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Annual Report 1978-79



THE
Kensington
Society

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Society

The objects of The Kensington Society are to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington by stimulating interest in its history and records, by protecting its buildings of beauty and historic interest, by preserving its open spaces from disfigurement and encroachment, and by encouraging good architecture in its future development.

Annual Report
1978-79

FRONT COVER

Clock Tower, Kensington Palace, c. 1860

By kind permission of Kensington Public Library



H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, planting a tree in Kensington Square to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Kensington Society in 1953. 19th September, 1978

The Kensington Society

PATRON

H.R.H. PRINCESS ALICE, COUNTESS OF ATHLONE

PRESIDENT

ALEC CLIFTON-TAYLOR, F.S.A. Hon. F.R.I.B.A.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

THE RT. HON. LORD BALFOUR OF INCHRYE, P.C., M.C.

THE DOWAGER MARCHIONESS OF CHOLMONDELEY

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF KENSINGTON

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: IAN GRANT, Esq., F.R.I.B.A.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: GEOFFREY DEARBURGH, Esq.

Barnabas Brunner, Esq.

Michael Bach, Esq.

Mrs. G. Christiansen

Geoffrey Dearburgh, Esq.

T. Dunn, Esq.

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

Keon Hughes, Esq.

John Maclay, Esq.

Dennis Marlow, Esq.

Martin Starkie, Esq.

R. T. D. Wilmot, Esq.

HON. TREASURER: Keon Hughes, Esq.

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. G. Christiansen, 18 Kensington Square, W.8

AUDITORS: Messrs. Croft, May and Co.

Foreword

However surprised you may be to discover who is your new President, it is unlikely that your astonishment will equal my own. I had not the slightest idea that this honour would fall to me, but it is certainly as a great honour that I regard it, and I would like to thank very warmly all those who were responsible for inviting me.

My first duty and pleasure must be to convey to my predecessor, Lord Balfour of Inchrye, the gratitude which we all feel to him for having presided so graciously over the fortunes of the Society since the death of Lord Hurcomb in 1975.

I have not had his experience of public affairs; I am indeed a very unpolitical sort of person with an extremely bad attendance record at any kind of public meeting. What, however, I can claim is a gratitude and devotion to the Royal Borough, in which I have lived for well over half my life: nor do I ever intend to live anywhere else. Not only is it a very pleasant place in which to reside: it is also, by and large, a very well run borough.

Nevertheless, every place, however well administered, needs a watchdog, and this one is no exception. In this role, through the years, our Society has achieved some very notable successes, as past issues of the Report (and how good those Reports have been) testify.

This is specially true of last year, when the Society, by organising a meeting which was magnificently attended, was largely responsible for the rejection of the extremely unpopular proposal to allow the Russians to take over the Barracks site in order still further to enlarge their Embassy.

In all this, as usual, the key figure was our indefatigable secretary. The other great event of 1978 for us was Mrs. Christiansen's silver jubilee as Honorary Secretary, when on 19th September, in addition to a personal gift from members of the Council and of the Executive Committee, our Patron, H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, honoured her and us by coming again to plant a tree, this time in the garden of Kensington Square just in front of her house. I know of no other example of *Davidia involucrata*, the 'pocket handkerchief tree', in a Kensington garden, and in a few years it should prove to be a delightful addition to the local landscape.

ALEC CLIFTON-TAYLOR.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Orangery, Holland Park, on 7th June, 1978.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Dennis Marlow, a member of the Executive Committee was in the chair. Mr. Marlow read a letter received from the President, the Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Inchrye, explaining his absence. He conveyed his thanks to the Hon. Secretary for arranging the Public Meeting on 18th April. He said he thought he should make way for a younger President and asked the Meeting to accept his resignation. This was accepted with regret.

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

Mr. Grant, Chairman of the Executive Committee, in moving the adoption of the Report, gave a review of the campaigns waged by the Society over 25 years, culminating in the success of the Public Meeting which was attended by 1,500 residents. He said the Society had won a notable victory in finally persuading the Foreign Office and the Department of State for the Environment that listed houses should not be demolished and the Barracks site should not be developed by the Russian Embassy. Mr. Grant paid tribute to the work done by Mrs. Christiansen for the Society over the past 25 years, including the hospitality given to the Society in her house in Kensington Square.

Mr. Grant said our patron, H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, had started the Tree Planting Year by planting an oak tree at the bottom of her road to Kensington Palace. Plane trees had been planted in Kensington High Street and cherry trees in Kelso Place.

Miss Houlton seconded the adoption of the Report.

In the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer, Mrs. Christiansen presented the audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 1977. She said costs had continued to increase. Production of the new leaflet had cost £181 and the Annual Report £800. Advertising in the Report had brought in £300. Tree planting and the flower baskets in Kensington Square had added a further £263.93 to our costs. Donations amounting to £414 had been received. Mrs. Christiansen urged members to pay their subscriptions promptly on 1st January. In some cases four reminders had been sent to members which apart from increasing the work of the Society increased the costs.

Mrs. Marlow seconded the adoption of the Accounts.

No nominations had been received for the Executive Committee. Mr. Le Riche proposed and Mrs. Milbourne seconded the re-election *en bloc* of the officers and Executive Committee for a further 12 months.

Mr. Marlow expressed the appreciation of the Council and Committee for the dedication shown by the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Christiansen, for the past 25 years. It was proposed to present her with a tree to be planted in Kensington Square Garden by H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. A specially bound copy of the *Two Villages — Kensington and Chelsea* would also be presented to her.

Mrs. Christiansen expressed her thanks to the Committee, in particular to the Chairman, Mr. Ian Grant, and to Mr. Marlow for their help and co-operation in the work of the Society. She also thanked members for their support.

Under any other business, Dr. Allibone expressed concern about the Natural History Museum and pressed the Committee to bring as much pressure as possible to stop the current proposals. Mr. Marlow said he thought every possible step had been taken. Letters had been sent to the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council, the Greater London Council, also to the Chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee, Greater London Council. The Department of State for the Environment had been asked to call in the plan and for a Public Inquiry to be held. Mr. Sewell thought that the Committee should be considerably enlarged.

Mr. Marlow said that he was glad to hear that Mr. Sewell supported the Society's view but thought that increasing the size of the committee would not be of any help. All possible steps had been taken and the Society could only wait and see what happened. As the Kensington Borough Council was of the same mind it seemed more than likely that a Public Inquiry would be set up by the Department of the Environment.

There being no further questions Mr. Marlow closed the meeting, which was followed by an interesting talk by Mr. Alec Janaway, Manager of Holland Park (page 16).

THE PRESIDENT

In welcoming our new President, Mr. Alec Clifton-Taylor, F.S.A., we must first pay tribute to our late President, the Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Inchrye. Lord Balfour has been a member of the Society for many years; on the death of Lord Hurcomb he was unanimously elected President.

Lord Balfour has taken a great interest in the Society's activities. Last year, our silver jubilee year, we had hoped to obtain permission to use the rooms below the State Apartments at Kensington Palace, which at the time were not in use, for a reception which we hoped Her Royal Highness Princess Alice would attend. Lord Balfour made concerted efforts to obtain the Lord Chamberlain's permission for the use of the rooms, sadly without success.

Lord Balfour has officiated on a number of occasions when Her Royal Highness has been present at our functions, most notably when she planted her tree at the bottom of Kensington Palace Road, and again when she planted the Davidia tree in Kensington Square Garden.

As long ago as 1969 Lord Balfour, with Lady Stocks and Lord Hurcomb, brought to the attention of the House of Lords the Greater London Council's proposal for the Orangery in Holland Park to be used as part of the adjoining restaurant, instead of as a public place and shelter for visitors to the Park. This intervention and the part played by the Society resulted in the scheme being abandoned. In 1977 Lord Balfour arranged for members to visit the House of Lords, where he kindly conducted the tour.

The Society is grateful to him for his interest and help for so many years, and we are pleased that he has agreed to become a Vice-President.

MR. ALEC CLIFTON-TAYLOR, F.S.A.

We are delighted that Mr. Clifton-Taylor has consented to follow Lord Balfour as President of the Society. Mr. Clifton-Taylor has been a member of the Society since its foundation, and a member of the Council of the Society since 1964.

He has over the years given the Society a number of lectures, starting in 1955 with 'Looking at Georgian Houses'. Two years later he gave the wonderful illustrated lecture, 'The Ravenna Mosaics'. Other lectures have been 'English Country Houses Open to the Public', and last December he gave the Stocks and Hurcomb lecture entitled 'English Cathedrals'.

Last summer he gave a series of talks on BBC2 which attracted a lot of attention, entitled 'Six English Towns'. Reviewing the Tewkesbury talk in *The Telegraph*, Miss Sylvia Clayton said: 'If anyone were to succeed in talking to a brick wall it would be Alec Clifton-Taylor!'

From 1934 to 1957, apart from the war years, he lectured regularly for London University. Since then, in addition to writing five books on English architectural subjects and contributing to more than

twenty others, he has lectured all over the world. He is a contributor of articles to various papers, including *Country Life*.

In 1962 he published his first book, *The Pattern of English Building*. This book gives a comprehensive picture of buildings over the whole of England. Reviewing it, *Country Life* said: 'No such comprehensive survey has ever appeared before; a book of this scope requires a formidable number of qualifications; Mr. Clifton-Taylor has them all. Undoubtedly this will become the classic work on the subject.'

The second edition appeared three years later and a revised edition in 1972, followed by *English Parish Churches as Works of Art* in 1974 and *Six English Towns* in 1978.

THE TREE PLANTING AND RECEPTION IN KENSINGTON SQUARE
The Honorary Secretary would like to record her respectful thanks to Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, for planting a tree and attending a reception to commemorate 25 years of her work for the Society.

Thanks are also due to Sir David and Lady Barran for holding the reception in their house, and to the Committee and the Council of the Society for contributing to this commemoration. Special thanks are due to Mr. Dennis Marlow for the immense trouble he took over the arrangements.

OBITUARY

We report with deep regret the death of Sir Allan Quatermaine, a member of the Executive Committee. An appreciation of Sir Allan appears on page 12.

CHRISTMAS SALE

The Society was greatly honoured by the attendance of our Patron, H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, at the sale on 11th November. Miss Joan Lascelles was in attendance. We are grateful to members for their gifts and to those who sent donations because they were unable to attend. Proceeds from the sale, £401.10. Tea in the garden at 18 Kensington Square, with a produce stall, added £74 to the funds of the Society.

THE STOCKS AND HURCOMB LECTURE

The Stocks and Hurcomb lecture was given on 5th December by Mr. Alec Clifton-Taylor, in the lecture theatre at the Geological Museum. The lecturer, now our President, gave a delightful and stimulating talk on 'English Cathedrals'. This was illustrated by the most lovely slides.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

A number of members (48) from the early days of the Society are still paying £1.05 by banker's order. May I remind them that the subscription is £3, and will they please cancel their existing order and fill in the membership form at the back of the Report. Subscriptions were due on 1st January.

LOCAL SOCIETIES

There has been a further increase in the formation of local societies in the Borough and a number of these are affiliated to the Society. We welcome this increase; when possible we give them our support and in turn ask for their support.

