

16<sup>th</sup>

H. L. Bondell

# Annual Report

1969-70



THE OLD TURNPIKE IN 1820

THE  
Kensington  
Society

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Annual Report  
1969-70



Lady Isabella Rich, sister of Sir Henry Rich (later 1st Earl of Holland, of Holland House, Kensington). *c.* 1615. Attributed to William Larkin. Wearing an embroidered jacket cut extremely low in front and a full gathered embroidered skirt, worn without a farthingale. A standing band round her neck and a Moorish 'sbernia', imported from Italy, draped over her left shoulder. Shoes with large rosettes.

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*See page 31.*

# The Kensington Society

## PRESIDENT

THE RIGHT HON. LORD HURCOMB, G.C.B., K.B.E.

## VICE-PRESIDENTS

THE DOWAGER MARCHIONESS OF CHOLMONDELEY

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF KENSINGTON

THE LADY STOCKS

## COUNCIL

Miss Jean Alexander

Mr. Hardy Amies

The Hon. Mr. Justice Barry

Mr. W. W. Begley, F.R.HIST.S., L.R.I.B.A.

Sir Hugh Casson, R.D.I., F.R.I.B.A.

Mr. Alec Clifton-Taylor

Sir Trenchard Cox, C.B.E., F.S.A.

Mr. S. J. L. Egerton

Prof. Arnold Toynbee, D.LITT., D.C.L., F.B.A.

Mr. William F. Grimes, V.P.S.A.

Mr. John Pope-Hennessy, C.B.E., F.B.A., F.S.A.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Karminski

Mr. Oliver Messel, C.B.E.

Lady Norman, J.P.

Sir Duncan Oppenheim

Miss Irene Scharrer

Lord Spens, K.B.E., Q.C.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: THE LADY STOCKS

VICE-CHAIRMAN: MR. EDWARD SEELEY

Mr. Geoffrey Agnew

Miss Balian

Mr. D. Chesworth

Mrs. G. Christiansen

Mr. P. E. Clarke

Mr. G. F. Dearbergh

Mr. H. Gandell

Mr. C. H. Gibbs-Smith, F.M.A., R.E.S.

Mr. Ian Grant, F.R.I.B.A.

Mr. Keon Hughes

Dr. Stephen Pasmore

Sir Allan Quartermaine, C.B.E., M.C.

Mr. Edward Seeley

The Lady Stocks

Mr. R. T. D. Wilmot

HON. TREASURER: Mr. Keon Hughes

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. G. Christiansen

18 Kensington Square, W.8

AUDITORS: Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd

## Foreword

THE VARIED CONTENTS OF this Report illustrate the Kensington Society's detailed cares for the Borough, past, present and to come, and its concern that life in the Borough may continue to be something distinctive, not destroyed in patches or engulfed in the expansion of modern urban developments, so many of which are monotonous, mediocre and out of scale.

Only brief reference is possible to action taken by the Society in a number of selected cases, which by no means exhaust the range of our devoted Secretary's surveillance of what is happening to alter the appearance of our familiar streets and squares.

Attention is called to a matter of great interest to residents in the problem of the height to which new hotels should be allowed to rear their dominating towers in residential areas or near the parks and to create or aggravate congestion of traffic. The problem of height of buildings generally is critical to the character of our conservation areas.

An important and, we hope, temporary threat to the public use of the Orangery in Holland Park is described in the reprinting of a debate in the House of Lords on the 12th of March, 1970, on a motion by Lord Balfour of Inchrye. The attitude of the Society will be gathered from the speeches of Lady Stocks and myself. Still in the dark about the exact position, we trust that on second thoughts the G.L.C., whose general administration of the Park we like, will not pursue the idea of depriving the London public of this amenity.

In conclusion, may I refer to the springing up of several very local groups. We welcome the formation of such associations; driving force often comes from intense local and personal concern. But impact upon and influence with Authority, whether local or in Whitehall, is best exerted by a combination which represents numerically a substantial body of opinion. I hope therefore that all these local groups within the Borough will at once become associate members of our Society, as some of them have already done. Further, I would urge their members, as individuals, to join the Society. The more residents from the whole Borough do this, the more effective our joint representations are likely to be.

HURCOMB

## Annual General Meeting

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at Leighton House on 14th May, 1969, at 6.15 p.m.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Hurcomb, G.C.B., K.B.E., President of the Society, was 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.

The Lady Stocks, Chairman of the Executive Committee, moved the adoption of the Report, which she said was most excellent and interesting.

The re-election of Officers and Executive Committee was moved by Mrs. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Keegan, and carried unanimously.

The adoption of the Accounts was moved by Mr. Dearbergh, seconded by Mrs. King, and carried unanimously.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation of having been elected President. He expressed the Society's deep regret at the death of Lord Cholmondeley, whose interest in and help to the Society had been greatly appreciated.

Mr. Robert Vigers, Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee of the Greater London Council, referring to the control of parks by local boroughs spoke strongly in favour of Holland Park being run by the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council rather than by the G.L.C.

Lord Hurcomb said that Holland Park could not be compared to other local parks. The G.L.C. had cared for a large number of important London open spaces with considerable skill and knowledge, and individual boroughs would find it difficult to provide such expert staff. Holland Park was not just a local park for Kensington residents, since naturalists from all over England and abroad visited it.

Mr. Thom was presented with a cheque for £10 towards the Brighter Kensington Scheme.

Alderman Mrs. Diana Paul, Chairman of the Town Planning Committee, was presented with a book, Loftie's *History of Kensington*. In accepting it she said that the amenity societies were very important and that this gift was one of the most pleasant surprises she had received in the last twenty years.



The Meeting was followed by a lantern lecture given by Mr. Desmond Guinness on 'Irish Houses and Castles in the Eighteenth Century' which was much enjoyed, and a vote of thanks was moved to the Speaker by the Chairman.

#### OBITUARY

We report, with deep regret, the death of the following members: Miss Brockman, Miss Compton Burnett, Miss Ffooks and Mr. John Paul a member of the Executive Committee from 1958-1961, and Mr. Sedgewick Rough. Miss Brockman and Miss Ffooks were active members of the Local History Group. A paper given by Miss Ffooks will be found on page 34.

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If anybody has a copy of Miss Brockman's paper on Bedford Gardens we would like to print it in a future Report. Miss Compton Burnett, the well-known writer, was a founder member of the Kensington Society. Mr. Sedgewick Rough was also a founder member; he took a tremendous interest in the Society and was a most generous 'giver' to our Bring and Buy sales. He frequently attended our activities, where his gaiety will be greatly missed.

#### HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

We have decided to present our Annual Report from 1969 to 1970 in order to report current proposals and plans.

During 1969 and as we go to press, the Society is greatly concerned about the ever-growing number of proposals for planning consent for hotel development in the borough. It is quite obvious that from the developers point of view the Royal Borough is an ideal area, and perhaps too, from the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council's point of view, inasmuch that it produces a large amount of money in rates. Hotels bring many side effects; Kensington is still a residential borough, a borough which tourists visit to see its areas of architectural merit and its pockets of unique village-like character.

Hotel development more often than not means the loss of residential areas; it almost always changes the visual aspect and always creates extra traffic.

It appears to the Society that the West End of London is moving, in a relative sense, westwards and Kensington could become a ghost town, with offices and hotels of international uniformity. It is difficult to remember that Mayfair was once a place where people lived and, before it is too late, we think there should be a Ministerial policy with regard to the siting of hotels in London.

The Society suggests the following criteria:—

- (a) Easy access to good public transport—this to some extent would limit areas;
- (b) Hotels should not be allowed in conservation areas unless they 'preserve' or 'enhance'; this could happen in rare cases;
- (c) No hotels within areas of residential environment;
- (d) Hotel development outside conservation areas should not intrude on the conservation areas, *e.g.* overshadowing skyscrapers;

- (e) Hotel development on fringes of areas of residential environment should not introduce extra traffic into those areas or add to residents' parking problems or prejudice possible environmental management measures that could take existing traffic out of these areas;
- (f) Site and layout should allow access and egress without causing congestion;
- (g) No new hotel use for property currently devoted to residential use or which could usefully be developed for residential use.

#### SQUARE GARDEN RAILINGS

Do you live in a conservation area? Were your Square garden railings removed during the war? If the buildings in your Square are contained in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Minister under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1962, the local council has powers to make a grant or loan towards restoration of iron railings. We do hope more Square garden committees will take advantage of this help and so remove the unsightly chain-link fencing to be seen surrounding many of the Square gardens in Kensington.

#### BRING AND BUY SALE

A sale was organised by the Hon. Secretary and held at 18 Kensington Square at the beginning of December.

Mrs. Christiansen would again like to thank members who helped at the sale, in particular Miss Balian, Mrs. Boxall, Mrs. Francis, Miss Hurcomb and Mrs. Florence Willis. She would like to thank those who brought and bought, and our thanks are also due to Mr. Charles Margolis who supplied many articles at less than wholesale prices. This sale and the sale last year have proved a successful way of increasing the revenue of the Society. Mrs. Christiansen hopes to arrange a similar sale later this year—will members please bear this in mind.

#### PLANTING OF TREES

The Society donated £12 last year and £10 this year for tree planting in the borough. It was suggested that the ten pounds given this year should be used for a plane tree to be planted on the island site at the north end of Warwick Road at the junction with Kensington High Street. On inspection the Council thought that it would not be possible to plant a tree in this position due to the presence of various underground services, but they have agreed to plant two plane trees with the money provided in footways adjacent to the island site.

We gratefully acknowledge the donation of £10 from the Campden Hill Tenants Association.

#### LOCAL SOCIETIES

Where there are existing amenities there will always be a watchdog function and we are delighted to hear of the formation of local groups in the borough who are bent on protecting the amenities of their area.

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We shall be glad to give them any support we can. We feel that each conservation area should have its group or society to watch proposed development.

Thirteen areas have been designated in Kensington and Chelsea as conservation areas:—

1. Thurloe Estate—Smith Charity;
2. Kensington Square;
3. Ladbroke Estate;
4. Norland Estate;
5. Pembridge Estate;
6. Royal Hospital (Chelsea);
7. Cheyne (Chelsea);
8. Queens Gate;
9. Sloane Stanley (Chelsea);
10. Kensington New Town;
11. Kensington Village;
12. The Boltons;
13. Edwardes Square and Scarsdale.

#### CAMPDEN STREET PRESERVATION SOCIETY

This Society was formed in 1964. It is a corporate member of the Kensington Society and it has been very active in watching proposed alterations and additions to the houses in Campden Street and the near area. They have supported our efforts in getting modifications made to the development on the Metropolitan Water Board site, and recently they have given us support in our efforts to preserve the Orangery in Holland Park for the use of those using the Park. The Hon. Secretary is Mr. J. D. Williams, 51 Campden Street, W.8.

#### NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Norland Estate, which is centred around Royal Crescent, St. James Gardens, Norland Square and Clarendon Cross, has been designated a conservation area during the year. We feel the character of this area fully justifies this designation. The Norland Conservation Society was formed during the year, its aims being to help in the work of conservation and enhancement; they are particularly interested in traffic and its effect on the area. We hope that members living in this neighbourhood will wish to support this Group which has corporate membership of the Kensington Society. Hon. Secretary is Mr. Clive Wilson, 52 St. James's Gardens, W.11.

#### THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The Ladbroke Estate, which was the third area to be designated as a conservation area in Kensington, shows a very good example of early 19th century town planning. The Ladbroke Association was formed in July 1969, and it aims to arouse the interest of residents to the qualities of the region and to an awareness of responsibility for its future. The Association will also maintain a watch on proposed development within the area. For information please write to Mr. Angus

Stirling, 25 Ladbroke Grove, W.11. We hope that members who live in the area will give this Association their support.

