

THE
Kensington
Society



Annual Report
1996

THE

Kensington Society

The objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington for the public benefit by stimulating interest in its history and records, promoting good architecture and planning in its future development and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic or public interest.

Registered Charity No. 267778

Annual Report 1996

*East side of Onslow Square 1852
T. Hosmer Shepherd
By kind permission of The Royal Borough Kensington Library*



*H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone.
Grandaughter of Queen Victoria, Patron of the Society for 25 years.
By kind permission of the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Snowdon G.C.V.O.*

The Kensington Society

PATRON

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, G.C.V.O.**

PRESIDENT

SIR JOHN DRUMMOND, C.B.E.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

**THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF SNOWDON, G.C.V.O.
MRS GAY CHRISTIANSEN**

COUNCIL

Sir Ronald Arculus K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.	Dr Peter Nathan
Barnabas Brunner	Sir Duncan Oppenheim
Philip English	Dr Stephen Pasmore
Peter de Vere Hunt	George Pole
Ian Grant	The Hon. Laura Ponsonby
Antony Jabez-Smith	Jack Single
Robert Martin	Martin Starkie
Michael Middleton, C.B.E.	Tom Wilmot
Michael Winner	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sir Ronald Arculus K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.	Robin Price
Michael Bach	Arthur Farrand Radley, M.B.E.
Mrs Angela Darwin	Mrs Ethne Rudd
Philip English	Sidney Silver
Robert Meadows	Robert Vigars
Robert Milne-Tyte	Mrs Susan Walker
Harry Morgan	Hugh Wilson

CHAIRMAN: Robert Vigars

VICE-CHAIRMAN Robert Meadows

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs Ethne Rudd

HON. TREASURER: Hugh Wilson

VISITS SECRETARIES: Arthur Farrand Radley, M.B.E., & Robin Price

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Mrs Angela Darwin

ANNUAL REPORT: Mrs Gay Christiansen

HON. AUDITOR: Andrew Snelling, Barclays Bank PLC

President's Foreword

HAVING for the last year been free of my former responsibilities for Radio 3 or the Proms, and having given up membership of several time-consuming committees, I have had the chance to devote much more time to reading, thinking and reflecting on our current situation. When I spoke at last year's Annual General Meeting about my life in Kensington, some members of the Society seemed surprised to discover that I had such strong personal links to the area and that I actually knew a bit about its history and architecture! Yet for me this is only a welcome return to a world where I used to spend a great deal more time than in recent years. And I mean by that both architecture and Kensington.

My predecessor as President, Alec Clifton-Taylor, was not just a friend, but someone who owed his television career, and a very distinguished one it was too, to the happy chance of my having 'discovered' him and produced his first programme. What struck me from the outset was the infectious enthusiasm he brought to everything he did and the way he was so successful at involving other people in the things he cared about. Going round the country with him, looking at buildings was an extraordinary education, even if you thought you knew quite a lot already, because he noticed so much that so many fail to see because they take it for granted. I remember him saying "Of course all buildings have roofs, but it is always worth asking what sort of roof and why".

We tend to have short memories about change and not only fail to see what is there, but to remember what was there before. For all our interest we have a kind of blindness to our immediate surroundings which frequently means we are not strong enough in fighting to keep the best of what we have. In any big city, and especially in a borough like Kensington, with a large transient population and constant changes of use for buildings, some degree of change is inevitable. But that does not make it always desirable. The area behind Gloucester Road Underground Station, for instance, has been almost entirely rebuilt, but few could claim that it contains a single adequate building. How did that huge hotel on Cromwell Road get planning permission, when it so obviously breaks all the rules of scale and proportion that make an area like that feel integrated? Notting Hill Gate is another sad example of planner's lack of respect for the surroundings. Yet these are old mistakes, and it is gratifying to know that they have not been repeated in Kensington. I believe the Society can be given a fair amount of credit for that. But the cost is high and it takes time, if we are to continue to exercise a permanent vigilance about our environment. How much is the present membership prepared to do to make sure that the next fifty years continue their predecessors'

record of watchful and intelligent involvement in the continuing evolution of one of the most attractive parts of the capital? And how much understanding is needed to make sure that inevitable change is approached with sensitivity as well as confidence? Nothing stands still without losing relevance and authority. I think the Society needs to reflect on that with renewed energy. Decisions once taken often prove irreversible, and by then it is too late to do more than talk about it. We must look forward as well as backwards.

J.D.

Annual General Meeting 1996

THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held on 24th April 1996 in the Small Town Hall. Mr Robert Vigars opened the meeting by welcoming the Chairman, the President of the Society, Sir John Drummond, and, the distinguished guests including Mr Desmond Harney, chairman of the Royal Borough Planning and Conservation Committee, Mr Michael French, Executive Director, of Planning and Conservation Committee..

The business of the meeting was conducted after the talk given by Sir John Drummond entitled "Living in Kensington".

Sir John said that although he had been President of the Society for over 10 years, except for writing an annual report, he had not demonstrated his knowledge of Kensington, and as he had lived most of his life within the Borough, he was going to take us on a walk all around Kensington.

Architecturally, Kensington has a very strange history as it was a random development. One of the earliest was Kensington Square and when it was built it was surrounded by fields. He reminded us that Notting Hill Gate was called Gravel Pits because it was a gravel Pit.

Sir John took his listeners around the places where he lived and commented on the extraordinary changes which had taken place in a few short years.

He ended by emphasising that the greatest change was in the motor car – now every curb is packed with cars so that it is difficult to see and appreciate the houses, and the traffic situation is difficult and he made a plea for more one way streets.

Mr Robert Vigars thanked Sir John for his fascinating and amusing talk which had also demonstrated how fitting it was that he was our President as he had such a detailed knowledge of Kensington. He proposed a formal vote of thanks which was enthusiastically endorsed.

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 4th May 1995 and printed in the Annual Report were then confirmed.

The Chairman confirmed that no action had been taken on the increase to the subscriptions. He also mentioned that he had no further information on St Mary Abbots Archaeology (p. 56 of Annual Report) and from the floor Mr Dennis Corble said that he was keeping a watching brief on this.

The Chairman then thanked several people: the Secretary, Ethne Rudd, Robert Milne-Tyte for taking the Minutes at the Committee Meetings; Arthur Farrand Radley and Robin Price for arranging the visits and Mrs Christiansen for editing the Annual Report.

Mr Vigars reported that he continued to scrutinise the planning applications, and thanked Michael Bach and Robert Meadows for attending relevant meetings. He thanked Michael Middleton who was now resigning from the Committee for all his past work and he thanked all the continuing members of the Committee.

He then reported that the Fenelon Place Development was still not sealed, and Councillor Harney reported that “the ball is in Tesco’s court”.

The Annual Accounts for 1995 as set out in the Annual Report were then approved.

The Society’s Hon. Auditor, Mr Andrew Snelling was thanked and re-appointed.

Under Any Other Business;

Sir John Drummond asked everyone to keep an eye on the Alec Clifton-Taylor Garden which was now looking good.

Arthur Farrand Radley and Robin Price spoke about the visits.

Robert Meadows thanked Mrs Christiansen for the Princess Alice Memorial Garden and Mrs Christiansen spoke about the vandalism she had encountered there, in particular the smashing of the irrigation system. She also thanked John Bickel for all his hard work in the garden.

Sir John then rounded up the meeting by thanking Mrs Christiansen again and asking everyone to bring a friend next time so that the membership can be doubled.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.

Late News

Philip English is retiring as a Committee member of the Society in April, at the Annual General Meeting. Philip joined the Society in 1973. He has served as a member of the Executive Committee since 1979. I would like to record my thanks for the help he gave me in so many different ways, during his years as a Committee member.

1997 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Maria Assumpta Centre, 23 Kensington Square, W.8, on April 24th, 6.00pm for 6.30pm.

Chairman, The President Sir John Drummond C.B.E.

Speaker, Mr Simon Jenkins “How can Kensington change and develop in the future and still remain Kensington?”.

Chairman's Report

I am thankful to report that my appeal for help from members to enable the Society to continue its work and activities after the retirement of Mrs Christiansen, met with a response which has resulted in our achieving that aim.

I should record first that Mrs Christiansen has retained responsibility for editing, producing, and distributing this Annual Report and also for the maintenance of the Princess Alice Memorial Garden at the Town Hall. Mrs Rudd, who took her place as Honorary Secretary in the Autumn of 1995, has completed her first full year in that office and has contributed to the day to day work of the Society and carrying out new initiatives which will become apparent as 1997 unfolds.

Mrs Darwin has undertaken the role of Membership Secretary and is planning ways to increase our membership, particularly in the north of the Borough. Our President emphasised the need for this in his Foreword to last year's Report.

Our Vice Chairman, Robert Meadows, and Michael Bach have given me much assistance in monitoring and making representations to the Borough Council on planning, environmental and traffic policies and planning applications. Some details of this work will be found elsewhere in the Report.

Arthur Farrand Radley and Robin Price have together organised a splendid variety of visits.

An indispensable role has been played by Robert Milne-Tyte in producing minutes of our bi-monthly Executive Committee Meetings. These are essential not only as a record, but also as an agenda for action by committee members. Harry Morgan keeps a watchful eye on our proceedings. Hugh Wilson as Honorary Treasurer has produced and guided through audit our annual accounts.

Early in the year, we co-opted Sir Ronald Arculus and Sidney Silver to the Executive Committee. Michael Middleton and Philip English expressed a wish to retire. I would like to record the Society's thanks to them both for very many years contributions to our affairs.

In short, the Society is in good heart, but needs increased membership to ensure that its representations to the Council and to the Government command attention.

R.V.

Kensington Society's News

Mr Michael Middleton C.B.E., a member of the Society since 1957 and a member of the Committee for the last ten years, has retired from the Committee. He has been elected a member of the Council of the Society, much appreciation has been expressed for his help for so many years. He has represented the Society on the Panel of Assessors for the Borough's Annual Environmental Awards again this year. See page ~~XX~~ 17

Acknowledgements

As members will see from the preface of this Report a number of changes have taken place during the past year. Mrs Ethne Rudd was elected Honorary Secretary in 1995 and has dealt with Committee Meetings and other matters during the year. The Secretariat has been divided and Mrs Angela Darwin has taken over as Membership Secretary. Mr Hugh Wilson has been elected Honorary Treasurer, Mr Arthur Farrand Radley M.B.E. and Mr Robin Price are continuing as Visit Secretaries. Mr Robert Milne-Tyte is the Minute taker for Committee Meetings etc.

The Chairman Mr Robert Vigars, the Vice Chairman Mr Robert Meadows and Mr Michael Bach have attended and reported on Borough Council Meetings and have examined and reported on planning applications before the Borough Council.

The Society is indebted to Mr Andrew Snelling for acting as Honorary Auditor and to Mr Jabez-Smith for as usual, reading a proof copy of this report.