THE GREATER LONDON DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This was formally approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in July 1976. The London Government Act 1963 required the G.L.C. to prepare this plan. A Public Inquiry was held from 1970 to 1972 by a panel chaired by Mr. Frank Layfield, Q.C., to hear objections. Mr. Geoffrey Dearbergh, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, gave evidence for the Society at the Inquiry. The plan was subsequently modified and made available for public inspection. Objections and representations regarding the plan were accepted between December 1975 and March 1976.

The London Boroughs are required to submit their individual plan for their area by July 1979.

The Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council over the past three years have prepared 10 context papers. A number of Community Forums were set up by the Council to study the papers. The Society was represented on the Forum by members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee also studied and commented on the papers.

During the autumn the Council produced the Draft District Plan. The Society appreciated the effort and concern which had gone into the preparation of this document. It has been examined in detail by the Committee and comments were sent to the Borough Council (see report on page 15). Copies of the Society's comments can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary; please enclose large envelope and 12p for postage. It is necessary to have a copy of the Council's Draft District Plan (obtainable from Town Hall), as the Society's comments deal with individual paragraphs.

TREE PLANTING

The Society gratefully acknowledges a donation of £25 from the Cottessmore Court Association towards tree planting schemes. Trees have been given to the following Square gardens: Ladbroke Square; Thurloe Square; Earls Court Square; Lexham Gardens. Six cherry trees have been given to the Kensington Borough Council for planting in Ledbury Road and a silver birch to replace the one which has died in Wilsham Street, Notting Hill. Ten trees have been given to Holland Park to help with replanting areas which have been badly hit by Dutch elm disease and sooty bark. The latter collection included two American scarlet oak, four copper beech, one acer Crimson King, two acer drummondii and one cedar Deodara.

We hope to continue tree planting each year and we are glad to have suggestions from members; a number were received from members last year for street planting and all were investigated. I think all the services of London must be under the Kensington roads, I have drawn so many blanks! Considerable street tree planting appears to be going on in other boroughs. We have asked for sites in the northern part of Ladbroke Road; we are still waiting for the Council to test for sites.

ADVERTISING

The advertising has again been collected and dealt with by Mr. John Maclay, a member of the Executive Committee. Proceeds from the advertising covers over half of the cost of this Report.

DONATIONS

We are grateful to members and to others who have made donations to the Society, thereby showing confidence in our work.

I would like to record our appreciation of the care taken by The Campfield Press in printing this Report.

Survey of London

Published for the **GREATER LONDON COUNCIL**
General Editor: F. H. W. SHEPPARD

Recent volumes in the series:

37. Northern Kensington

Describing the Victorian building development of the area north of Kensington High Street to Notting Hill and Kensal Green.

'... one of the fascinating volumes in a brilliantly executed series.'

—*Daily Telegraph*

heavily illustrated £19.00

38. The Museums Area of South Kensington and Westminster

Describing the famous museum buildings and the great stuccoed mansion ranges in adjacent streets, with the varied parts played in their creation by many notable persons, including Prince Albert and the Queen.

'A worthy celebration of London's Victorian architectural heritage.'

—*The Times*

heavily illustrated £20.00

The Athlone Press
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

A selection of cases dealt with

The Society continues to receive a list of planning applications each week from the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. These are examined by members of the Executive Committee. In cases where it is thought to have an effect on the character or amenity of the area, or where a building of architectural merit is concerned, the plans are examined at the Town Hall; the site is visited and comments are sent to the Planning Department.

Perhaps the most important threat to Kensington during the past 12 months was the Russian proposal for the Barracks site and Kensington Palace Gardens. Members will remember that a public meeting was held last April and since the publication of our last Report we have been able to claim a notable victory. A complete record of the Russian saga has been maintained in a very special leather-bound book, given by Mr. Edward Seeley, containing copies of letters to and from the Foreign Office, to and from the Russian Embassy, the letters from the 19 eminent people who were asked and were unable to speak at the meeting, news-cuttings and other letters. The Secretary will be pleased for any member to examine the book.

Special tribute must be paid to Kensington's M.P., Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, for his vigorous and sustained campaign against the Russians having the Barracks site and 6-7 Kensington Palace Gardens.

The Barracks site

The Council has prepared a planning brief for this site. The site covers 1.75 acres. The Council states that the site is considered to be suitable for mixed development, and is seen as part of the Kensington High Street shopping centre; however, the High Street is thought to be adequately served by supermarkets. The Council says the type of development they envisage for this site is small units in character with the small shops on the west side of Kensington Church Street. They would be prepared to accept office use of 10,000 to 20,000 sq. ft., particularly if designed in small units. Residential use would be encouraged with at least 30 per cent as family dwellings and they consider it desirable that each dwelling unit should have direct access to its own garden space. An application for redevelopment of the site was made last year, for residential and commercial purposes, with shopping, recreational and office facilities.

The Society considered the design dull and that the set-back and broken frontage an unfortunate feature. No decision has yet been taken by the Borough Council. Letters have been sent to the Crown Commissioners requesting information about the future of the site.

Old Town Hall

A planning brief has been prepared by the Council. They state that the Town Hall was built on the site of the original National Schools in 1878-80; the architect was Robert Walker, who won a competition for his Italianate style. The builders were Brand & Co. of Chelsea. The original building was modified by an extension; this was built by Leslie & Co. of Kensington to the designs of William Weaver, the Vestry's surveyor, and William Hunt, a local architect.

The Council state that any proposals for the site should show general accord with policies and objectives, included in the Borough's District Plan. They would seek to maintain a shopping frontage and would welcome small shop units on the ground floor, either of the present building or of any new building which is erected. Any new building would be required to provide rear servicing facilities.

The planning brief and the future of the Town Hall has been discussed at length by the Society. A letter was sent to the Council stating that whilst opinions within the Society differed on the merits of the Town Hall, the Society would like to reserve judgement until plans had been seen, to evaluate whether it would be better to rehabilitate the existing building, or whether it would be possible for an architect to produce a scheme which would enhance the area. The letter stated that the Society would not be in favour of the redevelopment of the site to the east of the Town Hall, including St. Mary Abbot's Primary School.

Natural History Museum

Proposals by the Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History) for the demolition of three rear display galleries and the erection of a new six-storey block, to provide new display space and public amenities, are strongly opposed by the Society. Objections have been made by the Greater London Council's Historic Buildings Board and by the Borough Council, the Victorian Society and the Royal Fine Art Commission.

The present scheme is for a similar extent of demolition as was envisaged in 1976 and which was accepted by the Greater London Council and the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. The Greater London Council states that at that time 'The consensus of opinion on the major issue was that the needs of the museum should take precedence over the preservation of the existing form'. The siting of the present scheme is almost identical to that of the 1976 scheme. However, the bulk of the proposed building is greater and the roof line rises well above the ridge of the Waterhouse building. Although this will not be seen from pavement level in Cromwell Road, it will clearly be seen and have a marked impact on views from Cromwell Place and Thurloe Place.

Early in 1978 the Society entered into considerable correspondence with the Department of the Environment, the Historic Buildings Board of the Greater London Council, Mr. Bell, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee, and with the Borough Council.

In July 1978 a letter was sent to the Baroness Birk urging that a public inquiry should be held; we have recently heard that the Secretary of State has decided that a non-statutory public local inquiry is to be held at the Natural History Museum on 5th-15th June inclusive.

Thorney Court

The proposals in 1978 for the development of this site were considered by the Society to be architecturally unacceptable. This view was supported by the Royal Fine Art Commission and by the Borough Council and planning permission was refused. Revised proposals were submitted to the Council for the erection of a block part 9-12 storeys, to provide for 61 self-contained residential units and basement car parking for 61 cars. The plan has been conditionally approved by the Council and work has started.

Golly's Garage, Earls Court Road-Cromwell Road

The Society supported the Borough Council in their refusal of planning permission for the erection of a 247-bedroomed hotel, of 6,880 sq. ft. offices, 37 three-bedroomed flats, petrol station and basement garage for 89 cars. An appeal was made to the Secretary of State for the Environment and the appeal was dismissed.

An application was later made for the erection of a building containing residential, retail showroom, offices and car parking at basement level. Conditional planning permission has been given, the Society making no objection.

54 Cornwall Gardens

The Society opposed the application for the erection of a two-storey dwelling in the garden. An appeal was made to the Secretary of State for the Environment; the appeal was dismissed.

Stanford Court

The Society supported local residents in opposing an additional storey. Planning permission was refused.

3-20 Ashburn Mews, 2-12 Courtfield Road, 2-12 Ashburn Place

Application for use as a coach park was opposed by the Society.

164-178 Cromwell Road and 5-12 Pennant Mews

Application for the erection of a six-storey building on Cromwell-Marloes Road and two-storey building in Pennant Mews to provide a general medical clinic, with ancillary residential and car-parking facilities. The Society opposed this use and the demolition of Pennant Mews. Planning permission was given. An application was recently made to redevelop 8-22 Pennant Mews; this was opposed by the Society and has been refused planning permission by the Council.

19-26 Pembroke Gardens

Proposals by the Prudential Assurance Company for the erection of eight three-storey houses in place of the existing Victorian houses was opposed by the Society. The Royal Fine Art Commission were of the opinion that the buildings should not be demolished. Planning permission has now been refused.

23 The Boltons

The Society supported the Boltons Association in opposing construction of a swimming pool, verandah and conservatory.

123 Old Brompton Road, 5 and 6 Roland House

Application for conversion of these properties into self-contained flats and offices. Office use was opposed by the Society as a non-conforming use, not in accordance with the initial development plan.

30 Hyde Park Gate

Application for demolition opposed by the Society. Planning permission has been refused.

48 Bedford Gardens

Supported Borough Council's enforcement notice against change of use from residential to office use.

33 Eardley Crescent

Change of use from residential to hotel use. Supported Borough Council's enforcement notice.

4-18 Earls Court Road

Eight shops with basement storage. Flats and offices above.

26 Earls Court Road

Part of the above development. Two shops with basement storage, offices above.

These applications only cover the west side of Earls Court Road. The Society has opposed the application. No attempt has been made to achieve any compatibility with the corner building (Chelsea Building Society). This development appears to be of the cheapest and poorest quality.

1 St. Albans Grove

Application for change of use by the Ghana High Commission for offices and ancillary accommodation. Opposed by the Society. Later application by Richmond College to provide a residential college, including 50 bedrooms for students.

Conditional approval given by the Council, not opposed by the Society.

Silchester Road Baths

Demolition of the building by the Borough Council, subject of public inquiry, opposed by the Chairman of the Society.

16 Queensdale Place

Application to demolish light industrial building and erection of single family house. Society opposed the height and bulk of proposed building and suggested that the scheme should be revised.

1 Queen's Gate Terrace

An application for change of use from residential to offices for the Embassy of the Libyan Arab Republic. Supported the Borough Council's refusal. An appeal was made and allowed by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

36 Stanford Road

The Society opposed the application for an additional storey. An appeal to the Minister has been dismissed.

Music and dancing licenses

The Society has opposed four licenses during the year and many over the years, mostly without success. These licenses are considered by a panel of G.L.C. members at County Hall. Always the panel has been from other boroughs, with little, if any, knowledge of the area concerned. Any objection must be heard in person, objections made in writing are not accepted.