#### TREES

The Town and Country Planning Acts 1947/68 enabled local planning authorities to protect trees, individually or in groups, from loss or damage. In the latter Act the Ministry of Housing and Local Government pointed out to local authorities that trees as well as listed buildings could contribute to the special character of a conservation area. Kensington Borough Council, due largely to the interest in trees of Mr. Frank Carter and the Council's Park Superintendent, Mr. Pedder, was the first of the former London borough councils to carry out a tree survey, and in 1951 they sent to County Hall recommendations for tree preservation orders to be made throughout the borough.

As this survey is now twenty years old, and many of these trees have decayed and some have been lost owing to developments, we would like to see an up-to-date survey of trees for preservation and we have asked the Council accordingly. To get an order trees must add to the amenity of the area and be seen from the highway. Under the Act a person carrying out work to preserved trees without the necessary consent may become liable to a fine of up to £250.

Last year a group of residents in Ladbroke Grove made a successful protest about a proposal by the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council to remove a number of plane trees in Ladbroke Grove. Expert advice was sought by the residents and a very useful survey of trees in Ladbroke Grove was produced by them. We would like to offer them our congratulations on the success of their quick-off-the-mark protest.

#### BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 and the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings) Regulations 1968 came into force on 1st January, 1969. The previous system of control by means of Preservation Orders has been abolished and in its place all buildings on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, require planning consent for any alteration, extension or demolition. A Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular No. 61/68 sets out criteria for local authorities to follow when dealing with applications.

Local planning authorities are required under the new regulation to advertise in a local newspaper any application which they receive for listed building consents for demolition, extension or alteration, except those affecting only the interiors of Grade II unstarred buildings. They must also display a notice on the site to which the application relates. The Act also directs that notification of all applications for consent to *demolish* must be given by the local authority to—

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government;  
Ancient Monuments Society, whose leaflet we include in this Report;



Council of British Archaeology;  
Georgian Group;  
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings;  
Victorian Society;  
Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England).

As we stated in our last Report, the Act requires the local authority to establish conservation areas advisory committees, including persons not members of the authority; the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council co-opted representatives of the Kensington Society, West London Architectural Society and the Chelsea Society to their Development Plans Sub-Committee. Mrs. Christiansen has attended these quite frequent meetings as the Society's representative.

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#### THE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Members continued to meet at the library during the year. Four meetings were held and at these papers were read by Mr. B. R. Curle, Dr. Hermia Mills, Miss Keppel Barrett and Miss R. J. Ensing.

Shorter items reported included early maps of Royal Crescent, the site of Shrewsbury House, Chelsea, and new facts on Jane, Lady Berkeley's connections with Kensington.

The aim of the Group is to fill in some of the many gaps in our knowledge of the area not covered by existing histories. Membership remains small and the Group was unfortunate in the death of two of its more active members, Miss Ffooks and Miss Brockman, during the year.

All interested members of the Society are welcome to join the Group, whatever their previous experience in this kind of work may be. Meetings are held at the Central Library, Hornton Street, W.8, and prospective members are advised to get in touch with Mr. B. Curle at the Library for further details. The subscription to the Society covers membership of the Group.

## Other activities

VISITS HAVE BEEN MADE to the following: Kensington Palace Barracks; Victoria and Albert Museum—a lecture on 18th century furniture by Mr. Shrubbs; Waterman's Hall; Royal Naval College, Greenwich; Woodsford Square, Addison Road—lecture by the Hon. Desmond Guinness on 'Irish Houses and Castles of the 18th Century'—after the Annual General Meeting; Good Housekeeping; Chiddingstone Castle, Kent; St. Paul's Cathedral Son et Lumière; Royal Horticultural Gardens, Wisley; Victoria and Albert Museum—lecture on English Glass by Mrs. J. Bumpus; Bank of England.

In December a successful Bring and Buy Sale was held at 18 Kensington Square.

## A selection of cases dealt with

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#### LADBROKE ESTATE AND ADJACENT AREA

We have been greatly disturbed by the increasing number of applications and permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act for infilling on open ground between pairs of early Victorian houses in this area. We have written to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government asking that more buildings in this area should be included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, which is the only safeguard for any building against demolition, alteration or mutilation.

The character and amenity of the North Kensington conservation areas reside to a large extent in the unique kind of villa development and its relation to open spaces. The following are a few of the applications which have been opposed by the Society during the year:—

22a Pembridge Villas, 14 Pembridge Crescent, 34 Pembridge Gardens, 31/32 Pembridge Square, 24 Ladbroke Road, 137/139 Ladbroke Road, Princes Place, 1b and 1c Chepstow Villas, 4 Stanley Crescent, 11 Lansdowne Walk, 179/199 Holland Park Avenue, 30 Queensdale Road, 21 and 22 Stanley Gardens, 47/47a Lansdowne Road, 160 Kensington Park Road.

#### KENSINGTON SQUARE

It may be remembered from our last Report that, in view of continuing threats to Kensington Square, the Society had asked the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council to consider placing a preservation order on the whole Square; we are delighted to report that the Council agreed and an order was placed on the various houses with the exception of those in ecclesiastical use and those belonging to the Crown Commission. This may well have been the last preservation order to be made before the new Act came into force.

During the year an application was made to the Planning Authorities for hotel development of 4, 5 and 6 Kensington Square.

The Society opposed hotel development in the Square and we are glad to report that the Council agreed with our observations and planning permission was refused.

#### LULU'S CLUB

A public inquiry following the Council's refusal for permission for an extension of this night club was held on 6th June; Mr. Edward Seeley appeared on behalf of the Society. The appeal was allowed subject to the use of the basement as a discotheque ceasing on or before 30th September, 1970.

The Minister's Inspector said 'the presence of the discotheque adds to the volume of traffic using Kensington Square for parking and it contributes to the distressing street noise problem experienced by the residents of the district'.

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#### UNDERGROUND SQUARE GARDENS CAR PARKS

Applications have been before the planning authority for a car park under Queens Gate Gardens; this is the third application, and planning permission has been refused.

Application has also been made for a car park under Southwell Gardens and Nevern Square. The former has been refused; Nevern Square is being considered as we go to press and the Society has opposed all applications.

#### HOTELS

As already stated, applications have been made to the Council for planning consent for many hotels during the year. The Society has viewed with great concern the proposed hotel over Gloucester Road Station for a 2,000-bedded hotel; two applications have been made—the first was displayed at Messrs. Harrods Ltd., but this was later withdrawn. The Kensington and Chelsea Borough reported in their Minutes, dated 9th December, 1969, that they had decided to grant conditional permission for the development of the site for a 2,000-bedded hotel; Phase I has been granted outline planning permission consisting of two tower blocks 250 ft. high. The Society is concerned about the effect of this scheme on the neighbouring conservation areas and consider it to be a gross overdevelopment of the area.

*Knightsbridge Woollands Site.*—The Society supported the Westminster Society in opposing this scheme, with a tower block 180 ft. high so near the park.

*Hotel Development corner of Earls Court Road and Kensington High Street.*—The Society thought that this was an attractive scheme, apart from the 222 ft. tower; this they opposed as being too high near Holland Park and Edwardes Square.

*1-13 Courtfield Rd./16-20 Ashburn Place, 4-18 Harrington Gardens.*—Application for a 600-bedded hotel opposed by the Society on the grounds that it exceeded the outline planning permission.

*South Kensington Station Hotel Development for 515 Beds, plus shops, restaurant bars and car park.*—The first application was opposed by

the Society and it was subsequently withdrawn. Outline planning permission has been given for a similar scheme.

*131-161 Holland Park Avenue and 17-19 Holland Park Gardens.*—Hotel development, strongly opposed by the Society and local residents, has since been refused planning permission.

#### THE ORANGERY, HOLLAND PARK

On 10th January we learned that Messrs. Lyons were negotiating with the Greater London Council to take over the Orangery as an extension to the Belvedere Restaurant. We wrote to the Countess of Dartmouth, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Board, G.L.C., who replied that she had passed the letter on to the Chairman of the G.L.C. Arts and Recreation Committee, Mr. Sebag-Montefiore. On 30th January Mr. Sebag-Montefiore replied to our letter, saying 'my Committee, at their meeting yesterday, unanimously welcomed the proposal of J. Lyons and Co. Ltd. that they should be allowed to take over the Orangery as an extension of the existing Restaurant Belvedere'.

The Society and other local groups strongly opposed this takeover and the manner in which it had been done. Both the local Press and the national Press gave much publicity to the matter. The Society arranged a deputation to discuss the matter with Mr. Sebag-Montefiore and several local groups were invited to join the deputation. The Kensington G.L.C. Representative, Mr. Robert Vigers, was present at the deputation and said he would reserve his judgment.

A question was asked in the House of Lords on 12th March, and the following is part of the debate:—

LORD BALFOUR OF INCHRYE rose to ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in the interests of the aged and impoverished, they will represent to the G.L.C. the undesirability of proceeding with proposals to hand over the Orangery, Holland Park, to J. Lyons and Company as an extension of the Belvedere Restaurant and so deprive the public of the free use of this resting place of great architectural beauty. The noble Lord said: My Lords, the issue I raise this afternoon is one of local government and not of national importance. It is indeed an issue over which the central Government have no executive powers at the moment. Nevertheless, I believe that Her Majesty's Government now have a position, for this matter affects the comfort and the amenities of the aged and the impoverished, whose voices are hard to hear and who patiently live their declining years. Because this Government designate and take unto themselves the label of a Government of compassion, I bring forward this Question, and ask Her Majesty's Government to use their great influence to protect those whom I have described from the deprivation now threatened.

My Lords, the Orangery at Holland Park is a lovely, mellow, red-brick building erected in about 1810. The proposal is that it should be taken away from the general public and, with a green lawn outside, handed over to J. Lyons and Company for the exclusive use of the patrons of the high-class Belvedere Restaurant. This the G.L.C. propose. For a description of the Holland Park Orangery I cannot do better than quote from the G.L.C.'s own guide which says:

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'For older people the Orangery, heated in winter, provides a pleasant shelter and reading room and affords a charming view over the park.' I assure your Lordships that in summer when the heating is not necessary, it is an absolute sun trap, much enjoyed by the old folk.

Let me make it clear that I have no complaint at all against Messrs. J. Lyons and Company. The Belvedere Restaurant has high prices; a cover charge of 3s., or Steak Diane at 18s. 6d. is not a tariff which will allow entry to the Orangery or to the lawn for those who now enjoy the humble cup of tea and a biscuit. Locally there is strong resistance to this proposal. A petition containing several thousand names has been presented to the Greater London Council; and there has also been a deputation to the Greater London Council. I believe that this position need never have arisen, and that this evening's Question and other noble Lords' comments would have been rendered unnecessary, if there had been reasonable consultation before the Greater London Council announced what they were about to do. There was not notification through the local Press; there was no consultation with representative societies, such as the Kensington Society, the Campden Hill Preservation Society or the Kensington and Chelsea Arts Council. To my mind, this lack of consideration and failure to communicate savours far too much of 'Big Brother'—that 'Big Brother' knows best what is good for you.'

The matter goes back to 1963, when the then London County Council decided to offer to Messrs. Lyons the use of the old ballroom and the adjoining Orangery. This is recorded in the minutes of the L.C.C., but it aroused no public comment. Nothing more happened until 1965, when agreement was entered into by the L.C.C. and Messrs. Lyons (it was either in the form of a lease or agreement; I do not know which) for the use of the ballroom only. There was in this agreement nothing about the Orangery. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Messrs. Lyons have paid five guineas an evening for the 20 evenings they have used it since 1965; so it is not likely that they were paying for something which they already possessed.