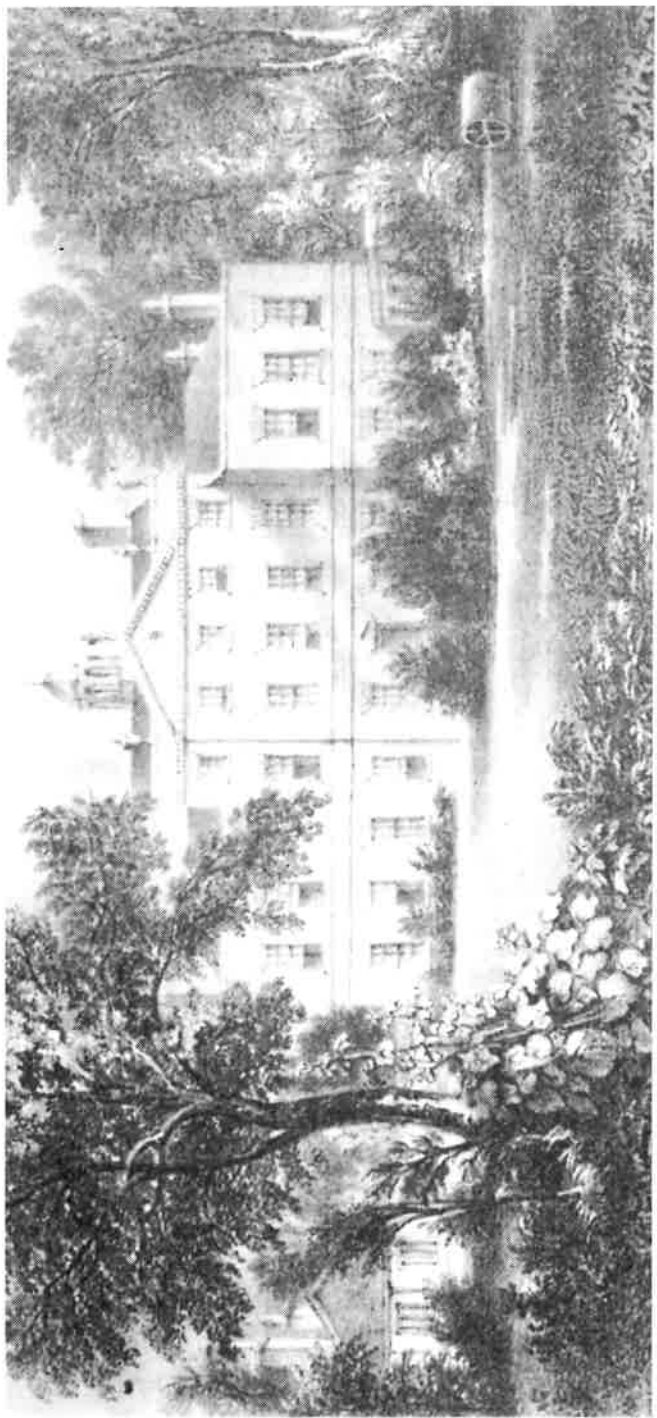
We are grateful for the help given by Mr Hills and for the support given by advertisers, without their help this Report could not be printed.

Subscriptions

The Annual subscription of £10 for single membership and £25 for corporate membership was due on January 1st. Please be a punctual subscriber, sending out reminders not only increases the expenditure of the Society but entails extra work for the Honorary Secretary.

Aubrey House

How sad that Aubrey House has to be sold. The Trustees of Aubrey House are asking £25 million for the house through the Agents Knight Frank. This house was last on the market in 1873 when the



AUBREY HOUSE

The house is situated in Aubrey Walk, near the grounds of Holland Park. A house existed on the site as far back as 1698, successively known as "The Wells," "The Villa at Notting Hill" (1762), "Notting Hill House" (1795), and "Aubrey House" (1859). Lady Mary Coke lived there from 1767 to 1788. A history of the house, compiled by Miss F. M. Gladstone, was published in 1922.

radical M.P. Peter Taylor sold it to Mr William Cleverley Alexander, banker and art collector.

In 1872 Mr Alexander commissioned Whistler to paint all his children he also commissioned Whistler to decorate the Aubrey House reception rooms.

In 1914 the garden room was transformed into a ward for fifteen Belgian soldiers. In 1916 the house was offered to the Government for use as a hospital. A Matron and eight trained nurses were installed and were there until April 1920.

Jean and Rachel Alexander, daughters of William Cleverley Alexander, attended the first Kensington Society Meeting in 1953, they were elected to the Society's Council, and what good friends they were to the Society. Many visits were made to the house and gardens and the Society held many functions there.

Mr Alexander died in 1916 and much of his extensive and varied collection including pictures, lacquer and metal work were presented by Mr Alexander's daughters to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In the Provisional List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, considered by Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act In 1947, Aubrey house was Listed Grade II.

In 1962 the Society considered the house to be one of the last outstanding houses in Kensington and applied to the Housing and Local Government to upgrade the house to Grade I. The Society's efforts were not successful. The Minister informed the Society that while they agreed that Aubrey House was an important building they did not consider it to be up to the high standard and historic interest to justify it being made Grade I.

Spoliation Of A Village – South End

The spoliation of Kensington's last village was objected to by Kensington Court Association, the Victoria Road Association and the Kensington Society and just about every resident in the area. It was generally accepted that some development was necessary in the village and it was hoped that the development would have been small houses with gardens and a development in the same manner as Ansdel Street.

The present development is too high for the area, and during the time the development has taken place, the path which was purposely made to allow small children from Lady Eden's School and Thomas's School to be able to walk safely, when going to the Convent for games, has been taken over by the developers. A number of letters have been received from residents objecting to conditions caused by the development.



His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester unveiling the tablet on the Memorial Garden 1982

Princess Alice Memorial Garden.

The Society has again been awarded the Certificate of Excellence for the Gardens at the Town Hall. The Garden was planted and has been maintained by the Society since 1981. Members do please occasionally have a look at the Garden. The irrigation system has been a problem this year, by presumably children, breaking the irrigation stands. May I appeal to members for occasional funds, plants and bulbs are very expensive. In November 100 tulip bulbs, 60 lily bulbs were planted and roses renewed.

Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria was a great gardener, she was a wonderful Patron of the Kensington Society, attending so many of our activities.

Buildings At Risk

The Register of Listed Building at Risk was set up by English Heritage in 1991, Kensington Borough Council's Risk Register followed in 1992, it included those listed buildings identified by English Heritage, but also the derelict or partially derelict buildings in the Borough which had been identified by officers, local councillors and residents. Since 1992 218 individual properties have been added to the list, however, 100 individual properties have been removed as building works have been carried out. The Borough Council's Register has been regularly updated.

Kensington and Chelsea's Listed Buildings:

- Grade I – 14
- Grade II* – 95
- Grade II – 3,705

How sad, no Christmas lights on Kensington High Street, other Kensington streets were well lighted. Mr Siveright did his best.

Obituaries

It is with sadness that we report the death of the following members.

Miss J. Rink, Mrs Nicholas Thompson, Mrs Dyson, Mrs Handley-Derry, Miss Phair, Sir Dennis Titchener-Barrett, Dr Peter Newbold, Miss Jane Lidderdale O.B.E., Sir Roger Ormerod, Christopher Carlisle.

Sir Dennis Titchener-Barrett

The end of September Kensington suffered a sad loss in the death of Sir Dennis Titchener-Barrett.

After a distinguished Army Career, Sir Dennis devoted himself largely to politics, he was knighted for his political and public service. He and Lady Titchener-Barrett took a continuing interest in the local Conservative Party having been Chairman and President where his great charm and wisdom were much valued. His declining health lately restricted his activities, and he will be very much missed by his many friends and confederates.

D.G.

Dr Peter Newbold

Dr Newbold, who died from leukaemia at the early age of 57 years, was a long-standing member of the Society. His membership reflected his interest and knowledge in architecture, particularly the glories of Wren's City churches and 15th century stained glass manufacture, and would often spend weekends on the continent filming stained glass windows in churches. He was also a connoisseur of music and fine arts, and would think nothing of flying to San Francisco to hear Dame Joan Sutherland singing in a new production in the Opera House there. An indefatigable traveller, he was fluent in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish.

Peter Newbold read classics at college and then read medicine at New College, Oxford, before going on to Guy's Hospital Medical School, London. After junior hospital training posts in London, he spent two years at the Seripps Clinic in La Jolla, California. This was followed by another two years in Cambridge, and he was awarded the Oxford DM in 1974 for his thesis on skin cancers. In 1974, he was appointed consultant dermatologist to the Worcester Royal Infirmary where he continued until ill health forced him to retire at the early age of 56 years. In keeping with his deeply held Christian principles, he voluntarily extended his care and compassion to patients suffering from terminal illnesses.

George Pole

Miss Jane Lidderdale O.B.E.

Jane Lidderdale had a distinguished career at high level in the Civil Service, serving as secretary of several government

committees and also of the 1951 Festival of Britain VVCommittee; for this she received the O.B.E. After retirement she was elected chairman (insisting that she was to be known as chairman rather than chairperson) of the Campden Street Preservation Society, a position she filled with grace, charm, humour and enviable efficiency. Her Civil Service training and experience of committee work placed her in an admirable position to answer the sometimes vexacious activity of the local authorities with regard to the street she loved. A very unfortunate accident at home resulted in very painful injuries which forced her, very reluctantly, to retire from the chairmanship. After a long spell in hospital she recovered sufficiently to return home but died after a short time at the age of 87. The number of neighbours and friends attending her Memorial Service was a testimony to the regard with which she was held. She is greatly missed.

Campden Street Preservation Society

Sir Roger Ormerod P.C.

The Right Honourable Sir Roger Ormerod P.C., a member of the Society for many years has also died. Called to the Bar in 1936 he also qualified as a doctor in 1941 and served in the RAMC 1942-45. He practised at the Bar and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1958. He was a High Court Judge of the Family Division (formerly Probate, Divorce and Admiralty), from 1961 to 1974 and then a Lord Justice of Appeal until his retirement. He will be remembered as Chairman of the Notting Hill Housing Trust for 20 years from 1968 to 1988, and he served in many capacities on organisations relating to the Law and Medicine.

Judge Gerald Gordon

Christopher Carlisle

Christopher Carlisle died on December 17th 1996, aged 72. He had lived in Kensington most of his life and had been a Life member of the Kensington Society for forty years. He was born in 59 Onslow Gardens and remembered being taken up Queens Gate to Kensington Gardens twice daily by his nurse, passing the crossing sweeper at the junction with Cromwell Road. His first school was Wagner's at 90 Queens Gate. He then went to boarding school and subsequently saw war service in the Coldstream Guards, ending up in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

After the war and Cambridge Christopher came back to Kensington and worked as an insurance broker. He retired in 1985 and enjoyed having more time for local affairs. He was especially concerned about environment. His chief care, however, was the church of Holy Trinity, Prince Consort Road, where he was church-warden for ten years. In these years he was instrumental in the work of restoring the church to its former beauty, as well as helping to build up the congregation. As with Sir Christopher Wren, though on a smaller scale, 'Si Monumentum requiris, respice'.

C.A.C.

Planning Matters and a Selection of Cases dealt with

A report from the Hon. Secretary Mrs E. Rudd

Conservation Areas

The Society has continued to support the extension and development of the conservation areas, and this year we have pressed very hard for the inclusion of the Victoria Road area which should obviously be included in this.

South End

Although the development at South End has gone ahead we have continued to monitor the builders, in particular watching to see that they do not take some of the pavement for their development and that they do not harm the tree which was planted by Mrs Christiansen. In this we are greatly helped by local residents and members who let us know if anything worries them and we have found the Council are also aware of our concerns.



Interior Brompton Hospital Chapel

Licensing

We supported the Council, and wrote to our MP and the Home Office, objecting to the Liquor Licensing legislation proposing to extend the permitted hours on Fridays and Saturdays. In the current climate of relaxation of all laws in this area, this is something which will need to be watched. In particular we objected to the application made by the Gypsy Garden Restaurant at 59 Marlow's Road for plans to use the garden and forecourt for drinking and live music. This objection was led by a neighbour who put an enormous amount of time into collecting objections and letters of objection and in the event was successful.

Brompton Hospital

We continue to monitor the development of this site. In particular we supported the local societies, Brompton and Onslow Neighbourhood Associations in their objections to the proposal for the Chapel. This is to be a leisure and fitness club which will entail removing all the internal woodwork which is considered by all the experts to be of exceptional importance. It is particularly sad that

this chapel should not be kept for public worship as St Paul's Onslow Square is full every Sunday and would welcome an overflow site.

Victoria & Albert Museum extension

The Victoria & Albert have chosen Daniel Libeskind as their architect for the Boilerhouse scheme. Having seen the plans and models for this extension which would dominate the Aston Webb screen, the Society objected most strongly. The Trustees for the Victoria & Albert have now asked Mr Libeskind to reduce his plan, but the Society still objects. The extension would dominate the skyline and be quite inappropriate in Exhibition Road.

Cycling in Kensington Gardens

We supported the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens in their objection to unlimited cycling and roller-blading in the Gardens and as walkers in the Park can now see, cycling and roller-blading is restricted to certain paths with the walking only paths gravelled.

40 Victoria Road

Another application was put in for development of this site, and once again we supported the Victoria Road Association in objecting to this.