The Society considers that the control of music and dancing licenses should be the responsibility of the local Council. The Kensington Borough Council supports this view.

We understand that a working group has been set up by the London Boroughs Association to consider the matter. We have asked our affiliated Associations to support the Society and we are grateful for their assistance. Similar support from members would be welcomed. A letter should be sent to London Boroughs Association, Westminster City Hall, Victoria Street, SW1E 6QW.

Other cases which have been of concern and where the Society has taken some action include

Porter's Lodge, Kensington Mansions; 30, 79 and 115 Ledbury Road; 22 and 35 Colville Terrace; 23-25 Pembridge Gardens; 124 Elgin Crescent; 14 Holland Park; 13 and 15 Queensdale Place; 30-32 Princesdale Road; 33 Chepstow Villas; St. John's School site, Walmer Road; 6 Stanley Gardens; 36-40 Chepstow Villas; 13-23 Denbigh Road; 79 Elgin Crescent; 49 Clarendon Road, 5 Kensington High Street; 38 Tregunter Road; 19 The Boltons; 11 Aubrey Walk; 30 and 30a Hyde Park Gate; 22 Holland Park Avenue; 104-106 Cromwell Road; 147a Cromwell Road; 37 and 39 Redcliffe Gardens; 13 Creswell Place; 4, 5, 6 Kensington Square, Derry & Toms roof garden; 13, 15, 17, 19 Earls Court Square; Gloucester Road Station site; 2 Aubrey Road.

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

The death on 17th October of Sir Allan Quatermaine at the age of 89 brought to an end a distinguished engineering career and a long and active association with preservation and amenity societies. He was a member of the Council, and of the Executive Committee of the London Society for many years and Treasurer of the London Society for six years. He was a founder member of the Kensington Society, a member of the Executive Committee from 1965 to 1975 and was then elected to the Council.

He was born on 9th November, 1888. He studied engineering at University College London, gaining the Chadwick Scholarship and taking a First Class Honours (B.Sc.) degree in 1908. In 1938 he was elected a Fellow of the College.

After a period in the office of the Hertford County Surveyor he spent some time with Tees-side Bridge Engineering Works. In 1910 he joined the Great Western Railway.

During the First World War he served from 1915 to 1919 in Egypt and Palestine with a commission in the Royal Engineers. When the military railway from Kantara to Haifa was constructed (250 miles) he was engaged on the location of the line and subsequently on the construction of stations, workshops, locomotive depots and water supplies. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Military Cross.

At the end of the war Sir Allan returned to the Great Western Railway, and for four years was Assistant Divisional Engineer, dealing with construction and maintenance of bridges, viaducts, permanent way and relining of tunnels. In 1929 he was appointed Deputy Chief Engineer and in 1940 Chief Engineer to the Great Western Railway (later to become Western Region, British Rail) where he continued until his retirement in 1951.

From 1940 to 1941 he was Director-General of Aircraft Production Factories.

In 1951 he was elected President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. At the end of his term of Presidency he continued to serve the Institution in many ways, sitting on important committees, including Coastal Flooding 1953 to 1954 and the Hydraulic Research Council. He was Chairman of the British Standards Institution 1954 to 1958 and Chairman of the Civil Engineering Scholarship Trust. He was

made an Honorary Member of the Institution in 1954. In 1951 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce. He was a member of the Royal Fine Art Commission from 1954 to 1960. He was made a C.B.E. in 1943 and received a knighthood in 1956. Sir Allan Quatermaine was reserved by nature and never sought the limelight. He was very conscious that change and progress could not be held back, but he was dedicated to the encouragement of good architecture in current development.

His energy and devotion to any matter affecting Kensington will be greatly missed by the Society.

ESTD. 1900

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Future arrangements

SUMMER PROGRAMME 1979

25th April. Marble Hill House, Twickenham, Surrey. Complete example of English Palladian villa, Georgian paintings and furniture. Members will be able to obtain tea if required, not included in cost of ticket. Coach leaves Kensington Square 2 p.m. Tickets £2.

22nd May. Nymans, Handcross, Sussex. Extensive garden of rare trees, shrubs and plants. Coach leaves Kensington Square 1 p.m. Tea will be available but not included in cost of ticket. Tickets £3.50, which includes entrance fee to gardens.

6th June. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, to be held in the Assembly Hall, the Convent of the Assumption, 23 Kensington Square, W.8, at 6 p.m. The President, Mr. Alec Clifton-Taylor, will be in the chair; Sister Elizabeth, Superior and Co-ordinator, will give a short talk about the ecumenical work taking place in the convent buildings, this will be followed by a short recital on piano and cello. Tickets are not required.

19th June. The usual visit to Swanton Mill, Mersham, Kent, where Mrs. Christiansen will give members tea. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1 p.m. Coach ticket £3.50.

11th July. At 3 p.m., Geological Museum, Exhibition Road, Mr. R. H. Roberts, Education Officer, has kindly agreed to conduct a tour of the exhibition 'The Story of the Earth' and 'Britain before Man'. Tickets required.

5th September. Royal Horticultural Gardens, Wisley. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m. Tea is available in the garden but is not included in the cost of ticket. Coach and Garden entrance £3.50.

18th September. Losely House, Guildford. Arrangements have been made to visit this house on a day not opened to the public. Entrance is therefore 70p, which has been included in the cost of the ticket. Members will be able to obtain tea if required. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m. Ticket £3.50.

Will you please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when applying for tickets; 50p is charged for tickets (other than coach visits or the A.G.M.) to cover cost of arranging, printing, etc. Coach tickets can be passed to non-members. Visits may have to be cancelled if less than 20 members apply for coach tickets.

The Borough Draft District Plan

The document was published by the Borough Council in the autumn of 1978. It represents the first published draft in a single document of the Borough Council's proposals and policies over the whole field of planning for the next 10 years or more.

Hitherto these have been published as context papers and other consultation documents for particular topics such as shopping, hotels and tourism, movement, offices and conservation; this Draft District Plan, which takes the results of the earlier consultation into account, combines in draft the Borough Council's proposals and policies on these and all other planning matters.

The Society has sent in its comments from time to time on the relevant context papers and other consultative documents as they have appeared. The Society has recently sent in its comments on the Draft District Plan. They include comments to the following effect:

(1) *Conservation areas.* There should be provision for review of their boundaries and provision for reducing or eliminating unsightly advertisements.

(2) *Housing and population.* Emphasis should be given to the preservation of local communities and amenities for residents.

(3) *Leisure and recreation.* The G.L.D.P. should be interpreted flexibly on the topic of open space. In particular private garden squares should not be converted into 'local parks'.

(4) *Hotels and tourism.* These activities should be controlled and restricted.

(5) *Industrial development.* The plan should exclude industrial development from residential and non-industrial areas.

(6) *Offices.* The plan should provide that the 'central areas' of Kensington are not to be designated preferred centres for office location.

(7) *Movement.* The plan is to be criticised for seeking to increase traffic capacity in existing streets, by making new traffic routes through existing streets, often residential, which are relatively free of traffic, thus adding to the mileage of main or 'secondary' roads within the Borough. The issue of the proposed western relief road is not effectively considered or dealt with. The plan virtually dismisses altogether the possibility even on a small scale of taking out of residential roads and confining traffic to a limited number of secondary roads.

The Trees of Holland Park

Talk by A. E. Janaway, Park Manager, Holland Park

On the occasion of your Society's 25th Annual General Meeting I have been asked to talk briefly about the trees of Holland Park, a subject which, for a Society such as yours that has taken a keen and active interest in the development of this historic garden as a public park, must give you cause for concern.

Since 1973 850 trees have been felled and it cannot escape even the casual visitor by the number of dead and dying trees still standing that a great many more are still to be felled, an estimated 500 trees.

Until 1976 Dutch elm disease was responsible for the death of the majority of the trees felled, a particularly resilient strain of this disease which has been ravaging the elm population of central and southern England since 1969. In some respects Holland Park has been fortunate in that parks in outer areas of London had lost the majority of their elms by 1973, a reprieve of three to four years.

Since 1976 sooty bark disease has been taking its toll of sycamores, and the culmination of three dry winters and the very dry summer of 1976 has also taken its toll of the surface rooting trees and shrubs; some silver birch, beech, conifers and magnolias were also lost.

I would like to reassure you that no tree is felled unless there is a very good reason. Either the tree is dead or dangerous. When live trees are felled it is only for woodland maintenance reasons, this being unnecessary in the past few years due to the large number of diseased trees being removed. A very good example of a diseased tree becoming unsafe is right outside the Orangery windows, by the Belvedere Restaurant. It is a large willow that has stags-heading: this is dieback of the upper branches which indicates all is not well with the tree, and fungus growing on the base of the trunk that indicates a severe fungus infection of the trunk. The tree is liable to fall across the lawn without warning while people are walking or sitting under it; therefore it will have to be felled in the near future.

Holland Park is, by its long history and layout, a large garden to a stately home, rather than a municipal park. When planning the replanting programme, it is my intention and that of the department to retain this characteristic. Broadly speaking, forest trees, the majority of British origin, will be planted on the eastern and western boundaries and in the woodland enclosures to the north of the park to maintain the natural woodland effect. Ornamental trees and trees of botanical interest will be planted in the central and southern informal and formal garden areas to add to the already interesting collection; 170 forest trees have been replanted this winter on the eastern and western boundaries. The majority of the species selected have a fast growth rate to replace the tree screens as quickly as possible. Once the remaining dying elms and sycamores have been removed, inter-planting of slower growing forest

trees will take place. Larger size young trees were used as the faster-growing species transplant well at this size, producing a large tree quickly. They are less likely to be choked by the undergrowth which grows more quickly after the loss of the tree cover and less likely to be vandalised in these vulnerable areas.

The Kensington High Street end of the driveway to the Earls Court gate is now clear of elms and it is planned to replant with red-leaved maple; the rest of the driveway and Holland Walk cannot be planted until the remaining stricken elms and sycamores have been felled.

A further 100 trees will be planted this winter in the woodland enclosures; future planting is dependent on the rate of felling of the dead trees and available finances. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that planting will take place at an increased rate for the next five years.

I would like to take this opportunity of briefly outlining the work planned for the near future in other parts of the park and of some recently completed.

The camellia border, at the north side of the Dutch garden wall, was planted last winter and despite a heavy fall of snow the week after planting is doing very well. A collection of camellia and other rare shrubs from the Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Garden, Weymouth, the country estate of the last owner of Holland Park, Lord Ilchester, have been included in this border.

The first stage of re-organising the west lawn shrub borders was completed and will continue in two stages for the next two years, to improve the vista and content of this informal shrub garden.

This coming winter the rose walk, running from the north lawn to Lord Holland's statue, will be replanted with a collection of roses, including Caroline Testout, the original rose planted by Lady Ilchester. The climbing rose supports will also be replaced. Caroline Testout is now unobtainable from the trade. The new plants are being grown by the Parks Department, buds from the original plants in the rose walk being budded on to the new root stock.

Lastly, although the occasional or first-time visitor to Holland Park will not be aware of the great changes in the landscape that have taken place, I feel sure the residents of the area and frequent visitors will view with sadness the loss of so many fine trees.

