a lake. As the Centuries passed it became the two-part City of London and Westminster. Then during the middle ages it encouraged the small outlying villages on the northern side of the Thames as well as the growth of the subsidiary market town of Southwark on the Kent side of London Bridge.

When the Eighteenth Century dawned the City of London stood resplendant on the northern bank of the tidal river. St. Pauls surrounded by spires and steeples of the City Churches dominated the scene from the Tower of London to the twin towers of Westminster. To the south, the hills, green fields and meadows of Kent and Surrey formed a natural foreground to the coventions of stone and brick. Later when the first and second of the Hanoverian Kings ruled in succession, London expanded Westwards, the growing streets expressed the village communal spirit which I am thankful to say has existed until the present day. This tendency towards neighbourly associations still exist despite the attitude of bureaucratic bodies to encourage the cult of densities and to pack certain elements of humanity into tower-ing containers.

At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century the Mediaeval and Georgian settlements which had ranked as introductory villages to the metropolis became linked by the coach routes. Yet Islington, Hackney, St. Pancras, Marylebone, Kensington, Chelsea and Hammersmith retained characteristics almost rural.

The more distant villages of Hampstead, Highgate, Stoke Newington, Clapham and Edmonton on the north side of the river with Battersea and Putney on the south side were now regarded as mere settlements of the growing city. William Cowper, the poet of the late eighteenth Century, wrote:

"Suburban Villas highway side retreats,  
That dread the encroachment of the growing street  
Brick boxes neatly sashed  
All in a blaze of July's suns collected rays,  
Delight the Citizen who gasping there,  
Breathes clouds of dust  
And calls it country air."

The late Eighteenth Century had witnessed the intensification of the village idea in the newer suburbs of Highbury, Canonbury, Mary-

lebone and Hammersmith. The more distant villages of Chiswick, Kew, Twickenham, Brentford, Acton and Ealing had become centres for the country homes of those affluent London Citizens who could afford a retreat. On the northern heights the villages of Hampstead, Highgate and Hornsey retained their seclusion. On the Kent side of the Thames the heights of Blackheath became the favoured centre for rural living.

We are, however, not so much concerned with the development of the London villages as with the continual respect for neighbourly living. I propose, therefore, to describe to you certain features which together with reference to historic buildings and amenities in general will demonstrate the true aspirations of many noble hearted men and women.

It must be borne in mind that the village features of London awaits discovery; in other words you have to be on intimate terms with a locality to recognize its dominant spirit. My leading reference is to that part of Piccadilly which extends on the north side from Sackville Street to Old Bond Street. I have named this area Burlington Magna for it covers the whole of the ground owned by Lord Burlington. The lines which epitomise this quarter will be familiar to you:

"Piccadilly Shops, Palaces, bustle and breeze,  
The Whirring of Wheels,  
The Rustle of Trees.  
By Daylight, by Moonlight, by Starlight, by Stilly,  
Whatever my mood is,  
I love Piccadilly."

The village of Burlington Magna centres on the twin terraced elevations of Albany, travel on the Piccadilly side by Melbourne House and on the Vigo Street side by the Holland lodges of 1850. This is the most private street in the West End. The shopping centre is Bond Street. The Parish Church of St. James still awaits the return of its timber steeple. The village artists are the Royal Academicians, the village tailors enjoy the reputation of Savile Row. If you shop locally you can start a friendly conversation with some very well informed tradesfolk. In fact you can never shop without gossiping, neither do the tradesmen demand cash for their goods, but you must be known to your fellow citizens before you enjoy such intercourse. Tailoring, Capping, Shoeing, Haberdashery, watch and clock repairing, jewellery and all the finishing touches of adopted gentility including shaving and hairdressing are available in the exquisitely designed shops of Burlington Arcade. The principal local Coffee Houses stand in St. James's Street. If you are known as a regular at any of these ancient establishments you can meet friends from country villages miles outside the fifty miles Metropolitan circle of today.