Heathrow Terminal 5

We continue to oppose the development of another Terminal.

10 Holland Street

The owner of this property applied to the Council for permission to change from retail to residential use. At first the Council refused, but the Society wrote supporting the owner on the grounds that his plans were sensitive and would improve the look of Holland Street. Permission for change has now been granted.

Other cases dealt with

Objection to a new Mexican Restaurant for 600 people at 38 Kensington High Street. Objections to extensions at 7-8 Pembroke Walk, 35 Edwardes Square, Cafe Bazzica.

Appeals

We have continued to write and support the Council when it has refused permission for use of the front garden for parking. Even in a scheme (as at 20 Cottessmore Gardens) when an ingenious arrangement is proposed so that the railings are not lost, we still oppose it on the grounds of appearance, the loss of the garden area, and the fact that a space is taken from a resident's parking area. This is the policy laid down in the UDP.

The Borough's Best

The Council's Environment Awards for 1996

Michael Middleton C.B.E.

This was the twentieth round of the Council's Environmental Awards Scheme – a model exercise of its kind which should surely, as it reaches the formal age of maturity, be given far greater publicity. The Royal Borough's terrain stretches a long way from the Grand Union Canal to the Thames, and the odds are that those in the north are unaware of the good work being done to the south, and vice versa.

The six assessors, including as usual representatives from the Kensington and Chelsea Societies, and from Action Disability, met under the chairmanship of Councillor Bryan Levitt. Before them were 24 completed entries, for consideration in five categories: New Buildings; Restoration and Conversion, Commercial, Access for the Handicapped and General Environmental Improvements. As usual we began by familiarising ourselves with these on the basis of the photographic evidence; taken in conjunction with Assessors' knowledge of many of the projects, this made possible some weeding out of the submissions – in some cases on the grounds that schemes were incomplete and would be more appropriately judged in a year's time.

After the hot weather of early June we set off in a light drizzle. However it quickly passed and a more pressing concern arose from the traffic hold-ups, especially in the south of the Borough. As always matters of principle prompted early debate. To what extent does the enforced retention of a listed building demand a gong for the owner/developer, who had no choice in the matter? The excellence of its restoration? Anything less would surely demand censure? Similarly, is recognition due to new development for 'keeping in keeping' if this simply resulted from the terms of the planning consent? What of a submission adjudged award-worthy in more than one category? Would not a 'two star' award reduce the chances of recognition for another submission in one of the categories? And so on, as always we tried to be pragmatic about such things.

In fact the most impressive in many ways of all the entries, the Boathouse, on the Grand Union Canal, hard by its crossing by Ladbroke Grove, was in fact given two Awards – for its conception and design as a new building but also for its exceptionally well thought out accessibility for the disabled. The Boathouse combines housing with a water sports centre for young people. It is well considered for its position; its balconies and curving roof evoke a light-hearted, vaguely nautical feel and the view afforded the



1996: Bridge Close and The Boathouse Centre W10; Lots Road SW10

passer-by through the canal basin where all the activity takes place is especially welcome. Taken in conjunction with the general towpath improvements effected here – the subject of a separate submission and themselves a worthy Award winner – the commended bridge works (and the arrival of Sainsbury's) these developments have given a splendid lift to this most northerly corner of the Borough

Also in the new-build category commendations were given to the housing at 150-158 Earls Court Road, on the corner of Cromwell Road; 51 Kelso Place; and the extension to the Sloane Club in SW1. The first of these, social housing by the Notting Hill Housing Trust, was felt to have succeeded well in its general massing on this important site, but to disappoint in some of its detailing and external finishes. 51 Kelso Place produced sharp differences of opinion, but received commendation as a wholly modern building which is an ornament to its locality. The Sloane Club extension likewise led to differing views but was felt on balance, notwithstanding weaknesses, to balance its duties to the distinguished barracks buildings on one side and the main Club building on the other, in what had been a demanding brief.

Unusually, no Award was made in the Restoration and Conversion category (in which fewer entries were received than usual), but commendations were earned by 53 Glebe Place, for its determined restoration of the building's original appearance, and to a tiny project – probably the smallest ever recognised in the Awards Scheme – at 5 Lambton Place, W.11 (the setting for other recent improvements). The latter is no more than a redesigned garage entrance, but so stylishly considered and executed as to form an exemplar for all such modest improvements. The incremental effect of such small works upon the urban scene is out of all proportion to their size; would that all received the care that this one did.

In the Commercial category National Westminster's building at

224-226 Kings Road, and its extension down Chelsea Manor Street to the side, were admired for the quality of its workmanship and design skills, and received an Award. Heal's, on the important corner of Kings Road and Sydney Street, notwithstanding some assessors' reservations, received a commendation for the changes effected. Common to both these projects, and the subject of strong adverse comment, was the state of the paving around the positioning of public utility furniture, which detract markedly from the schemes themselves. It is greatly to be hoped that these matters will receive early attention.

Finally, mention must be made of the accessibility category. The Boathouse, as has been mentioned, received an Award for its thorough-going efforts in this direction; so too did the Chelsea Methodist Church in its adaption to community uses. The number of entries in this category did not reflect the amount of work which is known to be going on in the Borough, well exemplified by the simple improvements effected by Pierre Victoire at Notting Hill Gate, which received a Commendation. Worth a visit by other shops and restaurants.

A number of entries, otherwise above average, were let down by their poor detailing, inconsistencies of treatment and, frequently, poor brickwork. Nonetheless, by those who have had longer experience of the Awards Scheme than has your correspondent, standards are thought to be rising. Long term concerns – for example the Council's improvements to the borough's many mews – have shown pleasing results over the years. Excellent work is in progress, as at Notting Hill Gate. One could wish, however, for more consistently excellent improvements where change is almost endemic – in the design of shopfronts, forever in a state of flux. Which perhaps brings us back to my opening plea for greater publicity to be given to these Awards, as a means of creating greater awareness of the importance of quality at all levels.

The Awards and commendations were presented by the Mayor – together with a Civic Trust Award and several commendations – at a ceremony at the Town Hall in September.

Environment Award Scheme



South Kensington Station

This is the third year we have written about the important proposal to re-develop South Kensington Station and the adjacent site. As well as the station, the scheme includes shops, restaurants, offices and residential accommodation. It would be carried out by a developer and is therefore commercially-driven.

Some modifications have again been made to the Planning Application. The most important change is the reduction in the height of the residential block on Pelham Street. The Council Planning Committee has called for various further modifications. But our original concern about the scheme remains. There is still no attempt to provide a strong link to the pedestrian subway to the museums – indeed the link in the new scheme is not as good as the existing link.

The scheme makes no attempt to help to solve the pedestrian and traffic congestion in the area. In fact, the nature and design of the scheme actually exacerbates the traffic congestion. However, we are told that the Council itself is producing a radical scheme to ease this congestion. This has not been made public. We look forward to full public consultation on this. We hope that such a scheme will be carried out without delay, even if the station re-building scheme is delayed by the lack of a suitable commercial developer.

R.R.M

Warwick Road, Fenelon Place

The area west of Warwick Road between Sainsbury's Homebase and Cromwell Road is one of the few remaining areas in the Borough suitable for comprehensive development. However, it seems that, for various reasons, this is unlikely to happen and the area will be re-developed piecemeal.

Since we wrote about this subject last year, the Council has completed its negotiations with Tesco for the development of the Fenelon Place area, including a superstore and an office block. The Society has always opposed this departure from the Council's own Planning Brief for this site.

A full Planning Application has now been made. This envisages development in two phases. Phase 1 includes a large superstore, 75 residential units, parking for 450 cars, a coach and lorry park and a new access road to Earls Court Exhibition Centre. Phase 2 includes a 10-storey office block. The housing is on top of the superstore. Access to the superstore from the north and the east by bus will be very difficult. The environment of the housing seems poor, especially for families. With the present over-provision of offices in London, it seems doubtful if the office block will ever be built.

R.R.M.

Kensington High Street A New Future?

At last we are moving forward. After several false starts in the last 20 years, we might at last get a strategy for the High Street that will be agreed and implemented. We might at last get the improvements necessary to equip the High Street to survive and flourish as an important shopping centre.

The Council has commissioned a firm of consultants, Urban Initiatives, to produce a vision and a strategy for the future of the High Street. This is an exciting departure, because at last we may get an innovative and yet realistic set of proposals which could transform the High Street into a much more pleasant place to shop or even just to walk along.

The consultants have focussed on:

Maintaining and improving the quality of the environment of the High Street, especially addressing the high levels of pavement overcrowding, street clutter and the lack of safe and convenient pedestrian crossings.

Maintaining and improving the types of shopping and other attractions so as to sustain the High Street's position as an important shopping centre.

Getting the public and private sectors and local residents to work together.

The strategy has been prepared after widespread participation by the business community, residents and London Transport. This has helped identify the key issues, both problems and opportunities, and to get some agreement on what needs to be done.

Traffic and pedestrian conditions

Everyone agrees that something needs to be done about the amount of traffic and the conflict between this and the quality of the pedestrian environment. The consultants have come up with exciting proposals which reduce the amount of space given over to vehicular traffic and increase the amount given to pedestrians in the main part of the High Street, from the Odeon to the Royal Garden Hotel, by:

Removing the bus lanes in both directions and providing laybys at bus stops;

Narrowing the road to a single lane of moving traffic in each direction, except near key junctions;

Treating all side road junctions to provide continuous pavement;

Widening the pavements on both sides of the road; and

Increasing the number of pedestrian crossings and changing them from two-stage to straight across in one stage.

These new arrangements would still enable the High Street to handle the same amount of traffic as now, except at the rush hour,

where a reduction of up to 10% would be required. This would be achieved by discouraging use of the High Street as a through route from the West to Central London. This will mean diverting about 100 vehicles an hour onto Cromwell Road in the rush hour.

Some people were concerned that traffic could get diverted into side streets. The plans include junction treatments – a continuation of the pavement across side streets from Palace Gate to Edwardes Square – which will give a clear message to motorists that they are entering a residential area. Moreover, the scope for rat running parallel to the High Street is limited because of the Circle Line and the parks.

Improving the Streetscape

Wider pavements with less “street furniture” cluttering up the space is what is proposed. The first thing that can go will be the hundreds of metres of guardrailing. The amount of signs can be reduced and even the lampposts could go, if lights are attached to buildings. The bus stops can be redesigned to incorporate lighting, information, telephones and kiosks. Seating will be able to be included at the Commonwealth Institute and near St Mary Abbots Church.

Areas where special projects are suggested include:

Kensington Church Street: widening the pavement on the eastern side, shifting the road west and putting the footpath through the churchyard.

Commonwealth Institute: creating a large square, by moving the entrance to Holland Park about 50 metres north; and

Hornton Street/Wrights Lane: creating a clearer, wide pedestrian route from the Town Hall across the high Street to Wrights Lane.

Overall Assessment

Overall, the High Street is in good health, although it is likely to lose out to other centres unless urgent action is taken to improve its attractiveness. The consultants recommend drawing up a clear strategy for the High Street and creating a partnership between the Borough, the traders and the residents to take it forward.

The Society welcomes these proposals as the starting point for debate. We are keen that the proposals are fleshed out and refined into a clear vision and an action plan drawn up. There is still a lot to be done and implementing it will take several years. We are keen for the Council to press on. Only if we can make the High Street more attractive to users, can we reverse the long-term decline it has experienced over the last 20 years. The Society expects to play a major role in this partnership. I hope that next year there will be visible progress to report.

Michael Bach

Extracts from a 1961 Public Inquiry

We are now familiar with the terms ‘conservation’ and ‘preservation’ in relation to the built environment and with Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings as part of present Planning Legislation, that we forget the tremendous changes in attitude which took place following the post-war building boom. Whole areas and many important buildings were destroyed before the new legislation and the change in attitude brought this to a halt.

An interesting and dramatic example of this occurred in Kensington in 1960 in which the Kensington Society played a leading part. Leighton House and the famous houses in Melbury Road were coming under threat from developers. The London County Council and the Kensington Society presented the case for preserving these houses at a Public Inquiry. Here are extracts from the report of the Public Inquiry which appeared in the 1960-61 Annual Report of the Society.