Presentation to The Honorary Secretary on September 19th

by

H.R.H. PRINCESS ALICE, COUNTESS OF ATHLONE,

On the occasion of the Society's silver jubilee year the Council and Executive Committee wished to pay tribute to their Honorary Secretary, Gay Christiansen, for the indefatigable and self-sacrificing work which she has carried on since the founding meeting took place in her house, 18 Kensington Square, W.8, on 17th March, 1953, and where the Executive Committee has had the good fortune to hold its regular meetings ever since.

Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, graciously consented to plant a tree, the *Davidia involucrata* (handkerchief tree), in Kensington Square Garden, and to present Mrs. Christiansen with a specially bound copy of *Two Villages—the Story of Chelsea and Kensington*, by Mary Cathcart Boer.

Her Royal Highness arrived in the Square at 5 p.m., where she was greeted by Lord and Lady Balfour, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr. Ian Grant, and Mrs. Christiansen.

Her Royal Highness with great dexterity planted the tree. The party, including the Princess's lady-in-waiting, Miss Joan Lascelles, members of the Council, the Committee and guests then proceeded to 36 Kensington Square where they were entertained by Sir David and Lady Barran.

The Princess presented Mrs Christiansen with the book which had been inscribed as follows:

**Presented to Gay Christiansen
by the Council and Executive Committee of the Kensington Society
as a token of their appreciation and esteem for her years of
continued and dedicated work for the Society since its formation
in 1953 and with which her name has become synonymous
Kensington is for ever in her debt
19th September, 1978**

On the plaque beside the tree is written:

**The Handkerchief Tree
Davidia involucrata
Presented to Gay Christiansen
as a tribute from the Council and Executive Committee
of the Kensington Society which was founded at her house,
18 Kensington Square, in 1953
This tree was planted by H.R.H. Princess Alice,
Countess of Athlone, Patron of the Society,
on 19th September, 1978**

The weather helped to make this a memorable and enjoyable day.

DENNIS MARLOW

William Cowen

B. CURLE

Early in 1843 Gibraltar Cottage, 14 Thistle Grove, was occupied by new tenants who, if they were not indeed responsible for the name, must have found it appropriate for they may well have called at the Rock *en route* to Corsica or on their return. William Cowen and his sister Sarah had visited Corsica during 1840 and one result of a lengthy stay was the publication of a series of 12 etchings which were re-issued, with two additions, in 1848 in *Six Weeks in Corsica*, the dedication to the Earl Fitzwilliam being addressed from Gibraltar Cottage.

William Cowen was born at Rotherham, Yorkshire, on 18th June, 1791, the son of William and Elizabeth Cowen. He seems to have come under the notice of Charles William Wentworth, later the 3rd and 5th Earl Fitzwilliam, at an early age, for under the Wentworth's patronage Cowen was able to pursue his artistic studies in Switzerland and Italy. Although *Six Weeks in Corsica*, the scenes of which by the author's account 'were visited, and sketched, under circumstances of peculiar annoyance and even danger . . .', appears to have been Cowen's only book, he was a regular exhibitor for many years.

The Society of Artists, the British Institution and the Royal Academy all provided opportunities to exhibit his work and in 1831 Cowen was one of the eight founder members of the New Society of Painters in Watercolours, now the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours. Cowen's membership of this was brief, however, for in 1833 he resigned along with several other members because of dissensions within the Society.

Cowen was no stranger to grand and spectacular scenery or to the great sweeps of the Yorkshire moors, but the gentler rural scene of Brompton seems to have stimulated his artistic vision and soon after his removal to Gibraltar Cottage he produced a series of views ranging through South Kensington and Chelsea. This attractive set of 31 sketches in blue indigo wash on paper watermarked 1844 conveys the rural setting of Brompton, which attracted so many discerning residents who sought peace and quiet in an attractive neighbourhood not too far from the centre of London.

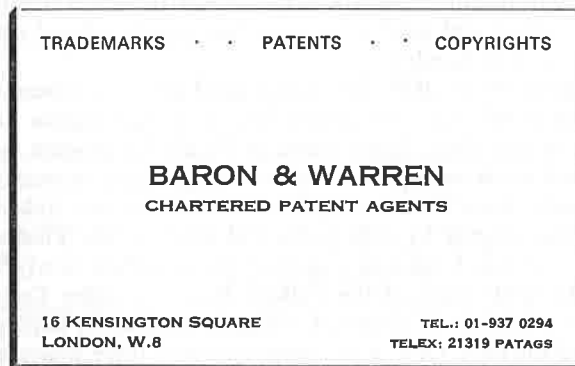
Although by 1851 half the population lived in towns, Edmund Daw's map of the parish for 1848 shows how little Kensington had been developed at this date. Large tracts of South Kensington were still covered with fields interspersed with market gardens, nursery grounds and orchards. Earls Court was still a separate hamlet linked to the centre of Kensington by field paths and lanes, while Thistle Grove (now Drayton Gardens) was a solitary thoroughfare newly laid out through the fields north of the Fulham Road. Gibraltar Cottage was but one of a number of detached cottages, standing in large gardens, which lined the road. Only at the north end were there examples of the

terraced dwellings that were gradually becoming a more familiar part of the local scene.

All this was to change within a few years of Cowen's death, but in the 1840s London must still have seemed a long way off for many and Cowen's series of watercolours reinforce this impression. Residents might stroll down Walnut Tree Walk (now the noisy and busy Redcliffe Gardens) or Rose Lane or wander along the banks of the Kensington Canal by the domes and parapets of the newly-opened Brompton Cemetery. Old Brompton Road, close to the artist's home, was not the busy thoroughfare lined with houses and mansion blocks that one sees today, but a pleasant tree-lined lane with cottages and some larger houses scattered along it. Hawk Cottage and the house of Mr. Attwood the market gardener lay close by, and somewhat further off in the Fulham Road the Hollywood Scotch Ale Brewery no doubt helped to slake the thirst of some local residents.

These pleasant reminders of a rural past were acquired by the Kensington Public Libraries in 1953 and photographic copies can now be seen in the Kensington Local Collection or the originals viewed by arrangement. All the drawings were made on sheets of Whatman paper of a uniform size and watermark and may have been intended for reproduction, as there is a Cowen lithograph of Cresswell Lodge in existence and the series includes a view of the approach avenue. Although these views do not seem to have been published, Cowen was responsible for others including 'Six Views of Italian and Swiss Scenery' (1824), some illustrations for Rhodes' 'Yorkshire Scenery' (1826) and 'Six Views of Woodsome Hall' (1851). Further research by others is also revealing further oil and watercolour paintings by Cowen scattered about the country in various collections, and it is always possible that additional local views may come to light.

Cowen died at Gibraltar Cottage in 1860. Although not an artist of the first rank his work is professional and pleasing, and we can be grateful to him for leaving to posterity such a delightful series of views showing South Kensington and Chelsea in the years before the developers obtained a firm hold on the region and swept its rural charm away for ever.



Kensington's Victorian Letter Boxes

H. I. DAVIS

The Kensington that we know today was largely developed in the Victorian era contemporary with the introduction of prepaid postage on letters, and one consequence of this is that the area has a rich variety of early postboxes. With the rapid growth of correspondence following the introduction of uniform penny postage in 1840, a demand for more posting facilities arose and the public began pressing the Post Office to follow France's example and provide roadside posting boxes.

Early boxes were erected in the Channel Islands in 1852-1853 and on the mainland soon after, but it was not until 1855 that London received its first roadside letter boxes. On 11th April of that year six boxes were opened to the public. These were sited in a line stretching westwards from the General Post Office in St. Martins-le-Grand and the sixth and last of these was in Kensington Road at Rutland Gate. At that time this must have represented the farthest point of continuous development of the metropolis westwards. These first boxes were rectangular in shape and stood approximately five feet in height, surmounted by a large iron ball. No record of the Rutland Gate box seems to have survived, but for many years a cast-iron plate showing postal information and collection times, removed from the similar box at Ludgate Circus, could be seen at the London Museum in Kensington Palace. Now even that has gone, but it may still be seen at the new Museum of London, in the City.

Between 1857 and 1866 the Post Office made various attempts to obtain a standardised design for cylindrical pillar boxes, but there does not seem to be any record of boxes from this period having been erected in Kensington.

Then in 1865 a hexagonal design was approved by the Postmaster General. This was designed by J. W. Penfold, an architect and surveyor, and was made by Cochrane Grove and Company of Dudley. Seven of these handsome boxes survive in the Royal Borough: in High Street, Kensington, at the corner of Melbury Road; in Pembroke Gardens; in Kensington Palace Gardens; in Cornwall Gardens; in Collingham Road; and two in Ladbroke Grove, at Oxford Gardens and Telford Road. Photographs in Kensington Library show others formerly in Campden Hill Road and Holland Park Avenue and there would undoubtedly have been several more in the area. In September 1976 the Ladbroke Grove box at the corner of Telford Road was damaged by a bus and was removed. Letters of protest from local residents appeared in the press and as a result this box was repaired and reinstated, which only shows that these survivors of our Victorian heritage are noticed

and cherished. It is interesting to note that several more of these hexagonal boxes are still in use to the west of the Borough, in the Shepherds Bush area, but there are none to the east, where any that were left were replaced in the 1950s by the large double aperture boxes that abound throughout the West End and the City.

In the years following the introduction of the Penfold design there were frequent complaints of letters being caught up and delayed by faults in the internal construction of these hexagonal boxes and by 1874 the Post Office was seriously considering reverting to the earlier cylindrical shape. In November 1878 a contract was placed with Andrew Handyside and Company of Derby and production began the following March, in two sizes.

Several examples of pillar boxes from this period are still in use in Kensington. The larger 'A' size may be seen in several turnings off Cromwell Road and in the roads around Olympia. Examples of the narrower 'B' size exist in St. Marks Road and Marne Street, in the north of the Borough. A minor variation in the design of these boxes is that a few examples have a raised ring on the roof instead of a domed top. No explanation for this is apparent, but one may be seen in Aubrey Walk, Notting Hill Gate, and another in Longridge Road, Earls Court.

In April 1884, after complaints that larger letters and newspapers occasionally became lodged in the top of the new boxes, the design was modified by placing the posting aperture a few inches lower in the body. Examples of this modified version may be seen in Edith Road and in May Street and in the 'B' size in Bolton Gardens.

Surprisingly, it was not until November 1887, eight years after their introduction, that it was realised the new cylindrical pillar boxes did not bear the Royal Cypher or indeed any indication that they were the property of the Post Office. By the end of that year a new design incorporating the 'VR' cypher on the door and the lettering 'POST OFFICE' on the collar below the rim of the roof had been approved. Many examples of this style survive throughout the Royal Borough and the design has remained virtually unchanged into the present reign, as anyone interested enough to walk around the streets of Kensington can see for himself.