At the west end of the village is the Royal Park of St. James. It is only fifty years since the farmyard and the milch cows ceased

to exist. How well I remember purchasing a glass of milk from the milkmaid of 1912. In my collection I have the famous picture of 1793 painted by Benjamin West showing the cows and the milkmaids of that period. Alas the passing of the years.

Burlington Magna is a very real London village. I feel sure you hold its qualities in high regard.

The next village of consequence is St. Marylebone which I have named Marylebon Clinical. This in the main includes a vast area with Clinics, Nursing Homes and Medical Centres. Quite naturally the character has changed but in the main the architecture is representative of the late Eighteenth Century. The rural aspect today is retained in the green expanse of Regents Park, formerly Marybons fields. The beauty of the village can be located in the High Street now known as Marylebone Lane. There the shops have something of the character of the olden time. There you will find antique shops side by side with food stores and dairies. The houses are not dwarfed by concrete towers. The small Church sketched by Hogarth no longer stands but the Parish Church is still a dominant feature. Strange as it may seem new hamlets have come into being behind the stately façades of Harley Street. At night when the streets are quiet the hoot of the tawny owl can be heard. There is a stately character in all the streets but certain old-time customs are missing; for instance the street criers. Only once a year does the Lavender Seller bring her basket to sell bunches of lavender to willing buyers. Where are the Lamplighters? Alas in mild October the Muffin Man with his bell no longer perambulates the streets to awaken interest in kitchens below stairs. Now and then a picturesque driver in an old four-wheeled cart, drawn by a scruffy horse, cries "Any old iron". Rag and bone sellers, however, cannot expect to trade in these days of tinned foods. The dust cart men clean the streets in silence.

The villagers of Marylebon Clinical find it difficult to take their carriages to their own front doors. For the convenience of local residents the Inland Revenue Office is in Baker Street and is quite near to Madame Tussauds. Can it be that the occupants of the Chamber of Horrors spend the dead of night destroying the buff envelopes of the Tax Inspectors.

We now proceed to Kensington Regal which from the late Seventeenth Century to the present day has been associated with Royalty. It was the retreat of William Makepeace Thackeray when he retired from Bloomsbury. He has recorded the fine ladies and the fine gentlemen of the Court of the first two Georges. The three main features are Kensington Square, High Street and Church Street. You search for the village charm; you will find it in the aspect of the villas and terraced homes. You discover it in its lesser shops and in the cool shadows of Kensington Gardens. Like other parts of London the old Mews, once the stables of former days, have become so many facets of the present village. Kensington was the first to have a continuous line of oil lamps which extended from the Palace to



Charing Cross. It was a dangerous village in the Eighteenth Century for robbers and footpads made it their business to attack travellers on the road to the west. Kensington has a feminine charm, most of the local residents emerge from their houses at eleven o'clock to do their shopping. Many young ladies seem to prefer to shop skirtless. Others like to display their furs. Elderly ladies trail basket trollies at their heels. To cross the streets and to risk the endless tide of traffic would imperil pedestrian moving. The great stores despite their many attractions are nothing more than perpetual Village Fairs. The feminine character of Kensington however is fully shown in the windows of the stores devoted to the display of costumes. The masculine qualities of Kensington, however, seem to be at a discount except when the Albert Hall exchanges compliments with the Albert Memorial. It is perhaps fortunate that the village of Kensington is far-flung and that its tentacles include Edwardes Square, Egerton Crescent and the greater part of Sloane Street. Londoners are indeed grateful for the fact that the Arts and Crafts of the Villages of other times are so carefully preserved. Students of all nationalities now study such things under the roof of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Quite naturally we turn our steps towards the village of Chelsea which I have named "Chelsea Delectable". Since the days of Sir Thomas More, Chelsea has maintained its air of independence. For example, it is the sanctuary of the Chelsea Arts Club and the very centre of Bohemian fraternisation. The houses of the village are both formal and picturesque. You recognise touches of colour, neat window boxes and china ornaments proudly displayed.