The Inquiry was held at Kensington Town Hall on April 19th and 20th 1961 before an Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government following a proposal by the L.C.C. for a Preservation Order in respect of Leighton House, which is No 12, Holland Park Road, and Nos. 6, 8, 9, 11, 15 and 17, Melbury Road.

The order was opposed by the Kensington Borough Council and the Holland Park Parways Estate.

For the London County Council, Mr Harold Marmham said that the houses were designed by artists and architects of the late Victorian era. They demonstrated the best of Victorian design of the artists’ own merits and as an expression of the leading artists of that time. They formed the nucleus of the artistic world and are therefore rich in historical associations. He called Mr Ashley Barker as his first witness. Mr Ashley Barker Senior Assistant in the Historic Buildings Section of the Architect’s Department of the London County Council, said:-

The houses numbered 9 and 11, Melbury Road, Kensington are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of architectural or historic interest for the Borough of Kensington prepared under Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.

The houses numbered 6, 8, 15 and 17, Melbury Road and No 12, Holland Park Road, having been included in a Supplementary List of Buildings of architectural or historic interest, were the subject of a letter dated February 5th, 1960, from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the Architect to the London County Council stating that Ministry proposed to add them to the Statutory List and that an instrument for that purpose was being prepared.

At that time the Council had under consideration a planning application relating to the sites of No. 6, Melbury Road and No. 14, Holland Park Road and envisaging the demolition of both of these buildings.

On May 16th, 1960, the Town Planning Committee of the London County Council determined to make a Building Preservation Order on all of the buildings numbered 6, 8, 9, 11, 15 and 17, Melbury Road as well as on number 12, Holland Park Road (also known as Leighton House) and the planning application was subsequently refused, both for this and other reasons.

Mr Ashley Barker then went on to give a detailed description of each house and then concluded: "It will be seen from all the foregoing that these houses, covered by the proposed Preservation Order, are of quite outstanding architectural interest and rich in historical association, as well as forming a most important document in the study of the development of Victorian taste. Representations have been received from The Royal Academy of Arts, the Kensington Society, the London Society and the Victorian Society, all supporting the making of a building Preservation Order. I am of the opinion that these buildings clearly warrant preservation. In the words of the Victorian Society's letter to the Council they "are a remarkable monument to the art-life of the Victorian age and to an aspect of the social history of Kensington".

The Kensington Society opened their case by calling the distinguished architect, Sir Albert Richardson, a former President of the Royal Academy, to give his opinion on the merits of the houses.

He said the planning of Melbury Road and its houses and gardens is superb and an example of Victorian looking-ahead. He told the Inspector, "any interference would be detrimental to the whole borough". He described Leighton House as being "the background of a great artist, free from ordinary trammels and commercialism", and spoke of "the appeal it makes to the ordinary mind". It fulfils a wonderful purpose. It is pleasant to look upon and adds something to the locality.

Of No. 6 Melbury Road, a house which had not been highly commended by other witnesses, Sir Albert said it had a really superb silhouette and that its plan was masterly. It was part of the history of this period and was important to the other houses. If properly cared for, remarked Sir Albert, No. 6 would form part of the future cultural centre of the borough.

No. 9 was the best example of the work of William Burges, the architect, "I think it would be a disaster and a comment on the general decline if it were touched. Already the public dislikes the rubbish that is being erected and when intelligence reigns once more, people will realise the importance of these Victorian Houses. They are part of the national heritage."

The Kensington Society concluded its case by presenting the following statement to the Inspector.

Several years ago the Kensington Society asked the London County Council to consider making preservation orders on groups of buildings.

The Society was very gratified to learn that the County Council considers that nos. 6, 8, 9, 11, 15 and 17 Melbury Road, and Leighton House (12 Holland Park Road) should be preserved both on account of the intrinsic architectural merit and of their importance as a group expressing the taste of well-known artists of the late Victorian period.

The Kensington Borough Council has objected to a Building Preservation Order being put on these houses. The Society deplores the action of the Kensington Borough Council and would like to submit the following observations for the consideration of the Minister.

Melbury Road and its region represents a development which took place in the 1870's on the site of an old farm house and the old Little Holland House and its grounds. In 1870 Lady Holland's circumstances were in that entanglement which led to her making over the administration of the whole of the Holland Park property to Lord Ilchester. An agreement of 1871 forbade any building lease that would "interfere with the beauty and enjoyment of the house", but left Lord Ilchester free to dispose of the Little Holland House portion of the estate, and this he quickly marked down for development, planning a new street, Melbury Road.

G. F. Watts built the first house in Melbury Road and named it Little Holland House (now No.6). Lord Leighton had already built for himself a house in Holland Park Road and the presence of Watts and Leighton inevitably attracted other artists, the district even acquiring the name of "the Leighton Settlement". Victorian academicians who enjoyed great prosperity by their subject pictures and the large sale of engravings made from them were able to indulge themselves architecturally and Norman Shaw, elected A.R.A. in 1872, was employed by his colleagues of the Academy. He designed No. 8 Melbury Road for Marcus Stone in 1876. Shaw also designed No. 11 for Luke Fildes in 1877. No. 15 Melbury Road is a typical example of the work of Shaw's pupil Halsey. No. 2 Melbury Road was the studio of the sculptor Sir William Hamo Thornycroft. Thomas Thornycroft was also a resident of Melbury Road, Holman Hunt lived at No. 18. No. 9 Melbury Road (Tower House) is a house on which that imaginative architect William Burges spent many years of loving effort. This house cannot be considered otherwise than one of the most wonderful houses in London, as interesting as Leighton House in its expression of its builder's remarkable personality.

Leighton House in Holland Park Road was for thirty years (1866-1896) the home of Lord Leighton, P.R.A. It was designed by him and erected under the direction of his friend George Aitchison, R.A. That part of the house known as the Arab Hall was begun in 1877 and finished in 1879, and is remarkable as being solely the creation of this artists' mind; it embodies the spirit of Eastern art, but without slavish imitation.

Its symmetrical proportions, wealth and beauty of colour and ornaments are achieved by clever and masterly blending of materials, old and new, Eastern and Western. The Eastern tiles (mainly 15th and 16th centuries) were brought from Rhodes, Damascus, Cairo and elsewhere, by Lord Leighton with the help of his friends, Sir Caspar Purdon Clark

and Captain Sir Richard Burton. The modern blue tiles are the work of William de Morgan, the stained glass and lattice wood work came from Damascus and Cairo, whilst the marble and stone work is executed in various styles. Particularly noteworthy are sets of tiles over the entrance, bearing an Arabic description, 16ft in length. On the same floor as the Arab Hall are rooms formerly known as the drawing and dining-rooms, in both of which small meetings are held.

Leighton House was acquired by the Kensington Council in 1926, and is maintained as a centre for the promotion of art, literature and music. An enemy bomb fell at the front of the building in September, 1940, but the damage caused was mostly external. The building was re-opened on 16th May, 1951.

The fact that the Kensington Borough Council objects to the proposal of the L.C.C. to put a Preservation Order on the house suggests that the Council is unwilling to save Leighton House from the developers. There is no doubt that the Ilchester Estate is very anxious to re-purchase the property for development, so if a preservation order is not made Leighton House may well be demolished sometime after 1963.

The Kensington Society believes that Leighton House and the small group of houses in Melbury Road call for special consideration. The Society feels that it would be iniquitous to demolish these houses and earnestly hopes that effective steps will be taken to prevent such a contingency.

The Inspector recommended that the Preservation Order be confirmed, except in so far as it related to No. 6 Melbury Road, but the Minister decided not to confirm the Order.

All the buildings were subsequently 'Listed' and, indeed, are regarded as some of the jewels in the Borough's heritage.

R.R.M.



The Tower House (centre) and the house Norman Shaw built for Sir Luke Fildes in which I now live (right) and one of the old Victorian houses opposite, now replaced by flats, in Melbury Road circa 1900.

Michael Winner

Tower House

Probably the most unusual house in London but one which very few people, other than private guests, have ever seen inside, is Tower House, in Melbury Road, Kensington.

The house was built in 1876 by the Victorian architect, William Burges, for his own occupation, when he was already famous for his fanciful work on the medieval-style Castell Coch for the Marquis of Bute, near Cardiff. The site of the house in Kensington (which he envisaged as a 'model residence of the 15th century') belonged to the Earl of Ilchester as part of the Holland House estate, just then beginning to be developed and Burges was granted a 90 year lease (from 1875) in February 1877, at an annual ground rent of £50 for the first two years and £100 a year thereafter. The building and its lavish embellishment and decoration is believed to have cost around £30,000.

Although the round tower, with its conical roof, has given the house its name, it was not included in Burges' original drawings but added before he finished the building plan.

From the outside the house is interesting and romantic, with its castle-like embrasures and mullioned windows, but it is the interior which really has a story to tell. Each room has a theme, from the arts, legends or nature. The bronze entrance door was decorated with symbols of the Four Ages of Man, and leads into the grand baronial hall where visitors first step over the mosaic of Burges' pet poodle, Pinkie, before reaching the central mosaic floor design, depicting a labyrinth in the centre of which Theseus is slaying the Minotaur.

The scheme for the dining room was said to be based on Chaucer's 'House of Fame', and certainly a figure of Fame was stolen from the house while it was derelict in the early 1960s, but scholars are in doubt about this as the design of the frieze features fairy-tale figures. It is hard, however, to look at anything but the striking ceiling, decorated with emblems depicting the Sun and the Planets, the Signs of the Zodiac and the Seasons and the Winds. Over the mantelpiece, 'the spirit of the house', an ivory-faced goddess, with lapis lazuli eyes, holding a rock crystal ball and sceptre, was in keeping with William Burges' designs for jewellery in the mode of Carl Fabergé, who was working in St Petersburg at about this time.

The library, on the garden side of the house, is quite suitably decorated in a literary and arts theme, the stained glass windows depicting Poetry, Music and Architecture and the coffered ceiling featuring the 'Law-givers', Moses, St Paul, Mohammed, Justinian, Aristotle and Luther.

The chimney piece, like a medieval castle, is fronted by figures

of the parts of speech, presided over by Mistress Grammar. Here are the trumpeters (Pronouns) the Verb Queen with her pages 'The Articles', followed by a man carrying a sack of Nouns, and all the rest, ending with a little dog, his tail curled into a question mark (Burgess had a sense of humour!).

A frieze below the mantelpiece contains the letters of the alphabet and pictures of birds by Burges's neighbour, H. Stacey Marks (Burgess bought seventy from him for £1 each!) decorated the bookcase doors. Burgess chose for his own bedroom design 'The Sea and its Inhabitants' – the Mermaid Room – with its frieze of fish and eels swimming and the ceiling illustrating the night sky sparkling with stars made of plate glass mirrors.

The Drawing, or Music Room, was dedicated the 'The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Love', the chimney piece carved with figures from Chaucer's 'Romance of the Rose', the cabinets on either side painted inside and out with symbols of the winds, oceans and flowers. Sadly, Burgess did not live long enough to enjoy the dream house where he lived barely four years, dying in 1881 before it was completed, having contracted a chill while driving in an open carriage.

Although a bachelor, he may still have had hopes of marriage and a family when he first planned the house, as he included day and night nurseries on the top floor.

The work was carried out by a team of artists and craftsmen and the names of the firms were recorded in his estimate book. Many were the same as those who had worked with him on the building of Castell Coch. All the stone carving was done by the sculptor Thomas Nicholls.

After Burgess's death, the house was occupied by his brother-in-law, Richard Pullen, and then passed into the hands of several owners. In the beginning of the Second World War, the resident occupier allowed the Auxiliary Fire Service to use the garage to station a mobile pump towed by a taxi, with the crew of firemen living in the chauffeur's quarters above.

In the 1950s, when redevelopment was just beginning after years of stagnation, the Kensington Society asked the then L.C.C. to make a Preservation Order on groups of buildings in this 'artists' quarter, between Addison and Melbury Roads, which had been the home of so many famous artists and sculptors, including G. F. Watts (whose Little Holland House was to go), Luke Fildes, Hamo Thorneycroft, Marcus Stone, John Leech and, of course, Lord Leighton, feeling that the spirit of the place was rooted in the sum of its parts rather than the buildings alone. But by 1962, Tower House was empty and for four years there were times when, despite valiant efforts by the Kensington and Victorian Societies and the championship of John Betjeman, it seemed it might even be demolished.