At the time of the 1965 agreement—I repeat, I use the word 'agreement' because I do not know whether it is in the form of a licence or lease—the Kensington Society was assured of the continued public use of the Orangery. It was not until November, 1969, that Messrs. Lyons asked for the Orangery on a permanent basis, as can be seen from a letter to *The Times* of March 4 from the Chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee of the Greater London Council, who seemed to be trying to imply that in the 1965 agreement there was some provision for the disposal of the Orangery. The letter to *The Times* was very carefully worded, and I think one can read it as one wishes, according to one's particular views. Perhaps the closing words of that letter are worth reading:

'... without offending against the obligations to the company, which we feel we have inherited from our predecessor the L.C.C.' From those words one might think that there was some provision in the 1965 lease or agreement. In fact there was not.

I have had some difficulty in obtaining such facts as I am able to give your Lordships. But even here, it seems to me that 'Big Brother' is a little disjointed. For while the Arts and Recreation Committee propose to respond to protests by representative bodies, the Greater London Council Historic Buildings Committee (a different committee) visit the Orangery and the chairman of that committee, a most distinguished and charming lady, is reported as saying that she knew nothing about the proposal. The report says:

'She said later that her committee had decided to defer any decision on the use of the Orangery. "We are very worried about the prevention of public access to the building and we have had I suppose about 700 letters and petitions from local residents who are anxious about it. We are also very worried about the destruction of the Camellias outside."'

It seems to me that there has been rather a lack of communication within the Greater London Council on this matter.

I think I need spend no time at all in disposing of the alternative which the Greater London Council are offering the aged and impoverished, instead of this delightful Orangery. It is a dark, unheated, wooden hut, part of a small cafeteria looking on to a brickwall, and a quite unworthy proposal as an alternative to what the aged and impoverished at present enjoy. I understand that the position now is that the proposal has been deferred. It is really a suspended sentence, because no work is to be done this summer, for the obvious reason that no restaurant owner would wish to open any extension in the winter. But there is every indication that the proposal may be revised later at the end of the summer.

Finally, my Lords, I should say that my appeal is twofold. First, I appeal to the Greater London Council to stop the dictatorial 'Big Brother' attitude of, 'What we want, we will do; and, after all, we know best what is good for you'. When they propose to do something like this affecting amenities and public rights, they should first notify the public and consult with representative bodies of citizens. If any proposals are brought forward, let those proposals safeguard the public use of the Orangery and the surrounding ground. My second appeal is to Her Majesty's Government to discharge their responsibilities to the aged, the infirm and the poor by using their position, and their influence, to prevent, now and for all time, any such action as has been proposed. It is possible that at some future time the Minister may have a judicial function in this matter, if he is called upon to rule on an appeal for planning permission, and therefore I do not expect the Minister who is to reply to-night to say anything which might have a bearing upon the future judicial position which the Minister may occupy. But my appeal to him is to prevent the matter from ever getting as far as that, and to use the Government's influence now on the G.L.C. to see that the present Orangery is preserved for those for whom it is intended and who enjoy it at the present time.

7.13 p.m.

LORD HURCOMB: My Lords, I am grateful to those of your Lordships who have acquiesced in my speaking out of turn in this matter, which really is a local controversy but has some wider aspects. I speak in the main because I do not wish the position of the Kensington Society, of which I have the honour to be President, to be misunderstood. They are against depriving the general public of the use of the Orangery which they now enjoy; not only the aged, infirm, or old-age pensioners, but people of all classes, ages and sexes, who do not want to sit out of doors in the park in the kind of weather we are having now.

When some weeks ago I met Mr. Sebag-Montefiore, the Chairman of the Greater London Council Committee concerned with this matter—and I wish to be completely fair to him, because I may have misunderstood what is rather a complicated position—he courteously explained to me that under an agreement made by the old London County Council in 1963, Messrs. Lyons were accorded the use of certain

buildings as a restaurant (and it is a very good restaurant) and that this concession included the use of the Orangery, which they had not in fact in recent years used except on the terms which the noble Lord, Lord Balfour of Inchrye, has described. I was not, and am not now aware of the exact nature and precise terms of the agreement, whether it was a lease or a licence, or just what it was; nor did I appreciate that this year, after seven years, there is a break in it—though it may not be clear how far this gives each party to the bargain an opportunity to review the whole position. In these circumstances, I felt bound to accept Mr. Sebag-Montefiore's view that an existing agreement, if it was binding and if Lyons were insisting, had to be honoured. At the same time, I expressed strongly the view that no encroachment should be permitted upon the gardens or paths to which the public now have free access, and which includes the very attractive garden, with its little pond, on the East side of the restaurant. I urged also that, in the interests of many young people, improvements should be made in the present cafeteria, and Mr. Sebag-Montefiore assured me that it would be kept open all the year, and warmed as necessary. In all this, I made it quite clear that I was not committing the Kensington Society or any other local body.

On merits, I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Balfour of Inchrye, that there can be no doubt that the Orangery should be open for the use of the public. It was bought out of public money, and it ought to be open for use in that way. Its architectural quality, in spite of what the noble Lord says, does not compare for one moment with the marvellous Wren structure in Kensington Gardens itself, but it is part of what remains of Old Holland House as it was in the 19th century; a house famous in our politics, our literature, and surrounded by remnants of wood and open country so jealously maintained by the late Lord Ilchester. It is greatly used not only by those who are aged and infirm, but by people of all ages, sexes and classes, who do not like sitting outside in this kind of weather.

What is the real position? I saw, and I still see, the Greater London Council's point that they cannot slide out of a binding obligation which they inherited from their predecessors in office. But is that the case? There is a break in the agreement, whatever its nature. Lyons have not claimed the Orangery for seven years, even if they were entitled to do so; they have made other and separate arrangements for its occasional use, which seem to be quite outside the agreement. Is it not, therefore, open to the Council, without embarrassment, to negotiate a new agreement confirming the use of the main building, but excluding (the Orangery? I hope so, and I hope that that will be done. I hope also that improvements can be made in the cafeteria, which is in other hands but which is, and ought to be, available to younger people who cannot afford to pay the prices charged by Lyons.

I cannot conclude without saying that it seems to me most regrettable that in the past the London County Council should ever have made, or offered, concessions involving the Orangery without, so far as I know, consulting any local interest, and certainly not the Kensington Society. But I think it would be more regrettable if it were the case that the Greater London Council had repeated that error until the facts began to be known.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I feel that this is really a local controversy. How far Her Majesty's Government are really involved in it, or need to become involved in it, or may eventually be in some appellate position, I do not know. But the fact that the issue

has been raised in this House this evening ought to have some effect upon the minds of the Greater London Council.

7.21 p.m.

LORD ERROLL OF HALE: My Lords, I hope your Lordships will allow me to intervene out of order at this stage, but I have a pressing engagement. I think it has the agreement of the other speakers. It will mean that I shall be very brief. It is perhaps right that I should intervene at this stage; first of all, to say how much I welcome the initiative of my noble friend Lord Balfour of Inchrye in debating a local but very important matter in your Lordships' House; and, secondly, to declare an interest, because my house backs on to that part of Holland Park which sees the Orangery. I should not like to enter a great controversy, but I do not think there is very much architectural merit in that part of Holland Park complex which we are discussing; namely, the Orangery. In my view, it looks like a rather cheap edition of a Lancashire cotton mill of the early 19th century. That is from the outside, but the outside is not going to be altered if the proposals to extend the restaurant go through; it is only the inside. Now the inside is at present very ugly, in my opinion, and also it is not used very much.

I did a little census on Saturday, and there were seven adults and three children there. Contrary to what my noble friend Lord Balfour may have indicated to your Lordships, it is not possible to have a cup of tea and a biscuit in that rather gaunt, dreary room, unless you bring it in yourself. There are a few uncomfortable chairs. It is not very well-patronised and is not available to the public after 7 p.m. in the evening; so that in the evening neither the wealthy clientele of the Belvedere Restaurant nor the old and impoverished are able to use it at all. I should like to make a plea for its extension and use as a restaurant. First of all, I would pay tribute to Messrs. J. Lyons and Co. for running an extremely good restaurant there at present. It is, to my mind, one of the best in London. I shall declare another interest; that I occasionally go there myself, although I also go to others. The restaurant is well-run and it is unusual in that it looks out over parts of the Orangery—

LORD KENNET: My Lords, the noble Lord will no doubt immediately agree with me that his remarks are also unusual in this House.

LORD ERROLL OF HALE: My Lords, in what way unusual?

LORD KENNET: They sounded to me like a commercial plug.

LORD ERROLL OF HALE: In that case, my Lords, I should naturally withdraw, but I am certainly not making a commercial plug. We are discussing this restaurant. My noble friend Lord Balfour has talked about the prices and the tariff, and it has to be run by somebody; it might have been run by some other commercial restaurateur. But the fact is that it is being well-run, and I think that should be known. I think, furthermore, that there is a great need in London for good restaurants, and the experiment of the then Socialist controlled L.C.C. in permitting the use of premises in parks for higher-priced restaurants was a very good one, because it produced diversity of catering opportunities. In this case it has worked out well. It is an amenity for London and is particularly appreciated by visitors to London, not only from the Provinces but also from overseas. So I think that that ought to be considered as against the amenity which it at present is. It is an amenity used by very few people indeed, it is not available in the evenings, and I think that some support should be given to the G.L.C. in what they are intending to do. Furthermore, I think that the G.L.C. could quite well look at the other amenities in the Park, where there is also



scope for improvement. But that would mean taking the debate rather wide to-night, and I do not wish to detain your Lordships with that topic.

7.35 p.m.

BARONESS STOCKS: My Lords, I am not completely covered by the category mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Balfour, because, though aged, I am not yet, thank God! impoverished. But I must declare an interest. I have no shares in J. Lyons and Company—at least, I do not think I have, but with these unit trusts you never know. I am not moved, I think, by prejudice. But I must plead guilty to one of the three sins which we are recommended to avoid in the familiar prayer to the House of Lords; that is to say, partial affection. I am moved to a considerable extent by partial affection; affection for London as a place where people can live and educate their children, shop and move about; and especial affection for the Holland Park area of Kensington, which is my native borough. I was born and bred in it; I have retired into it; and I shall, I hope, live the rest of my life in it and, in due course, die in it. Kensington Gardens was my playground; Holland Park is now my eventide recreation. Therefore, I have that interest, and it must be declared. It is not only the young who dream dreams and have visions. I have a vision of London, and my vision of London as a place where people live is somewhat obscured by the vision of London as a gigantic, swinging tourist centre, criss-crossed by six-lane motorways in all directions. But, meanwhile, I still have my vision of that part of London as a place where people can live and where they can enjoy the kind of amenities which we enjoy in Holland Park.

Then, suddenly, out of the blue, we, the ratepayers of Kensington and members of the Kensington Society and others, are told of this arrangement to transfer the Orangery to the Belvedere Restaurant. Why were we not told officially? I do not know how it leaked out, but it did, thank goodness!, leak out in time for the campaign to which reference has been made to be worked up. That campaign was led, I think, by the Kensington Society, of which Lord Hurcomb is president, but it has been followed up by very many people who are not members, never have been members but ought to be members of the Kensington Society. The position has now been explained, as several speakers have indicated, by Mr. Sebag-Montefiore, chairman of the G.L.C. Arts and Recreation Committee. He explained it very fully in a letter to *The Times*.

He pointed out, as I think Lord Hurcomb has reminded us, that the whole business began in 1963 when, under the L.C.C. General Powers Act, the Park and open space restaurants were allowed to exist and to offer what he described as 'a high standard of catering'. There is no doubt that Messrs. J. Lyons and Co. can produce a high standard of catering, as they do, I believe, in the Savoy Hotel. I have had the honour of dining there, happily always on somebody else's expense account. They also undoubtedly provide a very high standard of catering in the Belvedere Restaurant. But it is not the standard of catering to which most of us, even the less impoverished users of Holland Park, are normally accustomed, and it is not the kind of standard of catering that we require in Holland Park.