In the early morning skirtless young ladies are found pushing perambulators. When the ladies are smartly clad the baby carriages are historic models, when the ladies are plainly dressed the miniature vehicles are de luxe and of the latest type. In the evening the baby sitters arrive and the young wives, together with their husbands, make their way to the "Good Intent" to dine modestly and meet artist friends. The charm of Chelsea is the Embankment with the bridges and the ancient mansion. The sequence of the whole scene, however, is overshadowed by the twin chimneys of the Battersea Power Station. There are many delightful grounds of terrace houses. One feels rather dubious when one sees so many yellow front doors.

And so onwards to Hammersmith Lyrical. I suppose we must name this quarter lyrical by reason of the songs formerly heard in its roadside taverns. The Lyric Theatre, renowned for the Beggar's Opera, is near the river. Beyond we encounter the famous Square and Church of the Nineteenth Century. In the main the village is not quite so distinctive as other quarters.

Westminster Political on the other hand centres around the precincts of the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. For example,

Smith Square and the Eighteenth Century church of St. John's. It is the nearby streets of Georgian houses that form the village of Westminster. It is a region clearly exclusive, very illusive, detached, conservative.

In Fulham there is very little architectural interest in the rows of Victorian houses. Behind the front doors and repetitive bow windows, the village spirit doubtless lingers on. How different is Merry Islington. Here indeed we find the spirit of the past centuries haunting the highways and the byeways. From Pentonville to Canonbury is quite a long perambulation. You could spend hours admiring the quiet corners of Canonbury or exploring the select terraces of Highbury. In addition do not forget the older parts of Bloomsbury and the fringe of Stoke Newington and Kingsland. There is something of longing in the aspect of this part of old London. The New River has not been entirely covered in. There are still trees in the green lanes; from the top of Pentonville Hill the roofs of St. Pancras Station suggest distant northern scenery.

I have left the villages of Hampstead and Highgate to the last. Here can be glimpsed the country atmosphere which has not quite departed. Hampstead has the greater claim to rurality while Highgate suggests a large midland settlement. The position of both villages on the northern heights undoubtedly preserved them from spoliation. The railways, for example, were forced to go below ground, road traffic until recently was delayed by the steep inclines. But in both cases the remnants of the once almost impenetrable Middlesex Forest have assisted in the retention of rural charm. Folk are proud to have an address so northerly. They delight in walking on the Heath or wandering through Ken Wood. There is a fascination in catching sight of the dome of St. Paul's, so near and yet so far away. The houses and shops in both villages are just what they have always been. How long the charm will be kept up no one can be sure. It would indeed be tragic if either of these wonderful spots were to be modernised after the American ideal.

In this brief sketch of the villages of what must now be considered Inner London there is something of reality and something of make believe. But then all life is an illusion. We keep up our spirits by indulging in dreams and if our thoughts centre on beauty we are merely fulfilling a Divine Command.

This lecture was illustrated by many beautiful lantern slides.

The Earl of Euston, who was in the chair, told members of the Society that on a recent visit to America he was nearly "physically assaulted" because of what has been allowed to happen to London's beautiful buildings in the past five years. He hoped the "notoriously apathetic public" would soon wake up to what was happening to the historic buildings of London.

## THE LONDON GREEN BELT

This Lecture, illustrated by many beautiful slides, was given to members of the Society by Mr. W. H. Williams at the Kensington Town Hall on February 5th, 1963.

In the year 1580, Queen Elizabeth I prohibited by decree any building on any new site within three miles of the Gates of the City of London. Her concerns then were the provision of cheap food and the mitigation of the effects of the outbreak of plague in the City. Coming to more modern times, the idea of preserving open spaces round the Metropolis was the reason for the founding of the Commons Preservation Society in 1865. The men who started it saw the need of Londoners to be able to enjoy country conditions within easy reach of their homes. The commons provided this, yet many of them were threatened by enclosure, Hampstead, Wandsworth and Wimbledon were among the scenes of the Society's early successful struggles, resulting in these commons both being preserved from building and also providing wonderful natural open spaces. Later the Society went further afield to save such places as Epping Forest in Essex and Berkhamsted Common in Hertfordshire.