Tower House Library

But it was saved, and restoration began in 1966 with the aid of grants from the Greater London Council and the government and, when the actor Richard Harris acquired the house in 1969, he had further extensive repairs and redecorations carried out, including the restoration of some which had been obliterated earlier, much of the work being done by the successors of the original specialist firm which had worked there nearly a century before.

Fortunately, the original structure was extremely strong, the walls often two feet thick and the roof of Cumberland slate, otherwise this extremely interesting and unique building would surely have been lost during its years of dereliction. A target for vandals, and, despite its boarded up windows, used as a squat; pigeons nested in the top floors and dry rot began to creep into the woodwork.

At the same time even Leighton House was under threat, a curious coincidence as the link between these two Victorian museum pieces is so strong.

The tide of public taste, always fickle, fortunately turned in time to save them both, and it seems incredible now that either should have stood on the brink. Tower House is now in private ownership, Leighton House recognised as a jewel in the Royal Borough's Crown, but both, it seems, safe for at least the foreseeable future.

Barbara Denny



*Tower House
N.W. bedroom*

CHELSEA PAST

by Barbara Denny

The fascinating history of Chelsea is told in this new, sumptuously illustrated hardback.

Chelsea first became prominent when the ill-fated Sir Thomas More built a mansion overlooking the river there in the sixteenth century. It was from Chelsea that More set out to his trial and inevitable execution for denying Henry VIII his supremacy over the Church in England. With typical insensitivity, the king himself built another mansion near to More's former house in which he despoised discarded wives and children.

In the seventeenth century the splendid Royal Hospital for retired soldiers was built, and in the eighteenth century the Ranelagh pleasure gardens brought thousands of Londoners to the delights of the riverside. But it was not until the next century that Chelsea's artistic reputation was established. It became the home of many distinguished artists and writers—Turner, Whistler, Smollett, Wilde and Rossetti, to name just a few.

These highlights of Chelsea's history are amplified by many other stories and anecdotes reflecting the more modest side of Chelsea's nature and by many illustrations published for the first time.

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A Memorial to Dr Edward Jenner MD FRS *A Country Doctor Who Benefited Mankind* Kensington Gardens, London

Dr Edward Jenner MD FRS (1749-1823) was the man who, through his acute observation of the immunity of country milkmaids in his native Gloucestershire to the 'Speckled Monster', as it was then known, established the means in 1796 by which the world was to be rid of smallpox. And his principal monument to commemorate this great contribution, inaugurated in 1858 by Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, now stands in Kensington Gardens.

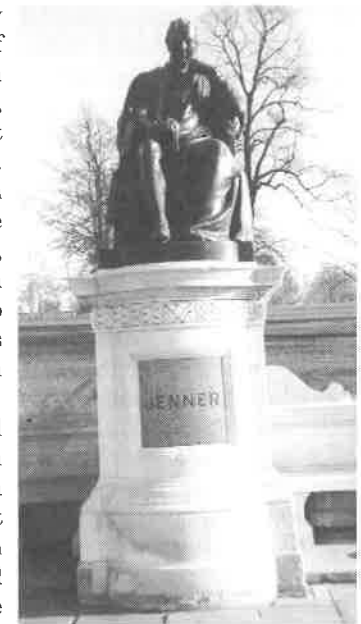
Smallpox was brought to Europe from the East by the returning Crusaders of the 13th century. It is difficult now to imagine the horror that this scourge brought in its train. It may not have erupted explosively as a pestilence like 'The Plague' but it spread rapidly and insidiously. The spots of smallpox that irritably covered the body caused ten percent of the total deaths and a third of those of children in London in the 18th century. It was the cruellest of the emissaries of the 'grim reaper'.

The link that Jenner recognised between the clear complexions of Gloucestershire dairymaids and the milder cowpox resulted in the end of the disease. On 14th May 1796, lymph from a cowpox pustule of Sarah Nemes, caught while milking 'Blossom' the cow, was vaccinated by Jenner into James Phipps. Later, when the boy was inoculated with smallpox, the feared symptoms failed to appear. Vaccination was shown to give protection. It then took nearly 200 years to eradicate the disease. The last recorded case was of a young man, Ali Maow Maalin, in Somalia in 1977 and, in 1980, the World Health Organisation, following an international eradication programme, declared the world was rid of the disease.

In view of his contribution, a number of memorials to Jenner have been erected. The first was placed by his friends in 1825, soon after his death, in his neighbouring Gloucester Cathedral. Napoleon, at the beginning of the 19th century, was one of the first to recognise the value of Jenner's discovery. British doctors were invited to France. Landing at Boulogne-sur-Mer, the first vaccinations in France were carried out there. As a result, a memorial to Jenner was erected in the town in 1865.

Perhaps the best known – since a casting stands in the Wellcome Building in London – is in the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Genoa, Italy. It is by one of the leading Italian sculptors of the 19th century, Giulio Monteverde, and depicts Jenner vaccinating his son.

It was commissioned in 1873 by Maria Brignole Sale, Duchess of Galliera, a member of an aristocratic Genoa banking family, in recognition of the protection that vaccination gave to her family. There is also another memorial in the grounds of the Japanese National Museum in Tokyo, Japan, due to its distance and its then isolation, was a later beneficiary to Jenner's discoveries and his memorial there was erected in 1904.



Jenner statue

However, Jenner's principal monument stands in Kensington Gardens. The sculptor, William Calder Marshall RA, a competent and prolific artist of the Victorian era, first produced the statue and the idea was then taken up by the medical profession. Committees were established internationally to

secure the necessary funds. The USA headed the list of donations; Russia, despite the intervention of the Crimean War, came second; and Britain was third. With the permission of Queen Victoria, a prestigious site in Trafalgar Square was secured and Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, presided over an inaugural occasion in 1858. Everybody who was anybody was there.

Soon afterwards, however, 'Jenner' was banished from Trafalgar Square. A non-military character, sitting reflectively, was thought inappropriate in an area devoted to British success at arms and her military heroes. *The Times* spoke up for his removal, and it was demanded in Parliament. The medical profession reacted vigorously, and *Punch*, contributed in verse, ironically saying:

'England's ingratitude still blots

The escutcheon of the brave and the free;

I saved you many million spots,

And now you grudge one spot for me.'

And so, in 1862, Jenner was unceremoniously moved to Kensington Gardens, the first statue to be placed there, overlooking the newly-erected fountains of the Italian Gardens. In 1896, on the centennial anniversary of Jenner's discoveries, St George's Hospital, originally at Hyde Park Corner, put in a 'Bid' for the statue. It had good grounds since Jenner had been a student at the Hospital and the illustrious John Hunter, one of its surgeons, was Jenner's mentor. But it failed, and the Hospital then made do with the well-preserved hide of 'Blossom' carefully hung in its library.

The battle against smallpox, with vaccination made compulsory in 1853, was a major medical development of Queen Victoria's reign. It is thus appropriate that Jenner's statue should stand in Kensington Gardens among a group of monuments to the achievements of that era.

But Jenner also justifies his place for another reason. King William III, who established Kensington Palace, suffered from asthma and, needing an alternative to the riverside air of Whitehall, moved to the higher Kensington in 1689. He offers an example of the ravages that the 'Speckled Monster' could then bring. His mother and father, Mary and William of Orange, were killed by the disease. William's wife suffered and died – aged but 32 years – and he was fortunate to survive. Smallpox, in fact, then contributed to a change in the course of British history. It killed the last survivor and brought to an end the Stuart Dynasty to which William III belonged, leading to the Act of Settlement of 1701 and the introduction of the Protestant, German Hanoverians to the British throne.

Given that record, it is certainly appropriate that a corner of Kensington Gardens be given to the honour of the man who rid the world of that deadly disease. It is also a fitting reason why the memorial should become a centre-point of the celebrations in 1996 to mark the bicentennial anniversary of Jenner's great discovery.

John Empson



*Kensal Green Cemetery
Photograph by Mr Farrand Radley on
a Kensington visit in 1996*

**3 October 1996
Kensal Green
Cemetery Visit**
Sam Bell, our guide,
presents the 'longest
running English
Cemetery remaining in
private ownership'.
Three-quarters of its
area lies in the Royal
Borough.

A Royal Pulpit

Next year in St Mary Abbots, the Parish Church of Kensington, the pulpit will be three hundred years old. Eminent churchmen will preach from this pulpit on successive Sundays early in the year.

The pulpit, made of oak is the work of a local joiner, Jasper Orchard; it is hexagonal with a panel on each facet on which are monograms, crowns and letters that are hard to identify. Although no reference to the pulpit can be found in the Royal Court records, the figures 1697 and the letters WMR accord with the tradition that the pulpit was the gift of King William III to the earlier St Mary Abbots that had just been completed (replacing a medieval church). The Royal Court was but newly established in Nottingham House, to be known thenceforward as Kensington Palace, and as the chapel was too small seats were reserved in St Mary Abbots.

Also on one of the pulpit's panels is a monogram supposed to be that of Princess Anne, later (in 1702) to ascend the throne as Queen Anne. Thomas Faulkner's 'History of Kensington' praises the Princess for her religious zeal 'augmenting from her own expense the livings of poor clergy and expressing solicitude for the purity of the clerical character'. I believe that her memory should be honoured as thanks are offered for the historic pulpit.

A. C-G.



*The Pulpit. One of a pair, used
as pulpit and reading desk
said to have been presented to
the parish by King William IV,
and dated 1697*

Major John Torriano

A long-standing resident of 16 Kensington Square in the late Georgian/Regency era was Major John Samuel Torriano, late of the East India Company's Bombay Artillery. Major Torriano took up residence in the square sometime after his retirement from the army in 1787 and died there nearly 40 years later in 1825.

Torriano was descended from a noble north Italian family, in late medieval times the Dukes of Milan and Counts of Taxi and Valsarvini. In 1572 Ferdinand Torriano, the then Count of Taxi, was Post Master to the Holy Roman Emperor in Venice. It was Ferdinand's son Alexander who founded the English branch of the family.

Though a Catholic, Alexander warned some local Protestants of an impending massacre and as a result was himself forced to flee his homeland. He took refuge first in Geneva, where he married and converted to the reformed faith, and then in England, where he arrived about 1620 and served as minister to the Italian church. He had three sons, who in turn had more children. From these strong refugee roots sprang many generations of successful Torriano merchants, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, academics, civil servants and soldiers.

Major Torriano's father Charles was an officer in the Royal Artillery. John followed his father to the military academy at Woolwich, but instead of proceeding into the regular army opted instead for a commission in the East India Company's forces. He sailed out to India at the age of 17 in 1768 and joined the Bombay Artillery the same year. During the 1770s he rose to the command of the artillery at Surat, the oldest English factory in India, and saw a good deal of action in the Mahratta wars. He also became a skilled surveyor and in 1776-7 carried out a secret survey of roads and forts in Mahratta territory while officially commanding the British ambassador to Poona's guard. For this survey, the first ever made in the Deccan by a British officer, Torriano was promoted brevet captain. Later his work was incorporated into a map of Hindustan published in 1787.

During the Mysore war of 1782 Torriano commanded the Bombay Artillery in the army of Brigadier-General Mathews, which had been charged with putting down Hyder Ali, then ravaging the Carnatic. Mathews opened his campaign by capturing the coastal fort of Onore, south of Goa, in January 1783. Having been wounded in the attack, Torriano was left in command of the fort after Mathews' departure with strict instructions to defend it 'to the utmost' in the event of an enemy attempt to recapture it. Hyder Ali's son, the fearsome Tipu Sultan, did indeed try to recapture it, but Torriano bravely held out. The siege lasted 10 months. For his

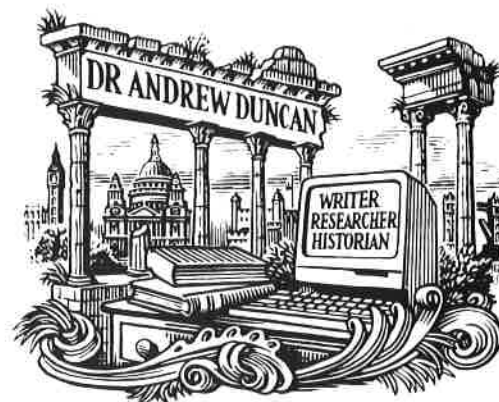
defence of Onore, described as one of the finest episodes of the war, Torriano – by then the senior artillery officer in the Bombay army – was promoted brevet major.