But then the question arises—and several speakers have asked this—what exactly was the agreement by which J. Lyons and Co. took over the buildings which now constitute the Belvedere Restaurant, with an option, apparently, on the Orangery, an option which was not, as has been pointed out, taken up until quite recently. We do not really

know. If you look at the explanatory letter which Mr. Sebag-Montefiore wrote to *The Times* on March 4 you will see that he speaks of 'an agreement'. Lord Hurcomb has asked the question: was it an agreement? Was it a lease? Was it a contract which has some force? We do not know. He speaks of it as 'an agreement'. He speaks of it somewhere else as an arrangement. We do not know. It is high time we did—because really unless we do know, the letter that Mr. Sebag-Montefiore wrote to *The Times* tells us nothing effective.

There it is. If it is an agreement, we do not know what exactly the agreement covers. It appears to cover the incorporation of the Orangery itself in the Belvedere Restaurant, but I gather that it also covers the incorporation of that row of camellias now about to be in bud and which Mr. Montefiore describes as 'past their maturity'. Like many of us they are aged, but there is no sign that they are impoverished. It is possible that this arrangement or agreement, or whatever it is, covers not only the West side of the Orangery but the East side, which would cause it to impinge on the Dutch Garden in the form of a terrace to which only clients who can afford the high standards of catering have access. If that is so, what do we, the ordinary walkers in Holland Park, lose of our Dutch Garden? We do not know. It is high time that we did.

The other question in doubt is whether it would be necessary, if the agreement goes forward, for the company to obtain planning permission from our borough council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1968.

It may be that the company requires or will require that permission. I am certain that if it asks for that permission from the Kensington Borough Council, it will get it—as an act of revenge on the part of the Kensington Borough Council which greatly resented the action which the Kensington Society took in attempting to persuade the G.L.C. to retain Holland Park in its own hands under the auspices of its own excellent Parks Department instead of handing it over to Kensington Borough Council. The Kensington Borough Council, if asked for permission, is in a position to say, as one of its committee chairmen said, 'Ha, ha! See what we can do to you now after what you did to us!' I do not think that if the agreement goes forward it is in any danger from the Kensington Borough Council.

There it is. We do not know what the future holds. I have great fear that a project which might be described as 'development'—and I use that word in inverted commas for it means something peculiar when applied to the growth of London—may go forward. It will be very sad if it does. I shall quote the words of one of our English philosophers—I cannot remember which—when applied to another context. I would apply it here:

'When the great God mammon sees a chance of profitable enterprise, he leaps to his prey like a tiger chained with cobwebs.'

I have an awful fear that we, the resident ratepayers of Kensington, are the cobwebs.

LORD KENNET: My Lords, of course it is part of the question at issue, what sort of service is rendered by the company in given premises. But I repeat, and I stand by what I said, that the noble Lord's remarks sounded to me like a straight commercial 'plug' for a named branch of a named firm.

My Lords, to come to the issue itself. Life is very hard. Sometimes I am told by noble Lords opposite that Socialism cannot tolerate the growth of local independence and initiative in local authorities; and sometimes I am told by noble Lords opposite to prevent local authorities



from exercising their normal powers and carrying out their normal functions in the way they think best. Indeed, some noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Mowbray and Stourton, from the Opposition Front Bench, went into great detail about what the Greater London Council ought and ought not to do; and, by implication, about what the Government ought or ought not to advise or induce it to do. Of course, in such matters one's attitude depends entirely on whether or not one likes what is proposed: if one does not like it, one wishes central Government to intervene; when one does like it, one wishes central Government to keep out.

Many noble Lords have asked, or speculated, about the nature of the agreement, or understanding, or whatever it is, between the Greater London Council and J. Lyons and Company. These questions, of course, could more properly be ventilated in the Council Chamber of the Greater London Council than in Parliament. This is an agreement between the local authority and a firm, and I do not know about it.

On the question of Government intervention.

I think it was the noble Lord, Lord Balfour of Inchrye, himself who said that he expected I should have to say that it would be improper for the Government to take any attitude; and that is indeed so. If the Orangery were to be used in this way, as an extension of the restaurant, a planning application would be required for the adaptation of the building for that purpose. This planning application, according to the present lie of the land (of course, interests are sold), would probably have to be made by Messrs. Lyons to the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. If the Borough Council, or indeed the Greater London Council behind them, as it were, were to have a change of heart and were to refuse that application, then an appeal would lie to my right honourable friend the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

Moreover, the Orangery in Holland Park enjoys, as a building within the curtilage of Holland House (which is a Grade 1 listed building) the status of a statutorily listed building. This means that if any changes are intended that would affect the character of the building as one of special architectural or historic interest, listed building consent would be required. Once again, my Lords, if the Greater London Council, or the Borough Council, were to have a change of heart and were to refuse that consent, an appeal would lie to my right honourable friend. Equally, my right honourable friend could call in either matter for his own decision in the absence of a refusal and an appeal.

So, my Lords, you will see that in many possible ways these are matters that may have to come before my right honourable friend in his quasi-judicial capacity, and for this reason it is not possible for me to express any opinion on what ought to be done on behalf of the Government.

Lord Balfour of Inchrye was also supported by Lord Mowbray and Stourton, Lord Strabolgi and Lord Conesford.

#### KNIGHTSBRIDGE BARRACKS

The Kensington Society is horrified at the impact of the new Knightsbridge Barracks building on the surrounding area. We have made strong representations to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for changes in the procedure for development by government departments. We think that all Crown development should be subject to normal planning control.



THE ORANGERY, HOLLAND PARK

#### PRINCESS LOUISE HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN, ST. QUINTIN AVENUE, W.10

The Society has supported the Council and the Association of Friends of the Hospital, by writing to the Secretary of State for the Development of Health and Social Security, asking that this hospital should be retained for use as a children's hospital.

#### OTHER CASES

Other cases with which the Society has been concerned during the year include pedestrian crossing Kensington High Street/Kensington Church Street; Holland Park; Metropolitan Water Board Site; 156/158 Cromwell Road; London Air Terminal Hotel; car parking in front gardens; 7 Cambridge Place; 35 Ovington Square; Thorny Court demolition and hotel development; Princes Place; 1 Elm Place; 10 Selwood Place; 3 Beauchamp Place; 11 Elm Place; Manson Mews; Hotel 32/33 Elvaston Place; and, as we go to press, a new hotel development 100/107 Queens Gate, 2/2a and 4/6 Clareville Street, 25/29 Manson Mews and 94 Old Brompton Road.

## More about Architectural Details

Ian Grant

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER bad year for cornice cropping and knocking off the architectural features which are so essential to the proper appearance of stucco Kensington.

Whilst the administrators of the big estates of the South maintain a very high standard of repair and replacement, the record of the individual freeholders, especially in North Kensington, is deplorable.

There seems so little reason for the wantonness of some of the destruction, and now that grants of money are available from the local council under the Local Authorities Historic Buildings Act for the 'restoration of architectural features', I cannot any longer believe that the main cause is financial.

Ignorance seems to be a large factor; also a selfish disregard for the general appearance of the environment, linked with an obsession about personal expenditure on mechanical gadgets and pretentious display instead of long-term investment in the stuff of permanence.

The poor state of the building industry is also responsible, bedevilled as it is by an economic situation which makes it almost impossible to train the kind of operative who is capable and knowledgeable enough to execute good restoration work.

Some householders have told me with pride that they have had restoration carried out, but on examination it almost always turns out that their builder, through lack of guidance, has formed the mouldings wrongly or emasculated the profiles.

I still consider that in the absence of other leadership the Kensington Council should offer an advisory service, and that this could begin by circularising all householders to inform them that help and information are available. For if no drastic measures are soon taken, I am certain that the rate of damage is likely to increase beyond the point where large-scale repair is still practicable.

Occasionally individual householders take upon themselves the most magnificent task of restoration; a Gothic house in Pembridge Villas, a classical house in Chepstow Villas, a terraced mansion in Kensington Park Gardens, all stand out as beacons in a sea of apathy, ignorance and destruction.

It would be nice to see all these benefactors rewarded—plaques attached to their houses, public congratulation given to them—and I would like to see the day arrive when no householder without his cornice would rest until it had been correctly restored.

## Future arrangements

4TH MAY — 2.30 p.m.

A visit to H.M.S. 'Discovery', Kings Reach. Numbers limited. Tickets required—2/6. Temple Station.

1ST JUNE — 3 p.m.

The Donaldson Museum of Musical Instruments at the Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, S.W.7. Tickets required—2/6.

2ND JUNE — 6 p.m.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Orangery, Holland Park, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be followed at 6.30 by a talk by Professor Peter Hall, the well-known planner, on 'Conservation in Kensington'. Lord Hurcomb will be in the chair with the Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley and Baroness Stocks on the platform.

7TH JULY — 1.15 p.m.

A visit to Allington Castle near Maidstone, and The Friars at Aylesford. Both buildings are in the possession of the Carmelite Order; the Castle is generally used as a House of Retreat. Coach leaves 18 Kensington Square at 1.15 p.m. Tickets, including coach, entrance fee and tea, 30/—.

20TH JULY — 1.15 p.m.

A visit to Ightham Mote, near Sevenoaks. A fortified mediaeval manor house in a stretch of secluded and unspoiled country. Tea at Town House, which is a fine example of a mediaeval 'hall house' dating from the 15th century. Coach leaves 18 Kensington Square at 1.15 p.m. Tickets, including coach, entrance and tea, 35/—.

1ST SEPTEMBER — 12.30 p.m.

A visit to Godinton Park, near Ashford, Kent. A house belonging mostly to Stuart times, containing interesting portraits, fine furniture and china. It is hoped to arrange for tea at Swanton Mill. Coach leaves 18 Kensington Square at 12.30. Tickets, including coach, entrance fee and tea, 35/—.

19TH SEPTEMBER — 2.30 p.m.

A walk around Ladbroke Conservation Area with Mr. Ian Grant, member of the Kensington Society and Ladbroke Association Executive Committee. Meet 2.30 at Holland Park Station. Explanatory notes of this walk will be supplied. Tickets required—2/6.

# Development Plans for Kensington

Geoffrey Dearbergh

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IN 1969 THE GREATER LONDON Development Plan ('G.L.D.P.') was published. This was hardly an occasion for dancing in the streets; it would have been equally out of place for the citizens of Kensington to have been cast in gloom. Development plans do not provoke that sort of reaction. Nevertheless, to a society whose objects are, among other things, 'to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington 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', this was an event of considerable importance.

Some of the aims of the plan are stated to be 'to treasure and develop London's character . . . to conserve and develop London's fabric of buildings, spaces and communications . . . to encourage continued improvement in metropolitan environments and make them congenial'. With these aims the Kensington Society and all London's amenity societies will agree. But something more than this general agreement is needed. As, in the months ahead, enquiries are held, plans are published, statistics multiply, arguments are pursued, and the flow of unreadable planning jargon increases, the Society and its members, and all who live in Kensington and are interested in its future, will need to follow and take part in the debate if the plans are ultimately to reflect their views. Policies will be laid down which are likely to be followed for many years. If the opportunity is not taken now to shape those policies in a way calculated to advance or, at least, to be consistent with these aims, it may not come again.

The purpose of this article is, therefore, to give a brief outline of the planning procedures, to mention some general and particular aspects of the G.L.D.P. that must concern the Society, to inform members of the steps the Executive Committee is taking in regard to the G.L.D.P. and the Borough Development Plan and to invite members to suggest matters to be dealt with by the Society in connection with these plans.