See centre page

Theatres of Old Kensington

*From a lecture given in 1955 in the Mercury Theatre by
Mr. Ashley Dukes, late husband of Dame Marie Rambert*

The word theatre is used in the widest sense to include such open-air amusements as pleasure gardens and even the Hippodrome which existed here beneath your feet* less than 120 years ago. Its fencing must have followed the actual frontage of this building, for the turnstile entrance from the metropolis was the sharp junction of Ladbroke Road and Kensington Park Road; this turnstile led into the public enclosure or silver ring of the course. The more affluent patrons went down the track or lane of this road until they reached the entrances for owners and jockeys and what would now be called Tattersalls Ring; this was somewhere just below the present crossing of Ladbroke Grove and Ladbroke Road, the principal stands were erected on the hill where now stands St. John's Church. The steeplechase course followed the line of Ladbroke Road, Clarendon Road, Pottery Lane, Notting Dale and so back up Kensington Park Road, within the fencing to the turnstiles and Notting Hill Gate. Balloon ascents, ostrich as well as horse races, semi-permanent fairs and all sorts of other amusements flourished within the enclosure. The Hippodrome was closed in 1841 and the large expanse of open land built over.

For the beginning of the theatre in Kensington we go back 200 years further. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods we know well that all the London theatres were in the limited central area of the City and Bankside, and even the Haymarket in its beginnings represented an extreme outpost of the stage on the western verge of the town. Perhaps it was only after the Commonwealth ordinance of 1647 forbidding the performance of stage plays and, in case of such performances being given, subjecting not only the players but the spectators to fines, that there began an underground movement of the dramatic profession to keep plays alive and especially to preserve their own means of livelihood. The first attempts were made in London itself, at one or two of the theatres such as the Cockpit, but they were often met with heavy penalties and the players had to look further afield. They had a good friend in the Lady Holland of that day, whose mansion in Kensington was still called Cope Castle, becoming known as Holland House several years later.

Cromwell's General Fairfax had made the house and grounds his headquarters until late in 1648 or the spring of 1649, and one can imagine that when the General and his soldiery moved out the larger apartments and halls were left pretty well bare. This reproduced probably with the aid of platforms and their own galleries, many of the

* Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill.

conditions of the early playhouses where Marlowe or Shakespeare or Ben Jonson could be performed. Just what part Lady Holland took in this hospitable and admirable business we do not know, for the need of secrecy was such that few if any records were kept; but we do find it recorded that companies of professional players, most likely still with men or boys taking the women's parts, 'used to act privately, three or four miles out of town, sometimes in noblemen's houses, in particular Holland House in Kensington where the nobility and gentry used to make a sum for them, each giving a broadpiece or the like'.

There is no sign of any stage activity in Kensington during the next 150 years, that is, under William and Mary and Anne and the Georges, though we can be sure that the increasing number of well-to-do people living in and around the village, and the men of letters like Addison who accepted their hospitality, were good patrons of the London theatre and made it a topic at their dinner-tables. It may have been through these circumstances that Campden House was furnished with a private theatre and became the home of amateur theatricals of high order—perhaps to be compared with those of Canterbury by the Old Stagers which still go on during the summer. Campden House was burned down in 1862. The organisers of private theatres leave few traces in history; we shall never know how much social pleasure was given within the walls of Campden House.

The Royal Kensington Theatre opened as a subscription playhouse, according to its playbill, on 21st July, 1831, with 'Othello'. The status as a subscription theatre may have been purely snobbish; that it was a definite and restricted status is shown by the later press reference to the desirability of a public license, then, as now, necessary under the Theatre Act. This theatre was on a site near the present fire station in Old Court Place. Its auditorium was probably modelled on that of the small London theatre of Madame Vestris, then a great personage in the social and theatrical world.

At some time between 1831 and 1834 a licence was apparently applied for and refused. After a prolonged closing the licence was granted, the interior was polished up and with a good deal of publicity the Royal Kent Theatre was launched on its career as a successor in the same premises.

This theatre cannot have held more than three or four hundred people, though much greater claims were made for its capacity. The rating seems to have applied to a modest sort of place; this assessment rose in time to £67.

Now, under the patronage of Queen Victoria's father, the theatre finally re-opened in 1834 and the first play was again 'Othello' which, as one critic said, 'went off very respectably', and the management promised further classical plays and revivals of old comedies. In fact, 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Merchant of Venice', 'Richard III', 'A new way to pay old debts', 'She Stoops to Conquer', 'Beggar's Opera' and an early adaptation of 'Martin Chuzzlewit' are to be found in playbills covering about 17 years.

The opening of the theatre was recorded as brilliant, and 'the boxes fairly glittered with a show of literary and histrionic professors, among them Madame Vestris, who had been drawn to Kensington from the Metropolis'. The opening hour was 6.30, which was then a regular London hour for theatres, and from 8.30 admission was half-price to the boxes and pit only. It must have been hard to pick up the threads of a Shakespearean tragedy by arrival as a half-timer, but it was doubtless much simpler with a bill of four melodramas or burlesque and this universal half-time and half-price system influenced all programmes in the 19th century. The half-timers were often drunk, and that accounts for their exclusion from the gallery where they might be dangerous. Later in the same year, 1834, came the ambitious drama 'Marie Antoinette'. One of the critics thought it remarkable 'that it should be left for the management of a suburban place of amusement thus to take the start of the novelty of all theatres in the metropolis. This is a fact which cannot be too widely circulated in its praise'.

It is sad to record that soon afterwards the theatre was closed and threatened with an auction sale to pay its debts, but in 1836 a new attraction was discovered to advertise the touring companies which had begun to be the chief attraction of the place. The theatre announced a balloon ascent from the roof, to take place one evening just before the hour of performance. The balloon was to be a 'magnificent Montgolfier', without reference to passengers, if any. In the same year, and perhaps as a sequel to the same evening, for it was the month of July, a man chosen at random from a number of brawlers was charged at the Kensington police court with riotous conduct in and about the theatre. The magistrate threatened the theatre with being closed down. It was, in fact, inconveniently near the 'Goat' public house, just over the way in the High Street, whose licensee had the right to send in gin and ale.

'Theatricals Extraordinary' was the next heading under which the attention of the press was drawn to the Royal Kent Theatre. In 1838 a company from London was advertised to perform 'Jack Sheppard'. A little sketch was first given, after which the drop curtain was let down and remained down for a considerable length of time. The audience, who had paid for a whole evening's entertainment, then became restive and some of them made a search behind the scenes, but no players were to be found. The baskets for their costumes and properties were there but those contained only a few stores. With or without the connivance of the local manager, the company had made off with the whole of the night's takings. There may have been no 'Jack Sheppard' to perform, perhaps even no company but a confederate or two. That time the audience broke all the windows of the theatre and smashed the benches, so that the theatre had perforce to close for a while.

Crisp, a manager who re-opened it in 1842, seems to have been deeply conscious of its history, for his first playbill states, 'It must be understood that Mr. C. is in no way connected with the late Proprietor', and it goes on to promise 'police constables in every part of the house

to prevent any disturbances'. He was very little more successful than a Miss Vyvyan, who took occasion to dissociate herself from all other managements, past, present and future, played the leading women's parts herself and announced that the part of Othello would be played by 'A. Gentleman'. The theatre closed in 1846.

In the years just before the Great Exhibition of 1851, that is, before Kensington linked up with London through the building of the whole district south of the main road to Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner, pleasure gardens flourished in the Brompton region and also north of the Park and at Notting Hill Gate. They were generally attached to taverns and if there were space enough they had fairing-grounds with roundabouts and exhibition booths and the like. Tokens were issued giving admission to them for a single payment of a sixpence. This was the first form taken by the family excursion on a Sunday or Saturday afternoon, and it was also the last fling of the suburbs concerned, which were soon swallowed up in the building tide. There was, of course, a much larger pleasure-ground in 19th-century Bayswater, near what is now Queensway. It is worth while in general to note the connexion of fairing-grounds and pleasure-grounds and even theatres with medicinal spas. Bayswater had a well of some importance. I remember being shown, by Lilian Bayliss, under a trapdoor in the pit of Sadlers Wells Theatre, one of the original springs that brought the spa and afterwards the theatre into being.

And now we come to what we are pleased to call modern times, as if the 17th and 18th centuries had not been as conscious of their modernity as we are. For a long time the only successor to the Royal Kent Theatre in Kensington was a hall in Archer Street, North Kensington, now the western end of Westbourne Grove. This became a theatre and after the First World War the Lena Ashwell Players, who had distinguished themselves by their performances to troops at Rouen and elsewhere, made it their repertory headquarters. It was then the Century Theatre and is now the Twentieth Century, for what that fine distinction is worth. At least it is a public playhouse, useful to amateurs, and not a private stage. This was closed in 1963 and is now used as a storage warehouse.

Towards 1900 there was a notion that London should have more outlying theatres suitable for visiting companies, and the Coronet in Notting Hill Gate was one of them. It has long since become a cinema, but I have seen Bernhardt, Rejane, Martin Harvey, Laurence Irving, Benson, Miss Horniman's company from Manchester and others on its stage. Seymour Hicks had something to do with the promotion of this enterprise, and but for two wars and the coming of the film the Coronet might still be an outpost of the West End theatre, like the Court in Sloane Square to which our drama owes so much.

I have just hinted in passing at the origins of the Mercury Theatre* in which you find yourselves this evening. It has just come of age as a

* Not used for ballet since 1965.



Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, and Lord Balfour of Inchyre, at 36 Kensington Square, after presenting a book to Mrs. Christiansen



Anonymous cylindrical pillar box in Longridge Road, showing raised circle on roof



Anonymous cylindrical pillar box c1879 in Nevern Square



Cromwell Lane

W. Cowen



Penfold pillar box c1872 in Collingham Road at the corner of Courtfield Gardens



Penfold pillar box in Ladbrooke Grove after accident in 1976



Brompton, Cresswell Lodge

W. Cowen



Kent Theatre



Kent Theatre interior

public playhouse, for it was first licensed in 1932 and only three years later it produced Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral' (performed in all about 400 times on this stage) and became a home of the new dramatic poetry. Those days are over because the poets are now successful in the West End, and in any case the conditions of today are very different from those of the years just before the war. Our stage now serves its turn as the creative hearth of two ballet companies, while we prepare to build a larger theatre on a site we already possess just over the way; this is in some small part occupied by the temporary structure of the Branch Library in Bulmer Mews. I would like to believe that in some such way as this, the dramatic traditions of western London and of Kensington especially may be carried on.

ESTABLISHED IN KENSINGTON 1830

J. H. KENYON LIMITED

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6 Woodhouse Road, N.12	01-445 1651

St. Barnabas, Addison Road

C. CARLISLE

St. Barnabas Church was built in 1829 in the fields to the west of Holland House. A rural parish was formed, leaving the more built-up area of Kensington around St. Mary Abbots. Even today the vicar of St. Mary Abbots is still the patron of this daughter church, although St. Barnabas is the oldest church building in the borough.

Addison Road became a residential area during the next half-century, particularly for artists. G. F. Watts married Ellen Terry in St. Barnabas in 1864 when he was living at Little Holland House. T. S. Eliot married his second wife here. St. Barnabas has kept its links with the arts by a high standard of musical tradition and has a fine organ.

Although it is an Anglican foundation the parish has for some years been in the forefront of the ecumenical movement, and welcomes residents and visitors of all Christian traditions. There is a close association with the church primary school of St. Barnabas and St. Philip, where there are pupils of every creed and race. The school often provides the choir for morning service.