Torriano saw no more active service. In fact, his military career now ended altogether, and in rather unfortunate circumstances, though these were due to accountants and bureaucrats rather than Torriano himself.

Torriano's accounts for the defence of Onore were mixed up with a larger set of army accounts returned to head office in England for final auditing. Torriano felt obliged to appear in person to explain his accounts, but as there was no furlough available, he had to resign his commission first. This he did on 19 August 1787. He then returned to England. By the time the accounts were settled, it was too late for him to re-enter the army and so he lost his career, certain promotion to lieutenant-colonel and the entitlement to retire on full pay.

Just before leaving India, Torriano married an Irish girl, Jane Boyes. On arrival in England he settled in Kensington Square. Other Torrianos – though not apparently his parents – lived there before him, including a Mrs Elizabeth Torriano and a Mr and Mrs Torriano. All were dead by 1791 so perhaps the major took over one of their houses. Several children were born to him in Kensington. In 1798 when the first Kensington volunteer corps was founded, he, with all his military experience, was appointed its commander. He features in a painting now in the Town Hall showing the presentation of the colours to the corps in 1799. Torriano's only other recorded local service was to act as a trustee of the Kensington savings institution, set up in 1819.

Torriano died on 27 September 1825, aged 75, and was buried in St Mary Abbots. There is a plaque to him inside the church on the north wall.



Secret London by Andrew Duncan

New Holland (Publishers) Ltd; 176 pages, 14 maps, 37 photographs;
£7.99 paperback, ISBN 1 85368 386 8; (ISBN 1 85368 277 2 Hardback)

Other Activities and Future Arrangements

Visits Made In 1996

Apsley House, Hoare's Bank and the Royal Courts of justice, Royal Naval College Greenwich, Hawksmoor London Churches, Swanton Mill, Eccleston Square Gardens, Two Historic Quaker Meeting Houses (Brentford & Isleworth and Jordans), Kensal Green Cemetery and Westminster Abbey.

Arthur Farrand Radley and Robin Price

Tuesday 18 February Sir Ronald Arculus KCMG, KCVO

Informal lecture entitled Undiplomatic Memoirs by the former HM Ambassador to the UK delegation on the Law of the Sea at the UN and HM Ambassador to Italy. This unusual occasion will allow us a fascinating glimpse into the unwritten side of the negotiatory life of a senior diplomat.

Meet at 6 for 6.15 at Kensington Square £5 per person

Wednesday 19 March Meet at 2.30pm at 27 Lots Road, SW10

The Royal Borough's Recycling Centre and the Kensington Canal and West London Railway. A guided tour of the massive 7,000 tonne per year recycling plant (the first in the country thanks to the Royal Borough's foresight) will be followed by a guided historical tour at the former site of the Royal Cremorne Gardens, the scene of 19th century balloon ascents, and the nearby Kensington Canal and West London Railway.

£5 per person

Tuesday 15 April Royal Albert Hall

Meet promptly at 6pm in the Elgar Room (via Main entrance and then door 6), for the tour which is followed by wine and canapes, a video and questions from participants. There is large capacity on this visit so bring as many guests as you can.

£5 per person

April 24th 6.15pm

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Maria Assumpta Centre, 23 Kensington Square W.8.

Chairman: Sir John Drummond CBE

Speaker: Mr Simon Jenkins. "How can Kensington change and develop in future and still remain KENSINGTON?"

Tuesday 13 May Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, W. Sussex

We visit 'Kew in the country' by coach. Meet at 1.00pm outside 18 Kensington Square. On the High Weald of Sussex, its higher rainfall, retentive soil and varied microclimate complement the collections at Kew. Not easily accessible without car or coach, the visit allows us to enjoy these superb gardens and the wonderful views over this area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The ticket includes coach, admission fee and tea.

£23 per ticket (£20 for National Trust Members)

Thursday 19 June Kensington Palace

Meet at the main entrance at 6.30pm for the pre-tour glass of wine. This highly-privileged visit explores a Royal Palace indelibly associated with William III and Mary II, and the childhood of Queen Victoria. After a special tour through Benson and Kent's interiors of 1723-7 led by the Director of the Palace, we shall repair to the Orangery for a summer two-course dinner with wine. This will be a real opportunity to meet fellow-members. Though limited places will be available, one guest per member will be welcome. The cost of this special tour, dinner and wine is reflected in the price.

£23 per person

Wednesday 9 July Quebec House and Squerries Court, Kent

Meet at 9.30am outside 18 Kensington Square.

Our summer outing takes us to the boyhood home of James Wolfe, victor at Quebec in 1759. At this very attractive 17th century house lined with contemporary panelling and filled with contemporary furniture, we shall have coffee on arrival, tour the house with its Wolfe memorabilia and have lunch. We shall then visit Squerries, still the home of the Warde family, whose George Warde was the boyhood companion of James Wolfe. This superb house has yet more Wolfe memorabilia and splendid gardens. The ticket includes coach, admissions, coffee and lunch. Tea will be available at Squerries but paid for individually. We aim to return to Kensington Square by 6pm.

£25 per person

Guests are welcome at any of these events

The Kensington Housing Trust

Looking back over its 70 year history, Kensington Housing Trust (KHT), influenced by the early model villages and garden cities, led the field in harnessing opinion to achieve practical results. Its approach was astonishingly modern. Documentary films showed the appalling conditions and overcrowding of local homes, shock-tactic leaflets and posters were distributed and fundraising events were organised. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a founder member of both KHT and the National Federation of Housing Associations, was a leading light, ably abetted by Miss Rachel Alexander who organised meetings and fund-raising events in her beautiful Aubrey Lodge. Miss Rachel and her sister attended the first meeting of the Kensington Society and were elected members of the Council of the Society.

In 1926, 23 almost derelict houses in Wornington Road were bought and adapted as comfortable flats. Three years later Crosfield House became the first purpose built KHT scheme, largely financed by that generous family and opened by The Duchess of York, who is now our Queen Mother. Princess Alice House which followed in 1934 and Robinson House, three years later, were both opened by H.R.H. Princess Alice of Athlone and housed 80 and 40 families respectively. The total number of tenancies achieved in 10 years was 341, housing 1,728 people. H.R.H. Princess Alice Countess of Athlone was the late Patron of the Kensington Society.

The destruction of the Second World War made it all the more necessary that KHT should resume work as soon as possible, when peace was proclaimed. Lord Balfour of Burleigh became President of KHT, Lady Pepler, wife of Sir George the Town Planner, took the Chair and Edward Norman-Butler was recruited to be the Treasurer. Already acting in that capacity for the Kensington Society, he shared the desire of both KHT and the Society; to provide comfortable family housing in North Kensington and preserve and enhance the historic buildings and open spaces of the Borough. In those days, Miss Brenda Breakwell MBE, the brilliant Director of a tiny staff, collected the rents herself on a bicycle, thereby keeping in close touch with the tenants. Sadly, this practice became too dangerous and more impersonal means had to be established instead.

In 1959, The Campden Charities, encouraged by one of their Trustees, offered to buy and adapt a house specifically for pensioners, if KHT would agree, against their principles, to divide the generations. After some hesitation, the deal went through, much to the delight of the Norman-Butler team. Thus began a

useful and continuing partnership between these two borough-based Trusts.

In 1961, the condition of the Wornington Road houses was causing the Management Committee much concern, but two obstacles had to be overcome before rebuilding could commence; money and the rehousing of the existing tenants. The first problem was solved by the imaginative decision of the Borough Council to lend KHT £500,000, part of which was spent on the acquisition of houses to accommodate the existing tenants and part on the actual construction of the new building.

In 1963, the Treasurer died and his widow was invited to join the Committee to chair a publicity campaign and organise the opening of the new development. Prince Philip, escorted by the President, named it Pepler House after the remarkable Chairman. Mrs Norman-Butler had recruited Lady Arthur and Mrs Weisweiler to help her and they both became valuable committee members. Lady Arthur organised the annual garden and window box competitions and Mrs Weisweiler became Vice Chairman.

The huge development of the Golborne Ward which followed in the 70's consisted of a stark design of fourteen, six storey blocks of flats with a large number of exits and entrances. This resulted in a lack of privacy and golden opportunities for crime and vandalism. In September 1991, Sir George Young, The Minister of Housing presided over the destruction of one of the access balconies.

Mrs Norman-Butler organised a competition for a suitable mural to enhance the bleak staircase of Paul House and to discourage graffiti. Sybil Pryor's brilliant design was chosen and in the summer holidays of 1980, under her leadership and with enthusiastic support from Mr White, the caretaker, children, dressed in plastic bags, filled the clear outlines with suitable colours while fathers stood on ladders to complete the high work. Sir Hugh Casson who opened the mural, preceded by a steel band and followed by ice-cream eating children, climbed from sea monsters in the basement to Mr and Mrs Noah and the dove on the top floor.

Currently, Wornington Green is undergoing estate-wide improvements to include separation of blocks; the building of new entrances and the installation of entry phone systems. North Kensington City Challenge has matched KHT's investment of over £2 million.

In the late 1970's Lady May Abel Smith, daughter of Princess Alice, came to open Athlone Gardens which provide a pleasant open space and a children's playground for those who live around it in varied types of housing. In recent years, a number of sheltered housing schemes for pensioners, disabled and other vulnerable people, have been enhanced by the imaginative design of the surroundings. If "one tree can transform a street" how much more can be done to soften the edges of urban life by flowering shrubs and a shady bench.

KHT's 70th year has seen the high-profile openings of large new housing projects, and has successfully transformed a closed-down DSS resettlement centre, derelict land and a redundant ambulance station, into Bridge Close in Ladbroke Grove, the Boathouse Centre on Canal Way and Westfield Close in Chelsea. These projects provide much needed local homes, but also community facilities ranging from skills-training for the unemployed to a sports centre with full access for the disabled. HRH the Princess Margaret opened Westfield Close in June 1996 and said how delighted she was to carry on the family tradition.

Keith Brading, who sadly died last May, served on the Committee years before becoming Chairman of KHT. His humane and wise leadership achieved the successful transition from a tightly knit neighbourly entity to a growing association providing over 3,000 homes and run by a highly trained staff and retaining the best of both traditions.

Mrs Norman-Butler, who resigned after 30 years on the Committee, was to her very great pleasure invited to be President in 1993 as it is an honour to follow in the footsteps of past and present housing pioneers. Much has been done, but much more must be done. Homelessness with all its evils is rife.

Fundraising – so central to KHT in the 1920's – is again to the fore. The same enthusiasm and determination which gave birth to KHT needs to be harnessed for the next century, complementing government investment with support and funding from other sources.