## The Planning Procedures

Various aspects of the G.L.D.P. had received some publicity before it was in due course published for consultation purposes; the Society's

Report for 1966-67 contained extracts from a report dealing with 'Metropolitan Design'. Upon the publication of the plan for consultation purposes a public meeting was held at Chelsea Town Hall to discuss it. After this, and after those consulted had made their comments on it, the plan was submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government in the late summer, in the form finally determined by the G.L.C.

The plan consisted of three documents: a Statement, a Metropolitan Structure Map and a Roads Map. Although they were not part of the G.L.D.P., there were published at the same time a Report of Studies which contained many of the statistics and detailed studies upon which the plan was based, and a volume entitled 'Movement in London', which concentrated on transport and traffic statistics and studies. Finally, by way of background to what had gone before, the G.L.C. published an illustrated essay entitled 'Tomorrow's London' designed to promote discussion.

Objections to the G.L.D.P. had to be lodged with the Minister by the 9th December. The public enquiry into the plan is expected to begin in July 1970; this is bound to be a long enquiry and the results will need to be analysed and considered before the Minister can come to any decision as to whether to reject or approve the plan, in whole or in part, with or without modifications and reservations; years rather than months can be expected to pass before the G.L.D.P. is finally approved and has full effect.

During this process the Borough Council will be—indeed it already is—working on its own Structure Plan which, within the general strategic context of the G.L.D.P., will lay down the planning guidelines for the Borough. The Borough plan cannot, however, reach any very final form until the eventual form of the G.L.D.P. is known and then the procedure of transmission to the Minister (via the G.L.C.); objection, enquiry and consideration by the Minister will have to be gone through before the Borough plan, too, becomes fully effective.

The whole process will be a long one, but so important a matter calls for careful scrutiny.

## A General Criticism of the G.L.D.P.

A criticism of the plan that has been made is that it is too vague, flexible and ambiguous to deserve the name of 'plan' at all. It has one very precise group of proposals, namely the road proposals, including the Motorway Box (now called Ringway 1) and an extensive primary road system. It may not be entirely a coincidence that it is this very precise set of proposals that has, so far, been the subject of most of the objections to, and debate upon, the plan; indefinite proposals are less easy to criticise or discuss.

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This lack of precision has its disadvantages in that those who may hereafter oppose or support a particular course of action may each find support from the plan; an expressed aim to 'protect the best while modernising what is out of date or inferior' is likely to produce more arguments than it will settle.

On the other hand, the vagueness of the plan in many respects does give the Borough Council a very wide discretion in the way it interprets the G.L.D.P. in preparing its own plan. Although the Society would, no doubt, be pleased to find some matters which it regards as important more firmly entrenched by receiving more precise recognition in the G.L.D.P., the advantages of having these dealt with in the context of local needs and views are appreciated.

### Some Topics Dealt with in the G.L.D.P.

Brief mention must be made of some matters that particularly concern the Society:—

#### AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

The Statement and the Structure Map define such areas which are to be treated as being of 'Metropolitan Importance'; in Kensington these are limited to the immediate surroundings of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, including the South Kensington Museums; the policy for these areas includes 'special care for the quality of the parks and character of parkside areas and skylines' and, in the museum area, 'special care for precinctual character, safeguarding the importance of skylines dominated by the Albert Memorial and the Albert Hall, Colcutt Tower' etc. The plan encourages the Borough Council to define in its plan other areas of special character in the Borough and to lay down policies for them.



#### AREAS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

Kensington is fortunate in having many such areas, as the Report of Studies demonstrates; in many of them it is accepted by the report

that conservation need present no problem; in others a need for consistent estate management is pointed out. The G.L.C. is to use its powers to preserve buildings, groups of buildings and areas in 'proper cases'. The Borough Council is encouraged to continue with the work of designating conservation areas and declaring policies for 'preservation, restoration and enhancement of their character'.

#### LONDON SQUARES

Emphasis is placed here on unity of architectural design and on fine trees. The decision on matters of this sort rests largely with the Borough Council but, it is to be hoped, the Borough plan will firmly set its face against 'projects, whether above or below ground, which would violate [the squares'] character'. The Statement says that 'Car



parks under the squares may in certain cases threaten trees or destroy the quietness and character of a square'. It remains the Society's view that there is hardly any square in Kensington where this would not be the case. The Report of Studies confirms that 'Car parks under squares and open spaces can cause serious problems if they affect the trees and introduce traffic, access ramps and *ventilation* structures'.



### HIGH BUILDINGS

The approach of the plan to this problem is to specify three categories of area: areas where high buildings are inappropriate; areas which are particularly sensitive to the impact of high buildings; and areas in



which a more flexible or positive approach is possible. The areas coming in each category are not specifically defined, but it is stated that the second category would generally include Areas of Architectural or Historic Interest and other Areas of Special Character. This would place much of Kensington in the second category, a fact confirmed by the Report of Studies which does in fact include the whole of the Borough in this category

except for the Northern tip, which is in the third category, and the areas adjoining Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, which are in the first. Criteria to be used in judging proposals for areas in the second category are to include 'absence of harm to the essential character of the surrounding areas, no marring of the skyline or detriment to famous or pleasant views and no impairment of the amenities of surrounding sites'.

### RESIDENTIAL USE

The Statement asserts that 'Central London needs satisfactory residential environments close at hand, which the further spread of central area activities would push further away'. One of the aims of the plan is 'progressive improvement of the environment so that London as a whole becomes a much more attractive place to live in than it is at present'. Rehabilitation and redevelopment of the areas of housing stress in North Kensington figure in this connection and in the context of redevelopment generally the Statement speaks of efforts to improve the standard of design of new development.

### OPEN SPACE

The plan emphasises the great shortage of open space in the northern part of the Borough; the Borough Council is encouraged to deal with this in its plan but the difficult, if not impossible, nature of the problem is recognised.

### SHOPPING USE

At the strategic level the plan deals very little with problems that are of concern to Kensington. Issues such as the fostering of 'village' shopping centres and the impact of large stores on the surrounding residential environment are likely to be the subject of the Borough Plan.

### TOURISM

The plan asserts the need for more hotel rooms in or near Central London. The issues raised by hotel proposals for particular localities are largely left to the boroughs to deal with. These issues are very live ones in Kensington and the formulation of a policy is urgent and likely to be achieved before the planning process has run its full course.

### OFFICES

The Statement foresees an increase in office floorspace in Central and Inner London but the extent of this has yet to be estimated and is to be the subject of discussion with borough councils later. The issues raised by such proposals for office development in the Borough—such as impact on surrounding residential environment—will fall to be considered in connection with the Borough plan.

### THE ROAD PROPOSALS

The relevant proposals from the point of view of Kensington are the West Cross Route—the West side of the proposed Ringway 1—and the designation in the Roads Map of a network of secondary roads. The Statement develops the theme that the building of the primary road system is necessary if the residential roads are to be freed and kept free of extraneous traffic which 'has persistently been forcing its passage through residential streets, destroying their quietness, safety and amenity'. Borough councils are to 'proceed with detailed plans which can delineate "environmental areas"' and the G.L.C. 'will use its powers to assist the creation of environmental areas freed from extraneous traffic'.

'Movement in London' contains a study which shows that residential roads freed from traffic by the construction of the primary network will, in the absence of management measures, fill up again with other traffic of equivalent volume. The inclusion in the secondary network plan of residential roads that might reasonably be expected to be freed of traffic in this way, and the continued refusal of the G.L.C. to commit itself to make any changes in one-way systems until the West Cross has been in operation for a period, points to the conclusion that Kensington residential roads will not and are not intended to be freed from any traffic as a result of the construction of West Cross; they are, it would seem, to be allowed to fill up again.

The Report of Studies recognises the importance of protecting areas of architectural or historical interest from traffic and to this end suggests traffic management schemes to improve environmental standards; this is a point of great force in Kensington, where the preservation of such areas requires that they should be lived in.

### Steps being taken by the Society

A sub-committee has been formed to deal with matters arising out of the Development Plans.

Formal objections have been made to some aspects of the G.L.D.P. When the date and form of the public enquiry are known, consideration will be given to the representation of the Society at the enquiry; the possibility of being represented jointly with the Chelsea Society and the West London Architectural Society is being explored.

An approach has been made to the Borough Council to ascertain when and in what manner the Society could best participate and help in the preparation of the Borough Plan. The sub-committee has twice met Borough planning officers to discuss this and has agreed to send out circulars to collect data to be used in the preparation of some parts of the plan; other suggestions have been made in the course of these discussions which are being followed up.

The sub-committee also had a meeting of a preliminary nature with representatives of the Chelsea Society and the West London Architectural Society to see if there were any matters over which the three bodies could usefully co-operate, and all three bodies were represented at the most recent meeting with a Borough planning officer. The three bodies hold common views on a large number of topics and it has been agreed that they should, where appropriate, co-ordinate their efforts in connection with the development plan. The Society intends also to contact other, more local, amenity and conservation societies in the Borough.

### Conclusion

The sub-committee would welcome comments and suggestions on matters on the subject of the development plans from members and others, whether of a general or a particular nature. It is regarded as important to take the present opportunity to be constructive about matters over which the Society, all too often, has to adopt an attitude of protest or objection.

## A portrait of Lady Isabella Rich

Stephen Pasmore

IN THE RECENT EXHIBITION of Elizabethan and Jacobean portraits at the Tate Gallery, there was a fine full-length portrait of Lady Isabella Rich attributed to William Larkin (see frontispiece) which was one of the magnificent set from the Long Gallery at Redlynch, Somerset, which had been lent by the Executors of the estate of the late Countess of Suffolk and Berkshire. The picture was reproduced in the catalogue by Dr. Roy Strong<sup>1</sup> where it was presumed that Isabella Rich was the wife of Sir Henry Rich (later 1st Earl of Holland) and the daughter and heiress of Sir Walter Cope, who built Holland House. However, further research suggests that the portrait is of Isabella Rich, the sister of the Earl of Holland and not his wife.

I first saw this portrait of Isabella Rich when it was reproduced in 1960 in 'A Picture History of English Costume'<sup>2</sup> and naturally assumed it portrayed Sir Walter Cope's married daughter, till I looked through the files of photographs at the National Portrait Gallery. There the photograph of the original picture showed an inscription at the top which had been cut off in the reproduction in the book. The inscription, which could be seen in the portrait on view at the Tate Gallery, read 'Lady Isabela Rich, d. to Robert Earle of Warwick'.

Reference to Dugdale's Baronage<sup>3</sup> shows that this Robert, Earl of Warwick, was Robert, Lord Rich, who was created 1st Earl of Warwick in 1618, for one of his daughters was called Isabella. Robert, Lord Rich, married twice: first Penelope, daughter of Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, *i.e.* the famous Stella of Philip Sydney's love lyrics and sonnets, and secondly, after his divorce, Frances, the daughter of the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Christopher Wray. By his first wife Penelope, Robert, Lord Rich, had seven children: three sons, Robert Rich who succeeded to the title, Henry Rich who became the first Earl of Holland, and Charles Rich who was killed as a young man in the battle of the Island of Rhé in France; and four daughters, Lettice, Penelope, Essex and Isabel.

There are three good reasons why this portrait of Lady Isabella Rich represents the daughter of Robert Rich, 1st Earl of Warwick, rather than Sir Walter Cope's daughter who married Sir Henry Rich.

1. THE NATURE OF THE INSCRIPTION. The inscription painted across the top of the picture states that Lady Isabella is the daughter of Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick. The title 'Lady Isabella' suggests the



unmarried daughter of an earl. If the portrait were of Sir Henry Rich's wife the inscription would probably have read 'Lady Rich' or 'Lady Rich, wife to Sir Henry Rich'.