The original architect was Lewis Vulliamy and he provided one of the earliest examples of nineteenth-century Gothic revival in London: Nikolaus Pevsner describes the church as 'The King's College Chapel type so popular at the time'. Pevsner himself could not have appreciated the unusual characteristics of the interior, which had been darkened and almost completely concealed by London grime. They are only now being revealed by major work which is being carried out by Campbell Smith & Co., who have done work at Leighton House and St. Augustine, Queen's Gate. The latter restoration was described in the 1974-75 annual report. Work on the fabric and the roof is being done by Ashby & Horner. The church is being re-wired by a Kensington electrician, Mr. D. Hume.

The Parish Council has decided to go ahead with the repairs to mark the 150th anniversary of the church's consecration, but also under the shadow of the loss of Pat Kirwin, a remarkable vicar; for fifteen years he did so much for Christianity generally and for people in the parish. It was he who launched us on this challenging and inspiring task.

There are anniversary celebrations planned for St. Barnabas-tide in June. The Bishop of London has agreed to come on the 8th at 7.30 p.m. and the Bishop of Kensington on the 17th at 11 a.m.

A guide to and history of the church is being published and its author, Mr. Michael Howard, would gladly show members of the Society the beauties of the church in the autumn.

Help is badly needed towards the budgeted cost of £25,000. The Honorary Treasurer for the St. Barnabas Restoration Fund is Mr. M. D. Chater, 3 Iverna Gardens, London W8 6TN.

Reports from Local Societies

ABBOTSBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Association has continued to monitor planning applications and to enter objections to proposed developments that threaten the environment or the value of members' properties.

The grounds of Holland House represent an important amenity for residents in this area. For some time there has been growing dissatisfaction among members at certain trends in the management of the park by the Greater London Council, who appear over the years to have followed a policy of creeping urbanisation rather than preservation as a unique natural enclave in a densely populated area. The formation of the Friends of Holland Park was therefore welcomed by the Association as calculated to exercise a restraining influence on the destructive policies apparently favoured by the G.L.C. By invitation, Mr. S. Rettig, Chairman of the Friends, gave a presentation on their work at the Association's Annual General Meeting in November which was received with great interest by members.

Further representations have been made on the draft management scheme in respect of enfranchised leaseholds in parts of the Abbotsbury Estate. It is the opinion of the Association that a scheme is necessary and desirable in order to maintain standards and amenities but that the scheme as originally presented on behalf of the freeholders was open to objection in detail. The scheme will come before the High Court for decision in May.

A number of members of the Association occupy houses with leases that are not enfranchisable under present legislation and which now have only a comparatively short period to run. While the Association has no legal standing in this matter, the Committee has endeavoured to help those members involved with advice and guidance in seeking to acquire their freeholds or new leases on acceptable terms.

The Spring Drinks Party on 19th May in the Orangery, Holland House, was well attended by members and invited guests, including representatives of local government.

The 1979 Annual General Meeting will be held on 14th November at Leighton House.

Chairman: Professor R. J. L. Allen, O.B.E., 63 Abbotsbury Close, W.14.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. F. L. Morrison-Jones, 37 Abbotsbury Road, W.14.

THE BOLTONS ASSOCIATION

There were no outstanding developments in 1978 but a steady level of activity was maintained. Some 74 new planning applications were considered and commented on while progress was watched in a number of cases already current. One noteworthy item was the withdrawal of the proposed extension of the telephone exchange at the northern end of the Boltons, which would have deprived the area of some fine trees; the Post Office have undertaken to consult the Association on an alternative, less drastic, proposal before taking it further.

Nos. 3 and 5 Gilston Road have been acquired by a private development company and are in course of being rehabilitated behind the existing facade so as to form four houses, which we regard as a satisfactory outcome to this four-year battle.

The application of colour control to certain terraces within the Conservation Area, under Article 4 direction, has excited considerable interest, especially in Priory Walk where efforts to arrive at a code acceptable to residents and the Association have not yet succeeded.

Traffic continues to be a major preoccupation, particularly in Drayton Gardens where the Council's experimental width-restriction scheme, which provided a most welcome respite, has lapsed without being renewed owing (we understand) to objections from the Fire Brigade.

We submitted a number of comments on the Council's Draft District Plan, including strong support for the proposed local western relief road (with a link to Wandsworth Bridge) which we consider deserved a more prominent position than was accorded to it in the draft plan. We are now actively assisting the Council in the preparation of the Policy Document for the Boltons Conservation Area, which had been in abeyance for some time owing to staff shortages in the Council.

Chairman: Philip English, 14 Milborne Grove, S.W.10.

Hon. Secretary: John Griffith-Jones, 17 The Little Boltons, S.W.10.

COTTESMORE COURT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Although now five years old, we have only recently joined the Society. Our main objective has been to improve the management of the block, with concern for the surrounding area secondary. Nevertheless we have been very much concerned with planning matters.

In 1976 a proposal was made to erect an additional storey to the block. The Association and our neighbours were extremely disturbed. We managed to get the developer (our landlord) to withdraw the application pending negotiations to buy them out. Negotiations broke down and the application was revived in summer 1977. After putting considerable pressure on the Council, they took a legal opinion on whether compensation might be payable if a refusal of permission to build an extra storey were supported by the Secretary of State. To our disappointment, the opinion and subsequent decision by the Town Planning Committee went against us. With this permission to build over our heads outstanding, the Association mobilised enough support in the block to buy out the freehold, and we are now our own landlords since November.

Since the Cottesmore Court decision the Council has been put under further pressure on this issue, has taken another legal opinion and is now satisfied that compensation would most likely *not* have been payable. Naturally we are pleased for other blocks, like our near neighbours Stanford Court, but it has cost us dearly to have been the front-runner!

Being in a highly built-up area has led to other such pressures, such as the proposal to add an extra storey to the Kensington Gardens telephone exchange in South End Row. This time the combined pressure of the Association and our neighbours appears to have succeeded.

Finally, the other good news of the last year has been our success in getting trees planted in Kelso Place and in the forecourt garden of the block. This was secured by the kind donation of the trees by the Kensington Society after plans for planting elsewhere fell through; the planting was done by the Council.

Chairman: Michael Bach.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. S. Crowther, 55 Cottesmore Court, Stanford Road, W.8.

EDWARDES SQUARE AND SCARSDALE ASSOCIATION

Due to precipitate action by the Committee in his absence abroad the Chairman, Dennis Marlow, felt he had no alternative but to resign. Richard Newcombe of the High Street Study Group also resigned from the Committee of the Association and both resignations were reluctantly accepted.

During the year various planning applications have been considered, including one for a discotheque licence at 'Farasha', a restaurant at the old Lyons Corner House site at the top of Earls Court Road and Kensington High Street, and another for office use at 57 South Edwardes Square and additional office development in Abingdon Road, all of which were opposed by the Association and were subsequently turned down by the Council.

The Draft District Plan was considered by members at a meeting in November and various suggestions put to the Council.

New planning applications have been put in for the development of the west side of Earls Court Road between the Chelsea Building Society and Pembroke Place, owned by Rank. The Association feels this is an inadequate application and have asked the Council to consider a more harmonious development and it is hoped that a more agreeable design will be agreed.

With regard to the Prudential's application to redevelop their Pembroke Gardens/Warwick Gardens property the Council were made fully aware of ESSA's position and as a result of a second survey carried out on behalf of the Council and representations made by ESSA and local residents the Planning Committee rejected the application.

The High Street Study Group's recommendations for the Old Town Hall planning brief were adopted in their report.

The English Property Corporation outlined their plans for Phase 3 of the Pontings site development in Wrights Lane, which it is hoped

will include flats, offices and/or retail units.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. M. Bain, 6 Phillimore Terrace, Allen Street, W.8.

EARLS COURT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

The year saw more of the Council's drive to change Earls Court again into a more pleasant place for living. As far as the Village is concerned, the Association co-operated with the Planning Office in the drawing-up of a policy to make conservation work. There can be no doubt about the Council's determination and much careful thought went into their report. Many of the proposals were well received but some residents feel their future freedom of action could be seriously eroded by the seeming over-protectiveness shown. It ranges from regulations of roof heights to suggestions for the size of doorknockers. The Association has, however, been advised that the Policy Document will serve as a basis for guidelines rather than represent hard and fast rules.

The Conservation Area newly includes the north side of Redfield Lane and the gardens behind the mews houses. The south side of the Lane, named Wallgrave Terrace, is now also to be known as Redfield Lane a move much welcomed by the residents.

No further activity can be reported from Golly's site at the north-west corner. A plan for mixed residential/office development was accepted in principle. It seems to have become stuck with the G.L.C.

The Council has promised, but has so far failed, to erect road signs at the entrance of both Redfield Lane and Kenway Road to discourage traffic seeking an exit to Cromwell Road from cruising through the Village. This delay in carrying out the installation constitutes a considerable nuisance to motorists and residents alike.

Chairman: Mrs. Jean Gilbert.

Secretary: Mrs. Francis Hopkins.

EARLS COURT SQUARE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in April 1974 as a result of local residents' concern for the future development and conservation of Earls Court Square. The earliest aims of getting the Square garden adopted under the Kensington Improvement Act and having the Square designated as a Conservation Area were achieved in the first year. The Association then pressed the Royal Borough authorities to produce a conservation policy document for the area and submitted a paper outlining local residents' views of what should be included in it. After a number of meetings with Planning Department officers, the Royal Borough's policy document for the square was discussed at a public meeting in March 1978 and then published in its final form later in the year. The Conservation Area was made subject to an Article IV direction on paint colour schemes during 1978 after discussion with the Association.

The main thrust of the Association's work over the last five years has been to improve the Square physically and more generally as a place to live in. This has involved opposing some licensing applications and other undesirable developments and bringing about environmental improvements to the Square. Eleven Norway maple and whitebeam

street trees were planted by the Council in positions agreed with the Association.

The Garden Committee completed the last major item in the restoration of the garden with the laying of hoggan paths. The Committee was delighted to receive a gift of two trees for the garden from the Kensington Society as a contribution towards the rehabilitation programme. The Committee was also honoured to receive a blue plaque from the Royal Borough at a Town Hall ceremony for winning the landscape category of the Environmental Award Scheme for 1978.

The Association strongly supports in principle the building of a new relief road to relieve the Earls Court one-way system and in the meantime would like to see more local traffic management schemes to ease existing problems.

The work of the Royal Borough's Earls Court Study is being watched with interest and the Association informs members of all news relevant to the Square through the distribution of a newsletter.

Chairman: D. E. Fair, 34 Earls Court Square, S.W.5.

THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

During 1978, with Mr. Ian Grant as Chairman, the Association Committee has met monthly and architect members have sent comments to the Borough on a number of planning proposals. Some Committee members also have attended, with representatives of other parts of the Borough, a number of forum meetings, on whose deliberations the Borough Draft Plan has largely been based.

The project 'Town Schemes' is progressing and a photographic dossier of architectural details is being compiled. Some moulds have also been acquired.

The St. John's Church appeal raised more than £3,500 and after repairs to the masonry there was a balance of about £1,750 to help towards the restoration of the railings on the Ladbroke Grove frontage. The Ladbroke Association gave a donation and assistance in presenting a scheme and specifications.