The Society, of course, were concerned to preserve particular places to which the public should have access. The concept of having around London, in order to stop London spreading, a girdle of ordinary countryside with its farmlands and woodlands came much later and originated in Sir Raymond Unwin's Greater London Planning Committee's Second Report of 1833. This Report envisaged round London an inner ring largely given to recreational facilities, playing fields and so on, with an outer ring of country preserved permanently for development between the existing towns and villages.

Under the Green Belt Act of 1938, the L.C.C. implemented this Report to the extent of protecting 25,000 acres immediately around London, but it was not until 1944, when more comprehensive general planning powers were being contemplated, that Sir Patrick Abercrombie, in his Plan, advocated the creation of New Towns with a much larger green belt, country of normal rural activities, stretching between these towns and the Metropolis itself. Under these planning powers the compensation payable was to come from the central funds and not out of the ratepayers' pockets.

Today, a really extensive area of open country is protected under the Town and Country Planning Acts. This is done by local authorities, e.g., the Councils of the Counties round London, designating it as Green Belt land in their (County) Development Plans and Town Maps.

The Minister of Housing and Local Government has to approve these plans and maps before they come into force and there is an opportunity for objecting. He has done so, and is now considering substantial extensions of the Belt. Within the Belt building is not

allowed except in villages and towns (infilling) nor is industrial development except in exceptional cases.

The purpose of the Green Belt is to stop the sprawl of the built-up area and thus keep the country reasonably close to those who live in the middle of the built-up area. The Green Belt, with these extensions, assuming that they are approved, will vary in width between twelve and twenty-five miles from the outer edge of built-up Greater London. The outer edge of the Belt starts in the west at the Thames near Marlow and follows the line of the Chilterns to Baldock. From here it goes to Hertford and, encompassing the valleys of the Lea and the Roding, it goes on beyond Southend-on-Sea. South of the Thames it starts east of Gravesend, taking in the Darent Valley and cuts southwards across the crest of the North Downs and turns westward at Tunbridge Wells. It then runs parallel with the scarp of the North Downs, through Surrey where so many National Trust properties are situated. It goes on to Haslemere where it swings north to include the green sand hills south-west of Guildford and to reach the Thames again at Wargrave. Places on the inner edge of the Belt include Erith and Hayes in Kent, Croydon, Cheam and Thames Ditton in Surrey, Uxbridge (Middlesex), Bushey Heath and Barnet, Herts., Enfield (Middlesex), and Chingford, Romford and Dagenham in Essex.

There are already within the Green Belt numerous substantial towns and villages, also areas of small houses in ribbon development, a legacy of the period between the wars. There are larger houses each with its one or two acres. These have been described, rather aptly, as the Stockbroker or Martini Belt, and of course the houses keep a high value largely because they are set in the Green Belt. There are also such buildings as hospitals and army camps and the more grisly paraphernalia of living and dying such as lunatic asylums, sewage works, cemeteries and crematoria which will probably have to increase, all the time, in size and capacity, as our population figures continue to rise. Nevertheless, on the whole, the Belt provides substantial stretches of rural land. It must be remembered that on this land the public has no general right of access merely by reason of it being in the Green Belt. This land is largely occupied by these important rural industries (because that is what they are) of agriculture and forestry, among others, and these must continue however much the public may wish to wander at will. Indeed they give the rural backcloth to the recreational activities to which I shall refer in a moment. The farmers and foresters in the Green Belt here had to safeguard their property against a mild invasion of Londoners, and not so mild in some cases. New methods of fencing and fire protection had to be evolved, yet it is ultimately on the good sense and good manners of the visiting public that a *modus vivendi* must depend. To quote the words of warning given by Mr. Lovett of the Ministry of Housing who lectured on this subject to the London Society in 1961: "It is the farmer, including the farmer who leaves a decent number

of hedgerow trees, on whom we really depend for greenness. If husbandry ceases to be economically viable in the Green Belt it is the public who will lose."