The inscriptions on pictures are not always correct as most of them are added at a later date. The inscriptions on the Redlynch portraits would appear to be correct, though they were added at least thirteen years after the pictures were painted, as can be seen, for instance, in the portraits of Elizabeth Drury, Countess of Exeter, and her two daughters, Diana Cecil, Countess of Oxford, and Anne Cecil, Countess of Stamford. All the portraits are judged from the costume to have been painted about 1615, yet Elizabeth did not become the Countess of Exeter till 1628, Diana Cecil did not marry the Earl of Oxford till 1624 and Anne Cecil did not become the Countess of Stamford till 1628.

2. THE FASHION OF THE COSTUME. The costume that Lady Isabella wears shows the bodice or jacket cut very low in front to expose the breasts. The Cunningtons<sup>2</sup> point out in their book that this type of bodice was only worn by single women about 1615–1620. If Sir Henry Rich's wife, who married in 1612, were the subject of the portrait she would be wearing a different bodice.

3. THE DATE OF THE PORTRAIT. The experts seem to agree that the portrait was painted 1615–1620. To verify this picture as a portrait of Lord Rich's unmarried daughter Isabella, it is essential to determine when she married. In Dugdale's *Baronage*<sup>3</sup> it is stated that Lady Isabella married twice; first, Sir Richard Rogers of Bryanstone, Dorset, and secondly Sir John Smythe of Bidborough, Kent. But later research<sup>4</sup> has proved Dugdale's statement incorrect. Lady Isabella only married once.

The letters of John Chamberlain<sup>5</sup> show that Lady Isabella married Sir John Smythe, grandson of Thomas Smythe, Farmer of the Customs, and son of Sir Thomas Smythe, 1st Governor of the East India Company. The marriage took place in November 1618. Chamberlain<sup>5a</sup> describes Sir John as 'a proper young gentleman of some 19 years old . . . so inveigled and cunningly caught in affection with the Lady Isabella Rich (five or sixe yeares elder than himself) that . . . he hath married her . . . without his fathers privitie, and contrarie to his expresse commaund'.

If, then, Lady Isabella married in November 1618 the portrait must date from before that time. And if Robert Rich was not created 1st Earl of Warwick till August 1618, it is suggestive the portrait was painted between August and November 1618. But this point cannot be proved, because if the inscriptions were added as late as 1628, the writer might have described Isabella as the daughter of an earl, even though her father had not been created an earl at the time of the painting.

From these facts it may be concluded that the portrait in question represents Lady Isabella Rich, daughter of Robert Lord Rich, 1st Earl of Warwick, and that Lady Isabella is a sister of Sir Henry Rich, later 1st Earl of Holland, and not his wife, who was also called Isabella.

It is interesting to find that in January 1618, the year in which the portrait was probably painted, both Sir Henry Rich's wife, Isabella (Cope), and his sister, Isabella Rich, aged about 23 and 24 respectively, took part in the Prince's Masque, called the Amazons' Masque, which was performed at Court on Twelfth Night. Again, John Chamberlain<sup>5b</sup> describes the scene perfectly in a letter to his friend Sir Dudley Carleton, Ambassador at The Hague: 'There was a maske of nine ladies in hand at theyre own cost, wherof the principall was the Lady (Lucy) Hay as Quene of the Amazons . . . they had taken great paines in continuall practising, and were almost perfet and all theyre implements provided, but whatsoever the cause was, neither the Quene nor King [*i.e.* James I and Queen Anne of Denmark] did like or allow of yt and so all is dasht. . . .'

#### REFERENCES

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- <sup>3</sup> William Dugdale. *The Baronage of England*. Vol. 2, p. 388. London 1676.
- <sup>4</sup> John Hutchins. *History of Dorset*. Vol. 1, p. 250. London 1774.
- <sup>5</sup> Norman E. McClure. *Letters of John Chamberlain*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia 1939.
  - (a) Letter 305. 21st November 1618.
  - (b) Letter 281. 3rd January 1618.

## The Kensington Turnpike Trust

E. Ffooks

THE TRUST WAS SET UP by Act of Parliament in 1726 and was in existence for exactly a hundred years. The area it covered was roughly from Hyde Park Corner in the east, to the Thames in the south, and to the North End Road in the west and included Chelsea, Fulham and Kensington up to Notting Hill Gate. The preamble to the Act stated that 'the several roads . . . are become so ruinous and bad (in the winter season) that the same cannot, by the ordinary Course appointed by the Laws and Statutes of this Realm, be sufficiently repaired and amended'. It appointed 148 Trustees and gives them power to set up turnpikes and charge tolls. They were mainly property owners or residents in the various parishes, but they also included Sir Robert Walpole, First Lord of the Treasury, Sir Spencer Chapman, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Sir Robert Eyre, Lord Chief Justice.

It is interesting to note the changes that took place in the district where the Turnpike Trust operated during the hundred years of its existence. In 1726 it was just a rural district with tree-lined roads joining London to the little towns of Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham. For the first fifty years the change was slow, and probably barely noticeable at the time. Then things began to move with a rush. New houses, new streets, better drainage and street lighting altered it by 1826 into a district not so very different from what it was at any rate in 1926.

The condition of the roads at the beginning of the eighteenth century was undoubtedly appalling. Even the main roads were only beaten tracks on which, in the neighbourhood of towns and villages, a few loads of gravel or stones were thrown from time to time. Many stretches were impassable in winter. So long as wheeled vehicles were rare and only used locally, these roads were adequate, but with the enormous increase in wheeled carts and private coaches which followed the Restoration, they became, as the Act describes them, 'ruinous'. The growth of London and other large towns meant that large quantities of cattle, grain and other things had to be brought in to feed the population, and this added to the wear and tear on the roads. The parishes, most of which had long neglected their statute work, were quite unable and unwilling to deal with the situation, and so it came about that Turnpike Trusts were set up by Acts of Parliament all over the country to try to bring the roads into a proper state of repair.



TOLL-GATE, NOTTING HILL GATE  
*From a Water Colour drawing in the Kensington Borough Library*

When one reads through the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trust there are three points which stand out to show the difficulties it had to contend with in the early years. First there is the fact that no one, neither the Trustees nor their surveyors knew anything at first about making roads. All their work was experimental. Much of London was paved by this time, but this was not entirely satisfactory, being constantly in need of repair and very costly. But a hard mettled road, such as we take for granted to-day was unknown. Then, for years, the Turnpike Trusts were up against public opinion. Apart from the very poor, people were not accustomed to doing what they were told by local authorities or anyone else, and they resented having to stop their carts or coaches to pay Toll, although they wanted better roads. The large number of people who moved about on horseback were content with the old roads which were nice and soft for their horses. The third great handicap was the absence of a police force to back up their authority. In the eighteenth century the usual way of dealing with an offender, when one could catch him, was to drag him off to the nearest Justice of the Peace, but unless satisfactory witnesses would come forward, the chances of enforcing the law were remote.

The meetings of the Board were almost always held at some tavern or coffee house. In winter they met in Westminster, and in summer near some part of the road where work was going on. The Swan Inn

at Chelsea, Don Saltero's Coffee House, the George in Kensington Square and the King's Arms at Fulham were among the more frequent meeting places. Latterly a room was rented, first at the Feathers Tavern in Sloane Street, then at the Cadogan Arms, and for the last year at the King's Arms in Kensington. The Secretary had charge of the books and had to bring them to the meetings.

In October 1747 a rather strong minute appears: 'Resolved that for the future no business be done at the meetings of this Trust after dinner'. No explanation is given. One wonders whether the Trustees were less sound in their judgment after a good dinner.

#### TOLL-GATES

The Act laid down that three Turnpike gates should be set up, and others as necessary. The gate at Hyde Park Corner was always the most important and the most remunerative. It controlled the traffic in and out of London along the Great Western Road through Kensington and Hammersmith. The second gate, called the Westminster Gate (near where the present Buckingham Gate joins Buckingham Palace Road), controlled the traffic from Westminster going towards Chelsea Ferry, which was more or less where Battersea Bridge now stands. The third site was near the Queen's Elm in Fulham. One gate was placed across Fulham Road itself and another across the road leading to Kensington via Hogmore Lane (now Gloucester Road). Within a few months it was found that Hogmore Lane was very little used, but that many vehicles from Knightsbridge avoided Toll by going down Church Lane to Chelsea Ferry, so the gate was transferred across Fulham Road to the top of Church Lane.

Tollhouses were built beside the gates and a supply of coals and candles was provided in winter.

In June 1729 the Trustees decided that it would very much augment the revenue of the Turnpike Trust to have a gate at Pimlico, near the gate of the King's private road, and also one across the main Western Road near Kensington. Three of the Trustees waited upon Sir Robert Walpole and asked him to obtain the consent of the King and Queen to the erection of these gates. This was given, but on Sir Robert's advice the Kensington gate was set up just west of the town of Kensington, near the Adam and Eve Tavern.

The Kensington gate remained in that position for ten years, but in 1739 the Trustees were informed 'that a certain lane within the Parish of Kensington called Earl's Court Lane, which for great part of the year for many years has been foundrous and not passable with carriages, and hitherto has been deemed only as a private way, was lately adjudged by the Court of King's Bench to be a publick highway and repairable by the Parish, which, when well repaired will open up a new thoroughfare'. It was therefore decided to remove the Kensington gate to just west of Earls Court Lane and to put an additional Toll bar across the top of the lane.

The erection of the gate at Kensington created a difficulty that was not cleared up for some years. A farmer in Knightsbridge, John Bates, sent a petition to the Trustees saying that the new Turnpike gate had forced drovers to take their cattle by Tyburn road to avoid paying Toll twice. They were in the habit of bringing the cattle in and pasturing them overnight in fields round Knightsbridge, and then driving them on to Smithfield market next morning, but they were expected to pay again at Hyde Park Corner. The Trustees appreciated the petition and gave orders that tickets issued to drovers of cattle should be valid until noon on the following day. Ten years later this order was reversed. The Trustees had evidently forgotten the reason for it. There was an immediate protest, but after reconsideration the Trustees confirmed their decision. However, the matter was not allowed to rest. A Mr. Wall, a butcher of St. James's market, and a Mrs. Bates, an innkeeper of Knightsbridge, came to see the Board and explained that if the drovers had to pay twice it would force them to use the Uxbridge Road, where they only paid once, and this would be greatly to the detriment of the innkeepers and owners of fields in Knightsbridge. The Trustees decided that this was the case and would tend to lower the value of property along the Western road, and also that it was contrary to the meaning of the Act. It was therefore decided to issue special red tickets with the word 'Cattle' stamped on them, which would be valid until noon on the day following the day of issue. This settled the matter permanently.

A 'dial' was put up at the Tollhouse at Hyde Park Corner in 1781. It was purchased for £8 8s. from Mr. Emery, a watchmaker of Charing Cross, who wound it and kept it in order for £2 2s. a year. An elaborate plan had to be carried out every night to inform travellers that it was midnight and the next day's Tolls had become due. Exactly at 11 o'clock by the dial, the Senior Collector at Hyde Park Corner turned an hourglass and sent it 'so turned', to the Tollhouse at Pimlico, and then exactly at midnight by the dial and the hourglass, the Senior Collector at each gate would ring a bell. This scheme was apparently not a complete success, as a watch was hired from Mr. Emery for the Pimlico gate during the Ranelagh season. In 1798 the dial was moved to the Kensington gate and a new one was obtained for Hyde Park Corner.

By 1820 there were so many new roads, and therefore new ways of avoiding Toll, that the system of Toll gates was becoming impracticable, and in 1824 all the more easterly gates, including Hyde Park Corner, were removed.

#### COLLECTION OF TOLLS

When the Turnpike Trust was formed the Trustees first appointed twelve men as Collectors of the Tolls. They worked in alternate 24-hour shifts and were paid ten shillings a week. No man was to be employed who could not read or write, and no Collector was to sell ale, beer or strong waters at the Turnpike gates. Each was given



'a little blank paper book' for his accounts and was required to come and swear to their accuracy at the monthly Board meetings. Their takings were collected by the Treasurer or some other officer several times a week.