In March Mr. Ashley Barker, O.B.E., Surveyor of Historic Buildings to the G.L.C., gave a stimulating address to members on 'Conservation in the Ladbroke Area—the next 10 years'. In December Mr. John Grainger of the Planning Department of the City of Bath, gave a most interesting lecture on some conservation projects in Norwich and Bath. There were two newsletters during the year for members' information.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 29th June. Mr. Ian Grant said that there had been one major triumph in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and this was the scrapping of the proposals for the Russian Embassy. He deplored the low membership of the Association. The area is one of the pleasantest urban places in London in which to live. The subscription is only £1 annually. Why, then, was the membership so small?

The Committee is anxious about the loss of mature trees in the area and the future of those which remain. A sub-committee has been set

up to discuss a matter vital to the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Cosh, 20 Kensington Park Gardens, W.11.

NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

After an energetic and successful campaign to retain the closure of Walmer Road, achieved in December 1977, we were pleased to learn that the Borough Council in response to our request resolved in April 1978 to expand the boundaries of the Norland Conservation Area, which now includes both sides of Princedale Road and Pottery Lane to Penzance Place, the east side of Pottery Lane to Hippodrome Place, both sides of Portland Road, save a few buildings at the far northern end, and all of Clarendon Cross outside the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

Of the 44 houses in Royal Crescent 25 have been redecorated and/or restored, and the work already done has had a significant effect in improving the appearance of the Crescent. The Article 4 direction and the agreement in principle of the Department of the Environment to continue to make grants available should serve to maintain the project's impetus.

A section of the terraced houses on the eastern side of Norland Road has been rehabilitated by the Notting Hill Housing Trust and occupied. The rebuilding of the western side of Norland Road is expected to start shortly; it originally included the re-erection, along the western side of Norland Road to front a paved pedestrianised accessway, of the stone-faced terrace of buildings now standing dejectedly in Norland Gardens, but the disappearance of some of the original materials has made modifications necessary.

Difficulties were experienced in deciding on a suitable project to mark jubilee year. In the end the choice was the lighting of the tower window at St. James's Norlands Church which makes a focal point looking down Addison Avenue.

The membership of the Society has increased from 230 or so to 320, and another very successful annual party was held.

Secretary: P. L. G. Gurney, 1 St. Ann's Villas, W.11.

ONSLow NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

The past year has been one of Committee work and administration rather than dramatic battles 'in the field'. The major activity has been the completion of the study of the Council's context papers and their discussion and the preparation of comment by our Local Planning Forum, all part of the preparation of the Draft Development Plan for the Borough. We believe that our efforts, though small in relation to the amount of work which the plan represents, have been well worth while. In fact it has been encouraging to see much of the comment and suggestion emanating from these Planning Forums incorporated in the final draft.

Our Annual General Meeting again proved a lively and interesting occasion. We repeated the format of the previous year and invited two Councillors to talk to our members and answer questions. This year

our guests were Councillors Christopher McLaren and D. H. Piper. With the changes in ward boundaries the area covered by the Association is now split between two wards, Brompton and Courtfield. This has the immediate advantage that we have the direct ear of double the number of Councillors.

We are sorry to record the closure of St. Paul's Church, Onslow Square. We are therefore urgently seeking an alternative use for the building, whose loss, in particular that of the tower and spire, would be an environmental disaster for the area.

It has been a quiet year for planning applications with none of a controversial nature. However, we are still concerned with the problem of 'creeping hotels' as mentioned in our report last year.

Copies of our recent newsletter describing the Association's activities are available from the Hon. Secretary.

Hon. Secretary: Hugh Brady, 16 Selwood Terrace, SW7 3QG.

THE PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

The problem of the future of the Sion Convent site has continued to be of major concern to the residents of this conservation area. Following upon the failure of the Science Centre to produce the necessary finance to acquire the property, a new proposal was put forward by the Central and Provincial Housing Trust to convert the building into flats and to build on much of the Convent Garden, thus adding over 200 to the number of residents of Chepstow Villas and Denbigh Road. The Association has put forward recommendations with a view to a substantial reduction in the numbers envisaged. As usual a large number of planning applications were received during the year; in two of the most important of these, the extension to the Russian Embassy in Kensington Palace Gardens and the establishment of an embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Chepstow Villas, the applications were not approved. A number of applications asked for permission to add a storey to a house. It has been the Association's policy to oppose such applications on the ground that the original proportions of houses should not be disturbed by increasing the height and hence the shape of the building. In most cases permission was not granted by the Council, but in one case approval was given, apparently because the developer claimed that only if he could add a storey and so increase income from the property would its renovation be financially viable.

It has been noticed that architects, charged with restoration or modernisation of houses in the area, frequently fail to appreciate that the original fenestration was expressly designed for the facade. Larger panes of glass are frequently used to replace the original mullions and transoms, with most undesirable results.

The peace of the area has been disturbed by an outbreak of Rachmanism and the Association has supported the Council in its efforts to prevent serious harassment to tenants. The Council was successful in the courts but the property in question was severely damaged by fire on the same day.

Two issues of the Pembridge Newsletter were produced during the year and the Annual Lecture was given by Miss Elizabeth Aslin of the Victoria and Albert Museum, a member of the Executive Committee. The Chairman and founder member of the Association, the Rev. Douglas Richardson, having gone to another parish, has resigned and his place for 1979 taken by Councillor David Campion.

Hon. Secretary: John Hayward, 28 Chepstow Villas, W.11.

ROYAL CRESCENT ASSOCIATION

Slow but sure progress continues to be made on the European Architectural Heritage Year restoration project, and over half the houses in Royal Crescent have now been redecorated in the new standard colour scheme. The improved appearance of the Crescent as a whole is quite striking, and presents a worth while achievement for the effort expended.

The improvement has also been assisted by the replacement by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea of the former modernistic style street lights by new lights of an upright design which blend better with the traditional character of the Crescent. (The Association have, however, been in communication with the Royal Borough on the problem of glare to the houses.)

On both the administrative and technical sides of the restoration project the Association have built up a fund of practical experience, which has been, and it is intended will continue to be, used for the benefit of the community.

Chairman: Colin D. MacInnes, 15 Royal Crescent, W.11.

THURLOE AND EGERTON ASSOCIATION

The Association continues to flourish and, indeed, to grow: thanks to an energetic campaign to attract new members, we now have just over 300 subscribers and we certainly hope for more.

A lively Annual General Meeting in April last year was well attended and we were delighted to have with us Councillor Cox, Vice-Chairman of the Town Planning Committee, and Mr. Sanders, Borough Planning Control Officer. We were grateful to both of them, and also to our Ward Councillors, for giving up their time to help and encourage us in such a positive way.

In June, with the Thurloe Square Garden Association, we held a highly successful party in Thurloe Square—a successor to our Jubilee Party the previous year. The money we raised is to be spent this spring on new planting in the Square.

During the year, besides looking at the steady flow of planning applications in our area, we continued our involvement in the consultations with the Council over the preparation of the Borough Development Plan. We welcomed the publication of the Draft District Plan in October, with the exception of the chapter on traffic, to which we objected strongly. In this, we found we were not alone and we are pleased to learn that this chapter is likely to be revised.

Our Annual General Meeting this year is to be held in the church hall, Holy Trinity, Brompton, on 25th April.

Hon. Secretary: Susan Walker, R.I.B.A., 13 Thurloe Square, S.W.7.

Some past notabilities of Kensington

Addison, Rt. Hon. Joseph (1672–1719)

Essayist, poet and statesman. Secretary for Ireland, 1708; Secretary of State, 1717–18. Contributed essays to Steele's *Tatler* (1709–11); with Steele produced *The Spectator*, writing half the 555 papers on social and literary criticism (1711–12). In 1716 he married the Countess of Warwick, the widow of the owner of the Manor of Kensington, and from then until his death in 1718 he lived at Holland House.

Albani, Dame Emma (1852–1930), vocalist

Dame Emma Albani lived in Kensington for many years: at 31 Kensington Square, 1877–1879; 16 The Boltons, 1889–1898; Park House, Earl's Court Road, 1898–1908; and 61 Tregunter Road, 1908–1930.

Alberstone, Viscount (1842–1915)

He was more widely known by his name Sir Richard Webster before his elevation to the peerage. He was an extremely dignified Lord Chief Justice. He sang for many years in the choir in Kensington Parish Church, and lived at Hornton Lodge, Pitt Street, from 1888 to 1914.

Borrow, George (1803–1881)

He was an ardent philologist and gypsy-loving wanderer, whose experiences are recorded in *Lavengro*, *Romany Rye* and other works. He lived at 22 Hereford Square from 1860 to 1872.

Burne-Jones, Sir E. (1833–1898)

Painter and designer. 'King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid' and the 'Briar Rose Series' are typical of his work. He lived at 41 Kensington Square from 1864 to 1868.

Callcott, Sir Augustus, R.A. (1779–1844)

The Mall. House demolished in 1871 to make room for the Essex Church. 'Entrance to the Pool of London' one of his best-known pictures. His wife, Lady Callcott, was the authoress of *Little Arthur's History of England*.

Cobbett, William (1763–1835)

Political journalist and essayist. As a young man Cobbett enlisted in a line regiment and served in it for eight years. He then took up journalism, editing his *Register*. His description of rural scenery met with on his rides are classic. He lived from 1821 to 1835 in Kensington High Street in a house the site of which is now occupied by Kensington High Street Station.

Coke, Lady Mary (1726–1811)

The youngest daughter of the Duke of Argyll. Lived at the villa at Notting Hill (Aubrey House) from 1767 to 1788. Lady Mary kept a very interesting journal of events and happenings during her residence at the villa. Owing to her peculiar colouring she was generally known as the White Cat.

Elphinstone, James (1721–1809)

Educationalist and translator of Martial. He established a school at Brompton in 1753. The school was removed to Kensington House in 1753. A friend of Dr. Johnson, he was a thorough-going pedagogue and originated a scheme for phonetic spelling. He died in 1809 and was buried in Kensington Churchyard.

Green, John Richard (1837–1883)

Historian. Author of a standard *Short History of the English People* (1874). Lived at 14 Kensington Square, 1879 to 1883.

Hicks, Sir Baptist (1551–1629)

Created Lord Campden in 1628, from his estate at Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire. Built Campden House in 1612.

Hunt, Leigh (1784–1859), essayist and poet

He has visualised Kensington in that fascinating book, *The Old Court Suburb*. He lived for the major part of his residence in Kensington at 32 Edwardes Square (1840–1851), but was also in Cromwell Lane (1830) and 2 Phillimore Terrace (1851–1853).

Hunt, W. Holman (1827–1910), painter

He advocated the painting of scripture subjects amid actual scriptural scenes, of which his 'The Scapegoat' is an example. 'The Light of the World' and 'The Lady of Shalott' are equally well known. Holman Hunt lived at 1 Tor Villas from 1856 to 1866 and later at 18 Melbury Road till his death in 1910.

Hunter, John (1728–1793)

Anatomist and founder of scientific surgery. He lived at Earls Court House.