What does the Green Belt provide in the way of recreation for Londoners and others? There are the commons, to some of which I have referred already, where one can wander, picnic and admire the view. There are the sites and buildings of historic interest, often vested in the Ministry of Works or the National Trust, to which the public are allowed to go on payment of a small fee. There are nature reserves where you can go for scientific study, but not otherwise, there are the ancient tracks such as the Pilgrims' Way. Then there are the riding clubs, the golf courses, the very numerous playing fields for cricket, football, hockey and tennis. There is fishing, rowing, canoeing, swimming and water ski-ing on the rivers and the other stretches of water. Above all there is the wonderful network of public footpaths and bridle ways, and there are rambling clubs and riding clubs who are among those who use them. These byways are the best, safest and quietest means of exploring the more hidden beauties of the countryside. As you know, routes of walks are often given in the London papers.

Now, of course, all these things are what you will find in any stretch of countryside in Britain. It is their nearness to London which makes them so valuable, readily available as they are to a population of eight million or more. Walkers and riders are cheaply catered for by Youth Hostels while there are sites for caravans and camping for those who like that sort of thing.

So far I have tried to show the importance and facilities of the Green Belt for definite recreational activities, but surely it is in the visual and spiritual relief and fresh air which the Green Belt provides for those travellers who approach or leave London that its greatest value lies, and through it the foreign visitor will go on his way to visit such wonderful buildings as Hatfield House, Windsor Castle, or one with more recent interest, Chartwell, Westerham. You in this Society, very naturally and properly, are greatly concerned with the preservation of this beautiful Borough with its fine buildings. But however well preserved this Borough is, it would be far less attractive a place in which to live if, every time that you wanted to visit other parts of the country you had always to travel twenty-five miles or more all between lines of houses and the rash of urban sprawl. Imagine the road to Aylesbury if, instead of having the beauty of the Chilterns, as at present, coming down to the edge of the road, you had villas and factories.

Now, what of the future of the Metropolitan Green Belt? There must always be more demand on it for more trunk roads and motorways, larger air fields, more electricity pylons and reservoirs. Also

the demand for cheaply obtainable minerals such as gravel, clay and chalk must go on so long as building in London continues. Luckily such places as gravel pits have a comparatively short productive existence and when they are worked out the question of restoration by filling in with refuse for playing fields or agriculture, or by landscaping, arises immediately. In some cases, when no filling is done, the resultant lagoons can be made attractive to the eye and useful for water sports.

But there are real dangers of a quite different sort looming ahead and threatening this Belt which, as it stands, of such great value to the Metropolis and to Londoners who now have, in general, more leisure money and education than they did formerly. There are tremendous pressures on all sides for both building and industrial expansion in the Belt, and it will take a strong Minister with public opinion firmly behind him to resist those pressures. They arise because of the magnet of London as a centre for business offices which creates a large demand for houses near and around London. Because of the overcrowding of trains and roads, commuters are loth to live so far out as the Green Belt now compels them to, they would like to have houses in the Green Belt itself. Then with London as the business centre there is a demand for more industrial sites near at hand and this will increase with the increase in trade with Western European countries. Behind all this is the huge increase in population, born in or out of wedlock, throughout Britain, which increase is most intensive in the south-eastern corner. I remember that at every Annual Meeting of the C.P.R.E. a member used to say, "What help is the Council giving towards easier emigration". I think he had something there.