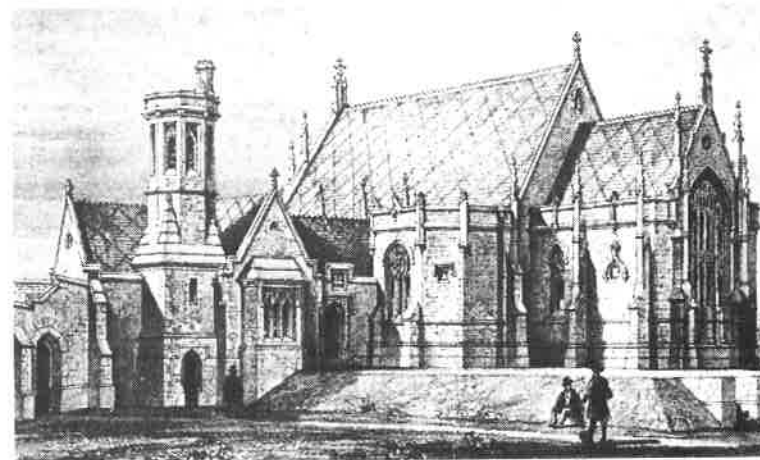


HRH The Princess Margaret with Mrs E. Norman-Butler (Honorary President KHT) and lifelong resident of RBKC

New Beginnings for Derelict Site

The Boathouse Centre started life as a singularly unpromising derelict site. Formerly part of the old gas works in north Kensington, the site, including a canal basin, was transferred to the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) for community use following the demise of ILEA. There was a legacy of contamination to contend with before RBKC could allow development. In 1991 The North Kensington Canalside Trust (NKCT), a local charity set up by residents, and RBKC formed a partnership to develop the derelict site. To help finance the development of the Centre, Kensington Housing Trust (KHT) purchased a lease of the air space above the proposed Centre to provide affordable, rented housing and KHT undertook to project manage the entire development. The site, which falls within the North Kensington City Challenge area has a frontage to the Grand Union Canal and lies to the west side of Ladbroke Grove between Canalside House and Sainsbury's. The canal basin provides easy access for small boats to the Paddington Branch of the Grand Union Canal, with some 15 miles of unobstructed water stretching between Little Venice in the East to Hayes and Southall in the West.

K.H.T.



Brompton Hospital Chapel (see page 15)

Heroes in Lexham Gardens and "Jimmy's"

Queen Victoria's official biographer was Sir Sidney Lee, Editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, who lived for thirty years at 108 Lexham Gardens where houses date from 1872-84. Many early occupants had careers in imperial service, and survivors of the Indian Mutiny included two VCs among a sprinkling of Generals.

However, a younger Indian veteran brought greatest distinction to Lexham Gardens in those days. Walter Haweis James (1847-1927) was educated privately and at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1867, he served for some years in India, on railways, finance and public works. Returning to Staff College, he passed "with honours" including German and Russian, thereafter being employed at the Horse Guards (War Office). In 1879 the Zulu War went badly for Britain with the massacre at Isandhlwana. James was among the reinforcements and as Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General on the staff of the commander, Lord Chelmsford, he was "within the square" at the battle of Ulundi on 4 July which ended the war.

Already married in 1871 to a daughter of the Revd George Akehurst, lecturer at St Mark's, Regent's Park and later Chaplain at Vevey, James retired as a Captain in September 1880. Moving into 19 Lexham Gardens, he ran the military tutors founded elsewhere in Kensington in 1864 by the Reverend Doctor George Frost, who had been Second Master at the Grammer School and Chaplain to the Workhouse (later St Mary Abbots Hospital). James quickly achieved an outstanding reputation as a highly successful tutor. The establishment at 19 and 21 spread to include 5 and 7 and "Jimmy's" became both fashionable and famous. Young men, including Victoria's grandson Arthur of Connaught, were schooled for army entrance; others more mature were prepared for Staff College entrance or promotion examinations. "Year by year for more than two decades he held the Blue Ribbon among the Crammers". An advertisement of 1897 stated that "more than one-fifth of the officers now serving passed into the Army from this establishment." ("Jimmy's" celebrated its centenary in 1964).

Another venture, St Paul's College, Stony Stratford, gave secondary education in small classes under the Revd Mr Jollye. Around 1896 this moved to Stratford-on-Avon as Trinity College under the new Headmaster, still under James's aegis. Within his own family James chose Eton, and at the Census of 1891 he was living with them in some style at 57 Lexham Gardens served by a

butler, a cook, a footman, two housemaids and a kitchenmaid. The author of a book on Waterloo, he produced military pamphlets, articles and lectures, and his *Modern Strategy* (1903) was required reading for aspiring officers.

James also entered local politics in Kensington as a Vestryman and Chairman of a Ratepayers' Association. At the Horse Guards he had received the thanks of Disraeli, and of Lord Salisbury whose sons he later tutored. Serving on the Executive Committee of the Ratepayers' Association he renewed acquaintance with Lord Chelmsford, the President who lived nearby at 5 Knaresborough Place. James championed establishing Free Libraries in Kensington, becoming a Commissioner. Though opposed to party influences in local matters he unsuccessfully contested North St Pancras as a Conservative in November 1885. He strongly favoured simplifying the whole system of local government, giving real influence to the newly formed boroughs. From 1889-1892 he was a member of the London County Council for South Kensington and a Conservative whip. For many years he was on the Grand Council of the Primrose League and Vice-Chairman in 1899.

With his reputation in military affairs, he returned to the War office during the South African War in 1901, assisting the Permanent Under-Secretary in the rank of Major, and promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in 1903. He moved to Bushmead Hall, Bedford, becoming active locally. Letters to *The Times* over forty years reflected his interests – naval and military affairs, the bye-laws and bad smells, the position of vestrymen. In 1911 this master of strategy met his Waterloo over a book. The sale of the copy of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which John Bunyan had possessed while he was writing *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Bedford gaol, was intended to avert the closure of the Bedford General Library and Scientific and Literary Institute. A Vice-President and Chairman of the Books Committee, James advocated this solution, hoping that the British Museum would purchase it. Questions were raised in Parliament, the Attorney-General gave opinion, and opponents prevented the sale.

When war broke out in 1914 he was in his later sixties. Former pupils filled key positions, including Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, and later Ironside at Archangel. At least one other of his pupils was prominent also in the Second World War, Sir William Dobbie, the Governor of heroic Malta. For the First World War James was a G.S.O.2 in the Censor's Department but he also "rendered great assistance" with preparing *The Times History of the War*. Honours which eluded him came rapidly upon his eldest surviving son, Colonel R. E. H. James, CMG, CBE, DSO. His last letter to *The Times* was in March 1919, and he died at a nursing home in Ealing on 13 January 1927.

Described during his Kensington prime as "short of stature" with "quick, intelligent eyes," and a public speaker "intelligent,

trenchant, and convincing," he was privately equally impressive. Young Winston Churchill met his match in 1893. From 5 Lexham Gardens, James wrote to the father: "rather inclined up to the present to teach his instructors instead of endeavouring to learn from them . . . this is not the frame of mind conducive to success."

Responding swiftly James "issued orders for your son to be kept at work and that in future he is to do the full hours." His methods worked: 1893 results included 15 passes into the R.M.A. Woolwich, 35 into Sandhurst, and 11 into the Staff College. Having twice failed, Churchill now passed at the first attempt under James – unlike so much else about him, an achievement far from unique. He later wrote very warmly about "Captain James and his highly competent partners", Edward Carlise and Captain M. H. Gregson. Their large establishment was advertised in 1895 with a teaching staff of "nine military tutors, and thirty-seven civil tutors" to prepare individuals "for the Navy, Army, and all Civil Service Examinations, and the Universities." A passage in *My Early Life* shows Churchill gently mocking himself: "no one who was not a congenital idiot could avoid passing thence into the Army." "Jimmy's" would repay close study.

The writer is the author of *The Origins of Lexham Gardens and Lee Abbey in London* (1996)

The Rev. David Weekes



Lieutenant W. H. James, R.E.
Courtesy of the R.E. Museum, Chatham

What London Councils Badly Need is More Control Over Their Own Environments

Veteran Kensington journalist HARRY JAMES deplores the trend towards more central government control over local environments and warns, that any relaxation of the planning and licensing laws will result in a further reduction in the quality of residential life in high profile areas like Kensington and Chelsea.

What distinguishes London from the other great capitals of the world, we are frequently reminded, is that it is a collection of 33 separate villages whose streets and buildings have developed organically over the years to reflect the character of the people who live and work in them. Successive governments, never ones to miss an opportunity to emphasise the value of civic pride, have always seen the merit in promoting London's diversity as one of its main strengths. So too have the borough's themselves, as they still do, although, perhaps, for different reasons. Nevertheless, in spite of boundary changes and the periodic swapping around of areas from the jurisdiction of one local authority to that of another, and in spite of the gradual diminution in the notion of civic pride, there are areas of the capital where local history continues to be carefully nurtured in local archives by countless enthusiasts who think such things matter. Pride in one's own locality while cherishing the London connection, is one of the capital's most endearing qualities. Sadly, I fear, the diversity, along with the civic pride, is rapidly giving way to bland uniformity as more and more control over local environments passes, as it is now increasingly doing, from local to central government. The long-standing convention that local people were better-placed to know what is most appropriate for their own areas, is now being abandoned, it would seem, by diktat from a faceless centralised bureaucracy far removed from the scene. That it should happen at a time when the capital is being assailed on all sides by more extraneous pressures than it can comfortably digest, and for what appear to be mainly politically reasons, has to be a folly London boroughs could well do without, especially by those local problems crying out for local solutions.

This latest example of social engineering, for that is what it is when all is said and done, is already having an adverse effect on the residential communities of the Royal Borough of Kensington and

Chelsea, an area of London that can justifiably claim to be in need of *more* not less environmental protection, having suffered a rich assortment of environmental assaults over the years. Its close proximity to the West End and City, its designation as a tourist and diplomatic location, and its plentiful supply of hotels and short-stay residential accommodation to suit all tastes, have all conspired to create the kind of cumulative pressures that can reduce the ordinary citizen to a nervous wreck. It does not ameliorate the suffering to know that the Royal Borough is surrounded by attractive parks, garden squares and Conservation areas, or that the Kensington and Chelsea streetscapes are littered with the history of bygone days – plus points that have made them easy targets for exploitation by estate agents, landlords and property speculators never slow to take advantage of a financial opportunity in the knowledge that the local Unitary Development Plan has more loopholes in it than a fisherman's net.

And that is only a fraction of the Royal Borough's environmental worries which are likely to get worse before they get better, and only if and when central government begins to realise that control of local environments is rightly the province of local government responding to the wishes of its residents. The Royal Borough is obliged to act as the western traffic gateway in and out of central London conduit for traffic, with Westway, Bayswater Road/Holland Park, Kensington High Street, Knightsbridge/Cromwell Road, Old Brompton Road, Fulham Road and King's Road acting as its major east/west arteries. The few north/south in and out routes available to car-borne commuters run through what are the Borough's predominantly residential areas, much to the consternation of householders who live alongside.

The growing volume of traffic using the Borough's highways out of necessity produce high levels of toxic air pollution as well as a not inconsiderable amount of damage to property. The Royal Borough also has to process over 3,000 planning applications annually – two-thirds involving sites in Kensington – with a high overall approval rate. Though the vast majority of planning applications are for roof, side and/or rear extensions to properties, most of which have little to do with planning and conservation and more to do with enhancing the value of the premises, the 'approvals' nonetheless represent a significant cumulative loss to the Borough of its valuable air and garden space, the two enduring features that have helped establish the reputations of Kensington and Chelsea as desirable areas. Royal Borough has to deal with a considerable number of opposed applications for, and renewal of entertainment licences, many of which are becoming increasingly acrimonious in nature as the demand for late-night cafes, clubs, restaurants and other places of entertainment grow. Concern over planning, licensing, traffic and the environment generally are what now take up great deal of the residents' time, often requiring hours or days

spent on investigations, consultations, meetings and sometimes attendance at appeals or magistrates' courts. The resulting heavier workload on residents' associations and amenity groups has meant that some of their members are virtually having to assume the role of full-time environmental watchdogs to keep up with the heightened activity.

The fact that there are some 200 tenants' and residents' associations is itself an indication that residents of the Borough are not altogether at ease with their lot. It is worth reminding ourselves that the Royal Borough, with a total area of 5 square miles, is one of the smaller London boroughs, albeit one with the highest population density and property values in the land. The attractive qualities that have always been its hallmark, are as worthy of protection now as they ever have been, only more so. We should never lose sight of the fact that there is still a great deal of untapped potential for aggravation in those over-crowded square acres. Note the Population Census which records the combined total population of Kensington and Chelsea as 251,279 in 1881, 262,561 in 1891, 218,528 in 1961, 138,759 in 1981, 138,394 in 1991, and currently standing at an estimated 150,000 of which 100,000 are included in the local register of electors.

H.J.

Harry James is the writer of the GRAPEVINE column in the London Weekly Times & Mail series of local newspapers which circulate in Kensington and Chelsea and other central London areas.