Leech, John (1817–1864), caricaturist

Member of the staff of *Punch* (1841–64). He illustrated *Handley Cross* and others of Surtees' books. He lived at 62 Holland Park Avenue (1850) and also 155 Kensington High Street (1862–1864) and died here 29th October, 1864.

Leighton, Lord, P.R.A. (1830–1896)

Lived at the present Leighton House. In 1873 he went on an Eastern tour, and while travelling collected the Persian tiles which are a feature of the Arab Hall in Leighton House. His pictures are remarkable for their exquisite draperies, 'Venus disrobing for the Bath' and 'Wedded' being examples.

Lind, Johanna Maria ('Jenny Lind') (1820–1887), vocalist

During her first year in England she was at Clareville Cottage and later, when she settled in this country, at 1 Moreton Gardens from 1874 to 1887, the year of her death.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington, Lord (1800–1859), poet, essayist and historian

He purchased Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, in 1856 and died there in 1859, having been created a peer in 1857. Two of his best-known works are *Lays of Ancient Rome* and *History of England from the Accession of James II.*

Maine, Sir Henry (1822–1888)

He was a jurist of repute and an authority on ancient law. He was also legal member on the Council of India for seven years. He lived at 27 Cornwall Gardens from 1874 to 1888.

Mill, John Stuart (1806–1873), political economist

He lived in Vicarage Place and also for many years (1837–1851) at 18 Kensington Square.

Newton, Sir Isaac (1642–1727)

Natural philosopher and mathematician. Presented his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (containing his theory of gravitation, etc.) to the Royal Society in 1686. During the last two years of his life he lived in a house at Orbell's Buildings (Bullingham Mansions now stand on the site), where he died on 20th March, 1727.

Pater, Walter (1839–1894)

A literary critic distinguished for critical thought and a style of exquisite finish. Among his books are *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) and *Imaginary Portraits* (1887). He lived at 12 Earls Terrace from 1885 to 1892.

Phillimore, Walter George Frank, First Baron (1845–1929)

He was an eminent international jurist who took a leading part in the formation of the League of Nations. He lived at Cam House from 1900 to 1929. He was much interested in local government and was twice Mayor of Kensington.

Smiles, Samuel (1812–1904), author

He was particularly interested in the amelioration and education of the working classes and in railway activities. His principal works were *A Life of George Stephenson* and *Self Help*. He lived for thirty years (1874–1904) at 8 Pembroke Gardens where he died.

South, Sir James (1785–1867)

Famous astronomer and a founder of the Royal Astronomical Society. He built an observatory on Campden Hill in 1826 and acquired Phillimore House from William Robert Phillimore. The house and observatory stood on the present site of Observatory Gardens. He died in his Kensington home in 1867.

Thackeray, William Makepeace (1811–1863), novelist

From 1847 to 1853 Thackeray resided at 13 (in 1885 changed to 16) Young Street. Here he wrote *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *Esmond* and part of the *Newcomes*. From 1853 he lived at 36 Onslow Square and in 1862 he moved to the home he had built at 2 Palace Green. He died here on Christmas Eve 1863.

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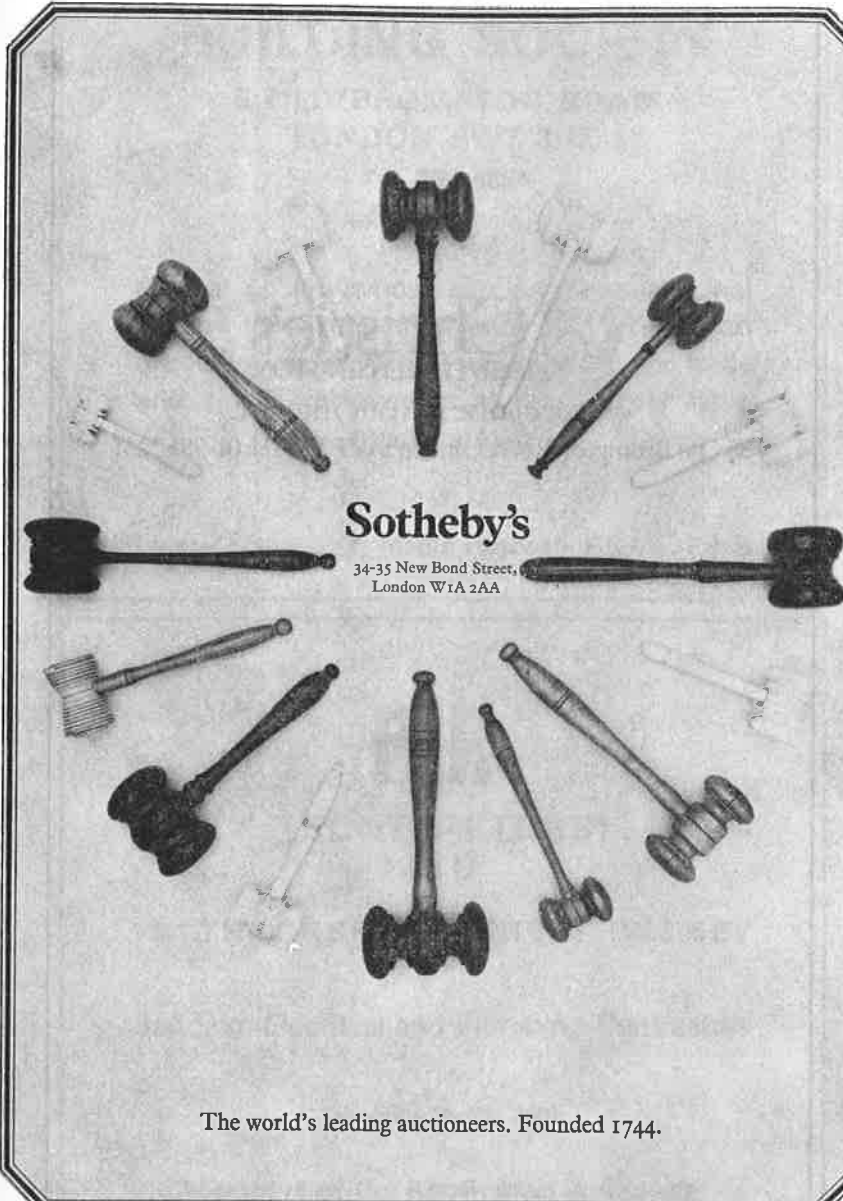
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INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1978

1977	£	£
Subscriptions		
1,090 Annual	1,296	
Life	200	
1,090		1,496
Other Receipts:		
656 Receipts from Sales	543	
253 Less: Expenses of Sales	140	
403		403
66 Bank Deposit Interest		86
48 Income Tax Recoverable		48
400 Receipts for Visits		294
300 Advertising in Annual Report		420
414 Donations		529
2,721		3,276

Expenditure

431 Printing, Typing, Stationery and Equipment	348
500 Postage and Telephone	435
982 Producing Annual Report and Society Leaflet	900
— Russian Embassy Meeting Expenses	312
65 Professional Charges	140
30 Sundry Expenses	53
66 Hire of Hall, Lectures, etc.	75
349 Coach Visits, etc.	228
27 Subscriptions and Donations	16
264 Tree Planting	304
9 Photographic Records	5
2,723	2,816

Surplus (1977 Deficiency)	
(£2) Transferred from Accumulated Fund ..	460

BALANCE SHEET

as at 31st DECEMBER, 1978

1977	£	£
Assets		
8 Stock of Sale Articles		12
117 Stock of Christmas Cards		117
— Sundry Debtor		16
49 Income Tax Recoverable		—
Balance at Bank:		
1,019 Deposit Account	1,605	
766 Current Account	670	
		2,275
1,959		2,420
Liabilities		
34 Subscriptions paid in advance	23	
112 Creditors for Expenses	124	
146		147
£1,813		£2,273

Accumulated Fund

1,815 Balance at 1st January, 1978	1,813
(2) Surplus from Income and Expenditure Account	460

KEON HUGHES, *Hon. Treasurer*
G. CHRISTIANSEN, *Hon. Secretary*

£1,813	£2,273
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In accordance with instructions given to us, we have prepared the foregoing accounts from the accounting records of the Kensington Society and from information and explanations supplied to us.

CROFT, MAY & CO.
Chartered Accountants

33 Marloes Road
Kensington
London W8 6LG
5 March 1979

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Address

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The Hon. Treasurer, The Kensington Society,
c/o 18 Kensington Square, W.8.

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

SIGNATURE _____ (TITLE)

(MR., MRS. OR MISS)

ADDRESS _____

BANKER'S ORDER

TO _____ BANK _____

19 _____

Please pay Barclays Bank Ltd., of 74 Kensington High Street, W.8, to the credit of the account of The Kensington Society, my subscription of £, and continue the same on the 1st of January annually until further notice.

SIGNATURE _____

ADDRESS _____

(MR., MRS. OR MISS)

(TITLE) _____

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

Life Subscription £50.00.

Annual Subscription £3

Corporate Membership £5.25.

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

I,
(Full name)

of
(Address)

HEREBY COVENANT with THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY, c/o 18 Kensington Square, W.8, that for a period of seven years from the 1st day of, 19.., or during the residue of my life, whichever shall be shorter, I will pay annually to the said Society from my general fund of taxed income such a sum as after the deduction of income tax at the rate for the time being in force will amount to the net sum of £3 or any part thereof.

IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this day of 19....

Signed, sealed and delivered by the above-named COVENANTOR in the presence of

WITNESS.....

ADDRESS.....

OCCUPATION.....

SIGNATURE

PLEASE NOTE

- 1 The date to be inserted as the beginning of the seven years period should not be earlier than the date on which the covenant is executed.
- 2 Unless your first subscription under the covenant is paid on or after the date when the above period begins, the Society will not be able to reclaim the Income Tax on such payment.
- 3 The document should be returned as soon as possible after completion, in order that it may not be out of date for stamping.

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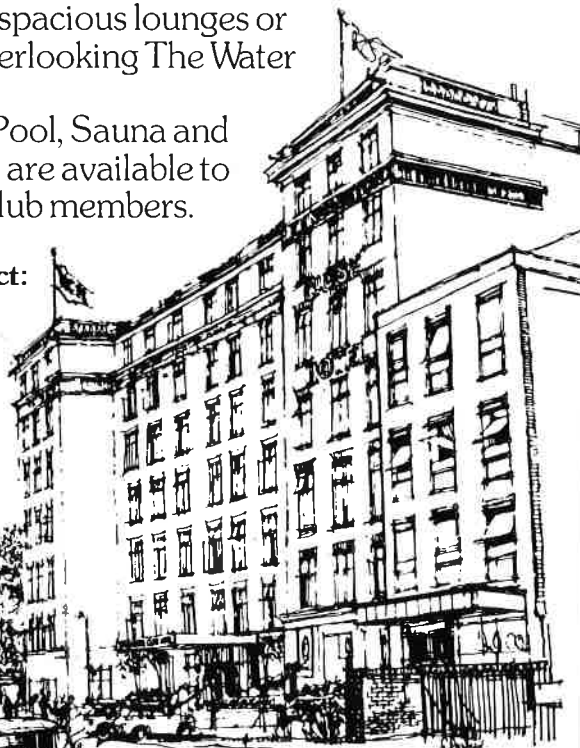
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