Now the Minister has said that he supports entirely the retention of the Green Belt. On the other hand he has said that he must find more land available for housing. It is felt that this is likely to lead to some encroachment, small at first, on the inner edge of the Belt. If these are no more than minor adjustments of the boundary of the Belt that is all right but what we must ensure is that the Belt itself in general remains intact and that controls on building in it are strict and permanent. We must ensure this whether we live in Kensington or elsewhere. At this very moment building developers hold options on much land in the Belt, just waiting for the moment when some misguided Minister relaxes the barriers. Once those barriers are down we should have a vast unmanageable sprawl, unpleasant to live in, unpleasant to pass through and expensive to administer, and all this just at a time when other parts of England are crying out for more development. In order to strengthen the Minister's position the Green Belt Council for Greater London have asked him to finalize and crystallize the boundaries of the Green Belt by Act of Parliament. It is felt that not until this is done can we be reasonably sure that our precious, pleasant and protective garment is not to be snatched from us.



## THE CHURCH AND THE ARTS

A talk on "The Church and the Arts" was given to the Kensington Society at Kensington Town Hall on March 12th. Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, Hon. Director of the Friends of Friendless Churches, Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society, and from 1951 to 1962 Chairman of the London Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

In the course of his remarks Mr. Bulmer-Thomas said:

If anyone were to say that the best way of deciding what furnishings should go into a church would be to refer the matter to a barrister who had probably never seen the church and had no training in aesthetic principles we should say he was crazy; yet that is the system which is enforced in the Church of England.

Since the First World War attempts to improve it have been made by the system of Diocesan Advisory Committees for the Care of Churches, but the Chancellor is not obliged to consult them, much less to take their advice, and any good they can do is almost entirely negative, in keeping out bad works of art rather than in positively promoting good ones. Great art is individual, and is not likely to emerge from the compromises of committees.

The so-called Liturgical Movement has been hailed as though it were a revelation from on high, but it is only one of those changes in fashion that come in one era and go out in the next. While there is much to be said for experimenting with central altars and westward positions in new churches built for the purpose and occasionally in Renaissance and Georgian buildings of suitable proportions, the application of current liturgical theories to medieval and Gothic Revival churches built according to an entirely different concept of worship frequently results in havoc. What is to be specially deplored is the scrapping of chancel screens, even when they are of delicate construction, and the turning of the chancel into a depressed area.

While there are nearly fifty architects in the country who can be entrusted with the repair of an old church, and in their hands the repair of old churches can be carried out with a skill and satisfaction never previously attained, the construction of new churches fills one with despair.

Today's architects, unwilling to build in the great styles of the past, are still bashing about in an effort to find a style of their own, and so far they have not succeeded. We get churches looking like aeroplane hangars, churches looking like tents on the point of collapse, churches looking like warehouses, but hardly ever churches looking like churches.

One reason is that architects seldom know what is required of a church. The current *cliché* is that an architect hardly ever gets an adequate briefing from a parochial church council, but this is a poor excuse, for churches have been built continuously in Europe since the reign of the Emperor Constantine, and an architect ought to know

without being told what happens in a church. For an architect to build a good church it is not necessary for him to lead a virtuous and godly life, but it is essential that he should understand the nature of eucharistic worship and for the time being at any rate identify himself with the aspirations of the worshippers to be. Like Handel in composing the Messiah, he needs to see all heaven opened before his eyes. The architects of former days were members of one society in which the Christian religion was the most important element; today's architects too often look upon the building of a church as just another job, and they will make their bus stations look like churches as readily as they make their churches look like bus stations.

Two of the chief arts employed in church are the spoken and the sung word.

The Church of England is fortunate in the possession of a liturgy and a version of the Holy Scriptures unique in the marvellous beauty of the language. There are, of course, people in high places who are not content to allow this situation to remain as it is.

The language of the New English Bible has been characterized by the greatest living master of English letters as "vulgar, trivial and pedantic". A revealing comment on this work has been made by one of the persons concerned in the translation. Bishop A. T. P. Williams has written:

"Note the name of our new translation. We deliberately did not call it the Holy Bible because the word 'holy' unfortunately suggests to many minds nowadays a limited range of life in which many people are not particularly interested."