A system of Toll tickets was worked out and arrangements made with a printer to supply the dated and numbered tickets daily. No one was liable for Toll more than once a day. Strong chests with padlocks were provided for the tickets and money.

The amount of the Tolls laid down by the 1726 Act varied from 4d. for a 'Coach, Berlin, Chariot, Chaise or Calash' drawn by six or more horses, or a wagon drawn by four or more horses, to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for a horse, mule or ass, laden or unladen, and not drawing a cart. Drovers of oxen or neat cattle were charged 5d. a score, and calves, hogs, sheep or lambs, 2d. a score. These rates were increased every time a new Act of Parliament extended the term of the Trust.

The Collectors needed plenty of courage, as they were frequently subject to assaults from the public who so much resented having to pay Toll. In 1733 a driver of a Windsor coach was prosecuted for having violently assaulted a Collector and dragged him down 'by which he lost 11s. 10d. of the Toll money out of his pocket and the use of one of his fingers'. This Collector seems to have had a more than usually rough time. Two years later he sent in a petition saying that he had met with several crushes and fractures in the service of the Trust, but had not asked for relief, but now, 'having the misfortune to be run over by a dray and coach while on duty at the gate, which had impaired his health, broken his constitution, and run him into debt, he besought their consideration and relief'. He was given four guineas as compensation and returned thanks to the Board.

The Trust suffered very much in its early days from the dishonesty of the Collectors. It must have been a great temptation for the men, who were probably of a fairly rough type, to keep back some of the money they took, even though they were on oath. In 1730 nine Collectors were found guilty of notorious frauds and discharged. It required considerable courage to reveal a fraud or other crime, as the witness was frequently counter-charged by the criminal and thrown into prison, sometimes for a long period. In spite of the hardships, the post of Collector of Tolls was very much sought after, and the men who were discharged always begged to be reinstated. The Trust were on the whole lenient employers and men were only discharged after serious offences or after having been suspended several times for minor ones.

Highwaymen and smugglers seem to have operated fairly continuously all along the West Road. In May 1743 an Excise Officer complained that the Collectors at Hyde Park Corner had refused to allow him and his men to remain quietly in the Tollhouse in hopes of intercepting several horses which they had been informed were to pass through the gate laden with 'run goods', and that at about midnight they had been forcibly made to quit the Tollhouse. Further,

he thought that Preston, one of the Collectors, had given a signal for the horses to turn off another way, notwithstanding which they had seized one horse laden with tea to a considerable value. The Collector was then called up to the Board, and as he could not give a reasonable explanation of what had happened, he was dismissed. The following February Preston sent a petition to the Board saying that the Excise Officer had expressed great concern at his, Preston's, dismissal, and felt the storm had fallen on the wrong man. As further proof of his innocence Preston told how some weeks after the incident with the smugglers 'a man on horseback, well-armed, had come to the Turnpike gate and said he wanted the Collector who had secured the horse laden with tea some little time before. On being told that Preston was turned out he seemed greatly surprised, and with great imprecations declared it was well for him it had happened, as he had come on purpose to do for him'. The Trustees, on hearing this, decided that Preston should be re-employed.

A highwayman appeared at Hyde Park Corner gate in December 1750 and demanded the Toll money, but the Collectors resisted him and prevented the robbery. The same night he went to the Pimlico gate and stole £1 9s. 6d. The Collector was alone on duty, but he resisted until the highwayman held a pistol at him.

By 1770 assaults on the Collectors had almost ceased, and the public seemed to have accepted the Toll system. There were, however, numerous complaints from members of the nobility and others about the rudeness of the Collectors. These were dealt with with much tact by the Trustees. In 1810 a Collector at Kensington gate was accused of 'very impertinent behaviour towards His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales'. It was resolved that 'in order to discourage such atrocious and undutiful conduct towards the Royal Family, the said Collector be immediately dismissed'.

#### BROAD WHEELS

In 1755 an Act was passed called the Broad Wheels Act which exempted from Toll any vehicle with wheels nine inches broad or more. No method of making roads which would stand up to the traffic had yet been found, so the idea was to make the traffic suit the roads. It had been found that heavy vehicles with narrow wheels tended to cut the roads up, and it was thought that very broad wheels would act more or less as rollers and help the roads, so they were to be encouraged and the Tolls graded accordingly. Further Acts continued this policy although they did not completely exempt the broad wheeled waggons from Toll. The 1765 Act provided for a Toll on waggons with sixteen-inch wheels at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per horse, nine-inch wheels at 1d. per horse, and narrow wheels at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per horse.

#### WEIGHING ENGINE

An Act was passed in 1741 which authorised Turnpike Trustees to erect 'cranes, machines or engines' for weighing carts, waggons or

other carriages at their Toll-gates, but it was not until 1752 that the Kensington Trustees acquired a 'weighing engine' for the sum of £110 5s. which was erected at Hyde Park Corner. Under the Broad Wheels Act of 1755 penalties were laid down for heavy loads. All narrow wheeled vehicles had to pass over the weighing engine. No waggon might carry more than three tons unless it had nine-inch wheels, in which case it might carry any weight. When the 1765 Act came in, the weighing engine had to be altered to take vehicles with sixteen-inch wheels.

There were many appeals against fines levied at the weighing engine. Generally the appellant pleaded ignorance and quite often the fines were remitted wholly or partly. They seemed very high, but the Government were determined to keep heavy loads off the roads as much as they possibly could. The weighing engines were constantly going out of order or having to be replaced, mainly because no one really understood how to look after them. Under the Kensington Trust's Act of 1824 the weighing engine Tolls were abolished, and so the engines were sold.

#### FINANCES

All through its life the Kensington Turnpike Trust suffered from lack of enough money to make a thorough job of the roads in its care. Each time an Act was passed to extend its term and powers, there was a brief period when the Trustees felt prosperous, but soon the Tolls again proved inadequate. From time to time money was borrowed at 5 per cent. and whenever funds permitted, some of the bonds were paid off. In 1740 its debts amounted to about £7,000 and there was a period of rigid economy. Officers' salaries were cut and Collectors were told to furnish their own pack thread for stringing the Toll tickets. A new Act in 1741 remedied the situation to some extent.

The Act of 1726 gave the Trustees power to make compositions with the various parishes in lieu of the performance of their statute work on the roads. It took some time to settle the amounts. The parish surveyor would agree a sum and then say he had no power to make a composition and must have the authority of the vestry. Then sometimes the church wardens would refuse to call a vestry and there was further delay. Eventually Chelsea parish compounded for £50 a year and Chelsea Hospital for £8. Kensington surveyors still had no power to act and St. George's, Hanover Square, were haggling. Fulham settled next for £40 a year and then Kensington for £35. St. Margaret's, Westminster, offered £50 a year, the Trust to have the right to lop willows, and this was accepted. Finally, in 1727, St. George's, Hanover Square, agreed to pay £100 a year.

The parishes had great difficulty in paying the sums they had compounded for. There were no proper arrangements for collecting the rates. Fulham was the first to get into difficulties, and in 1734 the

Trust's Surveyor was told not to do any more work on their roads until their composition was paid. By 1737 Chelsea, Kensington and St. Margaret's were also much in arrears. After 1767, however, there does not seem to have been any more difficulty about payment of the compositions. Possibly there were better arrangements within the parishes by this time for levying rates.

After 1767, except for short periods, the Trustees leased the Tolls. This was done by putting them up for auction. The lessee paid an annual rent and took all responsibility for collecting the tolls.

During the 1770s a Commission had been set up which had made Sloane Street and was developing the surrounding district, which was called Hans Town. In 1782 the residents of Hans Town petitioned the Trustees to take over Sloane Street as a highway, but they refused. In 1795, however, Sloane Street was taken over, and from that time the Trust paid a composition to the Commissioners of Hans Town for its repair. An annual payment of £1,000 was also made from about 1767 to the Commissioners of Paving who looked after the paving in Piccadilly and James Street, Westminster.

By 1825 all the bonds were paid off, the Trust was out of debt, and expected to have a clear balance of £3,500 at the end of the year. When they came to hand over their books to the Metropolis Commissioners at the end of the following year, the Trustees could congratulate themselves that financially their Trust was sounder than probably it had ever been.

#### WORK ON THE ROADS

At their first meeting in 1726 the Trustees instructed their Surveyors to prepare a report on the roads under their care. Considering that they were not qualified surveyors and could at best have had only a little experience as Parish Surveyors, the report that they produced was most practical and comprehensive.

The Great Western Road from Clarges Street in Piccadilly to Counters' Bridge was to be repaired with babins and gravel. These babins, or faggots, were presumably used to fill up those parts of the road that were just bog, and make some sort of foundation on which to lay the gravel. There is no mention of their use after the first year or two. A brick drain was proposed near the bridge at Knightsbridge, and during the first winter a plank drain, 16 feet long, had to be laid across the road in Knightsbridge to drain the water off the new causeway into a wheeler's yard, and so preserve the road passable.

New drains were needed everywhere. Babins and gravel were advised for the cross-roads from Chelsea Church to Kensington. In some places in Fulham and Little Chelsea, where the road was narrow with houses on both sides, paving was recommended 'but not this year'. Great economy had to be exercised, as the Trust started work with no funds at all until the Tolls produced some.



The Trustees accepted the fact that the most satisfactory way of repairing the roads was by paving them, but this was always expensive. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that they could report that most of the Western Road and parts of the others were paved.

The cost of keeping the roads as a whole in a usable condition was very heavy because, until it was found that by using flints or other hard materials a road could be made to last, the work had to be almost re-done every summer. The Western Road, as well as having the heaviest traffic, was very difficult to keep dry because a lot of water from Hyde Park drained down onto it, and also there were a number of springs.

The road at the east entrance to the Town of Kensington was, notwithstanding the great quantities of gravel laid on it, generally a slough all the winter season, and the Trustees decided in 1738 that the only way to deal with it was to pave it 'with good and substantial pebbles'.

In 1740 two milestones were set up in the Western Road, and an obelisk fixed at Hyde Park Corner from which measurements were taken.

The Act of 1741 added several miles of roads to those already cared for by the Trust, including Tyburn Lane, Church Lane, Kensington, Earls Court Lane, and a road across Chelsea Common. These were all roads which had only lately begun to be used by wheeled traffic.

A request to erect lamp-posts on the side of the road from Hyde Park Corner to Ranelagh Gardens in Chelsea was agreed to in 1742. In the same year appeared the first sign-post on the roads of the Trust: 'A large oaken post with a proper inscription' was set up near the Sign of the Bull at Brompton 'for the better direction of Travellers on their way to Fulham Bridge'. The next year another sign-post was set up near the pond at Walham Green.

Up to this time the Trustees had done very little in the way of widening roads, but in 1745 it was found that by removing and rebuilding a wall, with the consent of one of the Trustees who owned it, the road near Fulham Bridge, which was only 17 feet wide, with a deep ditch on one side, could be made 9 feet wider. The Trustees of the Bridge contributed £10, and the Bishop of London, 'in order to promote so useful a work', gave permission for three 'Arbeels' (white poplars) and five lime trees to be cut down and sold.

Early in 1750 there is the first mention of the use of Kentish rag-stone, a kind of flint, being used on the roads and covered with gravel. It was used in Piccadilly, at the sides of the paved causeway, but it was another 40 years before flint was used to any great extent as a foundation for the roads.

Widening of the roads was now going on steadily and was to continue as long as the Trust existed. In 1754 a Mr. Pitt offered a piece of his garden to widen Church Lane, Kensington, which was so narrow in places that two carts could not pass, and he was paid £40 on the understanding that he pulled down and rebuilt the wall at his own expense.