This gives the key to many of the faults in modern church art and architecture. What we lack most in the churches now being built, and in their furnishings, and in the worship therein, is a sense of the holy, or as it is sometimes called, a sense of the numinous. A religion that is not holy, a church that is not holy, is nothing.

In contrast with the written word, music is today experiencing a great renaissance. There have been attempts to produce beatnik music for church to match our beatnik Bibles, and I think they are misguided, but good and even great church music is being produced. Music is an object on which the ecclesiastical authorities at all levels are willing to spend freely, and our church and cathedral choirs and organists have made no small contribution to the general musical renaissance.

There is one complaint I should like to make. There is hardly a parish church that does not hanker after a cathedral organ, and when he has obtained it at vast expense the organist makes it the master instead of the servant of the worship. Far too often the organ drowns the singing, even of the highly expensive and highly trained choirs in our cathedrals and greater churches.

While the choir or congregation is singing the organ should merely be used for gentle guidance, and any display of virtuosity by the organist should be reserved for voluntaries and anthems.

I should like to plead for the use of smaller organs with more limited range in ordinary parish churches—and not a few excellent old organs are still obtainable from private houses at relatively low cost—and I should like to plead that there should be more use in our churches of string orchestras. There are hardly any churches with string orchestras, but the effect, even of a single violin, can often be exquisite and a great aid to worship.

It is disturbing to see the readiness with which Chancellors grant facilities for electronic organs and bells. The makers of these electronic devices should aim at producing, not imitations, but instruments as different from organs and bells as the piano was from the harpsichord. In the meantime, the best course is to resist all canned music in churches.

Apart from a few practitioners, the superb art of stained glass is today at a low ebb in England, and the works hailed as masterpieces are marked sometimes by a painful literalism, sometimes by a grotesqueness amounting to caricature.

Some excellent mural paintings have been produced in recent years. One feature of English churches that strikes the visitor familiar with the churches of the Continent, especially of Italy, is their poverty in paintings in oil or tempera; and when a pious donor has given a fine work of art to a church, too often the incumbent and parochial church council see in it, not an aid to worship, but a means of financing the repair of the heating apparatus, or of something else which they regard as of greater value in the service of God.

## 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, Corporate or Ordinary.
4. *Subscriptions.* Life members shall pay a minimum subscription of £10 10s. Corporate members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £5 5s. Ordinary members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £1 1s. Subscriptions are 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.

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## THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

### Statement of Accounts

for the Year

1962 - 63

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# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY — STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1962-63

1961/62	INCOME	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	1961/62	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£523	Balance at 1st October, 1962				509	1	11	£72	London Meetings—						
42	Subscriptions—							42	Lectures, Hire of Hall, Lantern etc.	47	12	0			
	Life		10	10	0				Cost of Public Meetings	38	0	2			
345	Annual		334	14	6			82	Printing, Typing and Stationery other than						
						345	4	6	Public Meetings	38	1	0			
	Other Income—							67	Postages and Telephone Calls other than						
11	Interest on Post Office Savings Bank							3	Public Meetings	81	1	0			
	Accounts					12	10	1	Bank charges and cheque books	4	12	0			
								10	Planting trees	10	0	0			
								3	Donations	4	4	0			
								115	Producing Annual Report	132	1	11			
								3	Sundry Expenses	5	3	4			
								7	Book advertising and expenses						
								—	Wreath, on the death of						
									E. Norman-Butler	7	7	0			
													368	2	5
								8	Coach Visits—						
									Net cost of Hire, Meals etc.				12	5	6
									Balances at 30th September, 1963						
									Martins Bank Limited	3	3	5			
									Post Office Savings Bank Account						
								456	Life Subscriptions	427	19	8			
								54	Prize Fund	55	5	6			
													486	8	7
£922					£866	16	6	£922					£866	16	6

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.

24th October, 1963.

WRIGHT, STEVENS & LLOYD,  
Chartered Accountants.



THE HON. TREASURER, THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY,  
c/o 18 Kensington Square, 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.

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