A good deal of building was going on all this time, which presented problems. A Mr. Gribbles asked permission to dig a well near the old well in Kensington Gore and pipe the water to a new house he was building on the other side of the road. This would have taken water from the old well, so the Trustees refused to allow it: 'as it appeared that the ancient well was of great service to the washerwomen of Kensington Gore, who could not get their living without it, the water being of a soft nature and very fit for their use'.

Between 1770 and 1780 the Trustees began to pay much more attention to drainage, and many formerly open drains and ditches were covered in. A ditch at the west end of Kensington was arched over in 1773: 'for the benefit and safety of persons travelling the road, and to prevent for the future such fatal accidents as have frequently happened'.

Footpaths also began to have attention about this time. Previously all that had been done was to throw the old gravel on them, but now the Trustees began to have planks or camp shedding put along the edge to protect them. In 1796 Lady Moreton asked permission, which was given, to make a coal vault below the footpath in front of her house in Park Lane. Numerous other requests followed, and it became the custom for new houses to be built with a coal cellar under the footpath. This, of course, implies a solidly-made footpath. Another thing which forced the Trust in the course of time to make good footpaths was the need of a firm base for lamp-posts.

The year 1805 was the beginning of a policy of paving all the main roads as funds permitted. At the same time the principle that drains should be put underground and not just allowed to empty themselves along the roads was becoming accepted. People were becoming more fastidious, and there were numerous complaints about bad smells. 'Gun barrell' drains came into use.

The early part of the nineteenth century was a time of great building activity in the Chelsea and Kensington area. Building contractors bought up land and built whole streets of houses. Mr. Smith, who had been one of the Trust's gravel contractors, built Smith Street in Chelsea. A Mr. Leon Changeur developed an estate in Earls Court Lane and also built up Phillimore Place, where the Trust then made up the road.

In 1807 the Trustees of the Turnpike passed a Resolution 'that the lane now called Hogmore Lane be hereafter called Gloucester Road'. But it was many years before the new name was adopted.



Immediately their new Act was passed in 1811 the Trustees embarked on several much-needed schemes of work. The pavement in Kensington was ordered to be repaired forthwith 'as two coachmen have lately been thrown off their box'. A paved kennel was made from the Queen's Elm right down Church Lane, Chelsea, to the Thames. Part of Brompton Road was paved at a cost of £4,000. At this time all drainage work was done 'subject and conformable to the directions and principles of the Commissioners of Sewers'.

#### ROAD MATERIALS

In the early days it was fairly easy to obtain gravel from pits close to the road on which it was to be laid. The surveyors were not so particular as their successors were when the work had become more professional. Sir Hans Sloane and Mr. William Sloane supplied gravel for many years. Pits in Holland House ground and in Earls Court Lane supplied the Kensington road. For roads near the river Thames ballast was delivered by barge.

Mr. Blizzard, who became Surveyor in 1749, was very much in favour of using hard materials, and the Trust advertised for 'dross, stone clippings, clinker bricks or bats, damaged polling, or similar hard refuse material', and also for 'flints, Malm stock, clinker bars, etc'. In 1809 Mr. Blizzard reported that the Kentish ragstone he had laid on the roads was standing well, so the Chairman was authorised to order as much of this stone as was needed. The stone used for paving the roads at the beginning of the nineteenth century was nine-inch granite—Aberdeen granite when possible. A little later Guernsey granite was used a good deal.

#### REMOVAL OF NUISANCES

Much time was spent by the Trustees at their meetings, and also by the Surveyors, in issuing notices to householders and others to remove some nuisance that was causing annoyance to the public. In 1727 notices were sent to residents in Fulham to cut down and remove trees which had grown into the road. Apparently they just cut them down and left them, as two months later another notice had to be sent, telling them to remove them. People seldom required more than two notices to do what they were asked. When the Surveyor was forced to remove a nuisance and send a bill to the persons responsible, they seem to have paid up at once.

A nursery gardener near the Queen's Elm filled up 'a large, ancient and useful draining ditch' and had to be threatened with indictment before he would re-open it. Another nursery gardener in that neighbourhood encroached on the road the length of his whole garden to a depth of three feet, and planted a line of trees in a drain belonging to the road.

Shops often encroached on the road, sometimes by putting up signs and sometimes by just building their windows out into the

footpath. In 1764 Mr. Hand's Bunhouse in Chelsea, and Mr. Oakley's Bunhouse quite near it, were both accused of encroaching.

In 1823 a nuisance is reported which one might well have expected to find fifty years earlier. The Surveyor stated that every Hay market day, carts loaded with hay and straw were stopped near the hackney coach stand in Knightsbridge for the purpose of sale, and an obstruction was caused. Orders were given that the practice must cease.

#### LIGHTING

As long as oil lighting continued, the only parts of their roads that were lit by the Trust, for a long time, were the Western road, Tyburn Lane and Grosvenor Place. The work was done mainly by contract, and there was always trouble as many of the lamps were out every night. No lighting was provided in the summer months. From about 1800 Fulham Road was also lit.

In 1819 there is the first mention in the Minutes of gas lighting. The Gas Light and Coke Company of Blackfriars were permitted to take up the pavement in Knightsbridge for the purpose of laying gas pipes. In 1820 Messrs. Barlow of Brentford were allowed to lay pipes from Counters' Bridge through Kensington, and, later, up Kensington Church Street. In 1821 a contract was placed with the Gas Light and Coke Company to light the Western road from Grosvenor Place to Sloane Street. It was voted a great improvement, and four years later the gas lighting was continued the whole way to Kensington.

In 1819 a Parliamentary Committee was set up to inquire into the working of the Turnpike Trusts and the following year a Bill was brought in with the object of consolidating the Trusts round London. There was considerable opposition from the Trustees to the idea of vesting the care of the roads in Commissioners, for the following reasons: that the report that the present system was impracticable was unfounded; that the Trustees at present were local men of property with a personal interest in the roads and daily opportunity of viewing them; that to transfer them to Commissioners without experience or interest was inexpedient and unjust. This Bill was thrown out in 1821, but another Bill was brought in in 1825 and passed, and came into operation on 1st January, 1827. It united under one authority fourteen of the principal Metropolitan Turnpike Trusts north of the Thames.

The final meeting of the Kensington Turnpike Trustees was held on the 28th December. Only four Trustees were present. Some cheques were signed and routine business done, and the Trust finished its work with no special action to mark the occasion.

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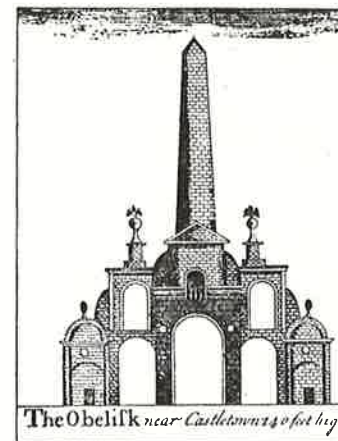
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# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY—STATEMENT OF

31.12.68	Income	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	<b>Balances as at 1st January,</b>						
490	1969 ... ..				509	15	8
	<b>Membership Subscriptions:</b>						
16	Life ... ..	31	10	0			
580	Annual ... ..	537	7	6			
					568	17	6
	<b>Other Receipts :</b>						
	Fighting Fund:						
	Receipts from Sale of Work and Christmas Cards ...	163	12	10			
	Deduct: Expenses of Sale, less Stock on hand ...	54	9	11			
78		109	2	11			
25	Bank Deposit Interest ...	29	9	7			
	Income Tax recovered on						
52	Covenanted Subscriptions	56	7	3			
170	Receipts for Visits ... ..	107	13	0			
—	Advertising in Annual Report	67	4	0			
—	Donations for Typing Expenses ... ..	60	10	0			
					430	6	9

Hon. Treasurer K. E. HUGHES

£1,411

£1,508 19 11

We have prepared the above Account from the books and vouchers of the Society submitted to us and certify that it is correctly drawn up in accordance therewith. We have obtained verification of the balances at Bank at 31st December, 1969.

# ACCOUNTS For the Year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1969

31.12.68	Expenses	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	<b>London Meetings:</b>						
	Lectures, Hire of Hall, etc. ... ..	17	4	0			
89	Printing, Typing, and Stationery ... ..	123	6	1			
119	Postages and Telephone	142	2	7			
27	Bank Charges ... ..	17	19	0			
23	Donations ... ..	23	9	6			
	Producing Annual Report and Leaflet ...	325	9	11			
291	Sundry Expenses ... ..	27	12	5			
21	Book Prizes ... ..	—	—	—			
6	Window Box Awards	—	—	—			
5	Local History Group	14	4				
					677	17	10
228	<b>Coach Visits etc.</b>				117	19	7
—	<b>Borough Council Minutes</b>				3	0	0
28	<b>Professional Charges:</b>				28	10	4
	<b>Tape-Recorder and Filing Cabinet</b>				—	—	—
64	<b>Balances at 31st December, 1969:</b>						
	<b>At Bank: Current Accounts</b>	187	13	10			
	Deposit Accounts :						
	School Prize Fund	70	5	3			
	Window Box Award	36	2	4			
	Life Subscriptions	432	2	7			
		726	4	0			
	Less: 1970 Subscriptions	60	3	6			
		666	0	6			
	<b>Other: Cash in Hand, History Group</b>	9	5	8			
	Stock of Sale						
	Articles	6	6	0			
510					681	12	2
					£1,508	19	11

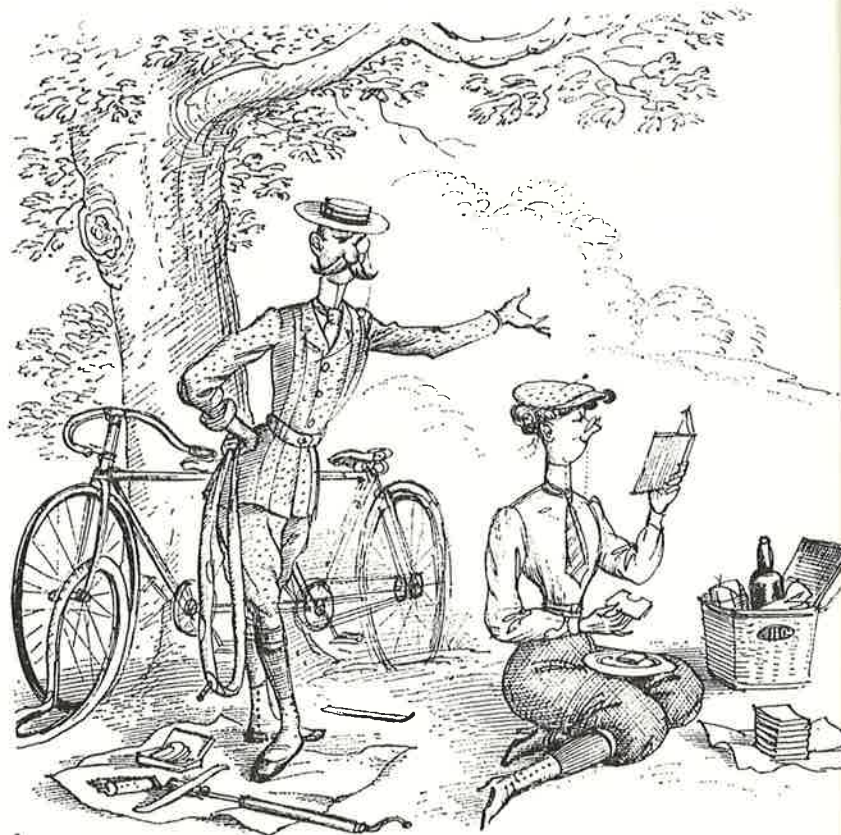
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IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal  
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WITNESS _____	}	SIGNATURE _____
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