*Eccleston Square Garden visit July 1996
Photograph by A. Farrand Radley*

Admiral Sir Charles Madden Bart, GCB, DL

Admiral Sir Charles Madden Bart, GCB, DL, was born in London on June 15 1906. His 90th birthday was celebrated by his neighbours in Christ Church Victoria Road, whose fruitful existence we owe much to Charles' leadership.

His father Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Charles Madden Bart, GCB, OM, took him onboard HMS Revenge, as a boy, when he escorted and interned the battle ships surrendered by the Germans to Scapa Flow. His other guest was W. L. Wylie, the marine Painter who Charles watched daily at his work.

The following year Charles went to Osborne and on to Dartmouth as a Naval Cadet. He was not a great success at either place because he was no good at games and the Arts were not catered for in that strictly practical regime. Indeed he asked his father if he could leave the Navy and study painting instead. He was advised by W. L. Wylie to stay in the Navy and paint in his spare time

This is exactly what he has been doing all his life, having given great service to his country in one sphere and great pleasure to himself and his friends in the other.

He first went to sea as a Midshipman in HMS Iron Duke, stationed in the Mediterranean. He learned to steer a Picket Boat in the teeming water of Malta's Grand Harbour, made technical drawings as part of his Naval Training and water colour sketches of the ports and coasts of the Mediterranean.

After two and a half years he returned as a Sub Lieutenant to courses at Greenwich and spent his leave in the N. Wing of Admiralty Arch on the Mall, which was the family residence as his father had become First Sea Lord.

Charles' next appointment was to the China Station and for a year he cruised round Japan and the China shores and down to Hong Kong. After this he held various appointments in the Mediterranean and the Gunnery School at Portsmouth. His final Malta job was under the command of Admiral Sir William Fisher known as the Great Agrippa on HMS Queen Elizabeth I.

In 1936 as a Lieutenant Commander in HMS Sussex he ran an armoured train from Haifa to Samak to protect the Seaforth Highlanders who were attempting to keep the peace between the Arabs and the Jews during the Palistinian troubles. This was his only military engagement!

When war was declared in 1939 Charles spent a few weeks at the Admiralty as a newly promoted Commander awaiting a new appointment. This was fortunate because he met a girl called Olive Robins and the two spent a blissful three weeks of courtship together during the phoney war. Their engagement was scarcely

settled when Charles received orders to join HMS Warspite at Alexandria. He was the youngest Commander in the Navy.

As Charles and Olive said goodbye, they neither of them realised that it would be two and a half years before they met again.

Warspite was the Flagship of Admiral Cunningham and took part in all the battles under his command, against the Italian Fleet, the first off Calabria, the second at Taranto and the third at Matapan. This brilliant and decisive victory was followed by the evacuation from Greece and Crete and the appalling losses resulting from the

German conquest of Cyprus. Warspite was severely damaged and had many casualties. She went alone across the Pacific and reached the American Naval Base at Bremerton, near Seattle where she was repaired. After her refit Warspite went to the Indian Ocean as Sir James Somerville's Flagship.

After two and a half years in this splendid old ship, Charles was relieved and came back to England. He met Olive by appointment at Liverpool Railway Station, not the most glamorous of trysting places. Neither of them was certain of recognising each other. However three weeks later they were married and enjoyed total happiness thereafter.

Charles worked at the Admiralty and they lived in York House. Roseann was born in January 1945 just before Charles sailed for Trincomalee as Captain of HMS Emperor, a small aircraft carrier. The future looked bleak but the Atom Bomb put an end to the Japanese war and Charles returned to London to be Naval Assistant to Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, then First Sea Lord, and moved his family to Eldon Road.

A series of Naval Appointments followed terminating as Commander in Chief Home Fleet, which job his father had held just 40 years before. All this time Olive supported Charles as a superb hostess and maintained a close family life with Roseann. He painted whenever he could and made friends wherever he was.

On retirement Charles became Vice Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, Chairman of the National Maritime Museum, Chairman of the Sail Training Association, Chairman of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen _ and Deputy Warden of Christ Church Victoria Road.

What is he going to take on next?



*Admiral Sir Charles Madden
Bart, GCB, DL*

B.N.B.



The Church of St John the Evangelist, Ladbroke Grove

St John's Church is the centrepiece of the Ladbroke estate. It is conspicuously sited at the top of a high knoll, its spire being visible for several miles to the north and west. Built of ragstone in the Early English Gothic manner and set among fine mature trees, it provides a notable contrast with the Italianate stucco and stock-brick fronts of the houses in the surrounding streets.

St John's was the first church to be built north of the Uxbridge road, and its district, as originally defined in 1845, contained almost the whole of this part of the parish as far north as Kensal Green Cemetery, only the Norland estate (where the building of St James's was almost contemporaneous) and the Potteries being excluded. The selection of its site and of its architect were evidently the subject of much discussion between the various developers then active on the Ladbroke estate, who were all anxious to have the new church on their land. The final decision seems to have been the result of a compromise; Richard Roy, the solicitor in charge of building development to the west of Ladbroke Grove, purchased the site from his clients and presented it to the church's trustees, while the architects were John Hargrave Stevens and George Alexander, whose client was Jacob Connop, at that time the developer of the lands to the east of Ladbroke Grove.

The foundation stone was laid by Archdeacon John Sinclair, vicar of Kensington and archdeacon of Middlesex, on 8 January 1844, and the church was consecrated by Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, on 29 January 1845. The builders were Joshua Higgs, senior and junior, who were paid £8,213. The total cost, inclusive of architects' fees, was £10,181. About half of this was paid for by private subscriptions, but two loans, each of £2,000, remained outstanding for some years, the lenders being Viscount Canning and C. H. Blake, both of whom were also investors in the large-scale building developments then proceeding to the west of Ladbroke Grove. The church provided 1,500 sittings, of which 400 were free, and a district parish was assigned in 1845.

R.R.M.

From the Survey of London Volume XXXVII Northern Kensington

The Royal Borough of Kensington 1900-1964

COAT OF ARMS

The arms of the Royal Borough of Kensington were mainly derived from those formerly borne by Lords of the Manor and others who became principal landowners in Kensington on the gradual division of the original manor.

The Veres were the first Lords of the Manor, from the time of the Norman Conquest until 1526. The first known division of the original manor took place when, in the 11th century, part of the property was given by one of the Veres to the Abbey of Abingdon.

The field of the shield of the Borough Arms were of the same tints, gules, and or, and was divided by the same partition lines, as that of the first Lords of the Manor.

In the first quarter the mullet argent is the same as that appearing in the arms of Robert de Vere, Duke of Ireland, and 9th Earl of Oxford (1362-1392). In 1526 John Vere, 14th Earl of Oxford, died without male heirs, and through his daughter Dorothy, who married Lord Latimer, the property came to the 7th Earl of Argyll, who sold it in 1610 to Sir Walter Cope, (died 1614).

His descendant Isabel Cope married Sir Henry Rich, 1st Baron Kensington and 1st Baron Holland (1590-1649), the manor of Kensington thus going to the Riches, Earls of Warwick and Holland. These titles became extinct in 1759, at the death of Edward Rich, 8th Earl of Warwick and 5th Earl of Holland, 5th Baron Kensington and 10th Baron Rich, and should not be confused with similar titles granted later.

Holland House was sold by William Edwardes, who inherited it through his mother, one of the Riches, to Henry Fox, who was afterwards (in 1763) created Lord Holland, (1705-1774). His brother was created Lord Ilchester. The Lordship of the Manor did not go with the sale of the property, but remained with William Edwardes, who was afterwards made Baron Kensington in the peerage of Ireland. His descendant William Edwardes, the 4th Baron (Irish peerage) was made the 1st Baron Kensington in the peerage of Great Britain in 1886.

Sir Baptist Hicks, afterwards the 1st Lord Campden, (1551-1629) acquired that part of the Kensington property known later as the Campden estate, or Campden Hill estate, from Sir Walter Cope in the Beginning of the 17th century. His daughter, Juliana, married Sir Edward Noel, 2nd Baron Hicks, and 2nd Viscount Campden (1582-1684).

The Finchs, Earls of Nottingham, were connected with Kensington through their ownership of Nottingham House, afterwards Kensington Palace. This was acquired by Sir Heneage Finch, the 1st Earl of Nottingham (1621-1682) and was purchased from his son Daniel by William III in 1689.

The crown celestial in the dexter chief was introduced by the Heralds College as emblematical of the Blessed Virgin, the ecclesiastical title of the parish "Saint Mary Abbot's".

The Motto was chosen by the first Mayor of the Royal Borough, Sir Henry Seymour King, K.C.I.E., M.P.:

"Quid Nobis Ardui" - "Nothing Is Too Difficult For Us"

MANORIAL ARMS

Family	Symbol
Vere	mullet argent
Abbey of Abingdon	martlets, cross flory
Cope	Roses proper
Rich	cross botany
Fox	Fleur de lis
Hicks	Fleur de lis
Noel	----
Finch	----

Lady Pepler



The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

COAT OF ARMS



The Kensington and Chelsea Council received its Charter of Incorporation as a London borough on 10th March, 1964, following the re-organisation of London government. Prior to this the separate boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea had been metropolitan boroughs since 1st January, 1900.

The title "Royal Borough" was originally granted to the Kensington Council by Royal Charter dated 20th November, 1901, to fulfil a wish expressed by Queen Victoria to confer a distinction on her birth place. The use of this Royal Title was graciously conferred by Letters Patent dated 7th April, 1964, on the new borough.

The Council's Coat of Arms was granted by the College of Arms on 10th December, 1965, and is of an entirely new design incorporating none of the features of the Arms of the old boroughs.

The Shield comprises three Crowns on ermine symbolising the Royal status of the borough, and an Abbot's Mitre signifying the centuries old connection of Kensington with the Abbey of Abingdon and of Chelsea with the Abbey of Westminster.

The Crest consists of a Bush of Broom. This indicates the connecting link between the two former boroughs of the "Brompton" Ward of Kensington which, for Parliamentary purposes, forms part of the constituency of Chelsea, Brompton, in mediaeval times, was an area famous for its fields of gorse and the name itself is a corruption of "Broom tun", a gorse farm.

The Supporters are a Blue Boar and a Silver Winged Bull. The Boar is taken from the Arms of the De Vere family who were Lords of the Manor of Kensington for 500 years. The Winged Bull is associated with St Luke, the Patron Saint of the ancient Parish of Chelsea.

The Motto "Quam Bonum In Unum Habitare" is the latin version of the opening words of the 133rd Psalm –

"What a good thing it is to dwell together in unity".

HERALDIC DESCRIPTION OF ARMS

ARMS	GULES A MITRE OR ON A CHIEF ERMINE THREE CROWNS OR
CREST	On a Wreath of the Colours ISSUANT FROM A MOUNT VERT A BROOM BUSH FLOWERED PROPER
SUPPORTERS	ON THE DEXTER SIDE A BOAR AZURE AND ON THE SINISTER SIDE A WINGED BULL ARGENT ARMED AND UNGULFED OR

*The Arms were designed by Sir Anthony Wagner, K.C.V.O.,
D.Litt., Garter Principal King of Arms*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

THE TOWN HALL HORNTON STREET LONDON W8 7NX

Chief Executive and Town Clerk ALAN TAYLOR LLB

1ST NOVEMBER 1996

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF



KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

GUIDELINES FOR USE IN DETERMINATION OF APPLICATIONS TO USE THE ROYAL BOROUGH'S COAT OF ARMS

- (i) Applications to use the Arms will normally only be considered if received in a written form, by way of a letter to the Chief Executive and Town Clerk
- (ii) Permission will not be given for the Arms to be used in connection with any form of commercial advertising or undertaking;
- (iii) Permission will not be given for the Arms to be used by any political organisation or in connection with any matter of a political nature;
- (iv) Permission will not be given in instances where use of the Arms could cause confusion as the applicant organisation's relationship with the Council:
- (v) The Coat of Arms must be used in its entirety, not adapted in any way
- (vi) The Arms must be reproduced in the final publication etc to a reasonable standard of quality. The content, character and physical appearance of the publication must also be of good quality. The applicant will need to satisfy the Committee on all these matters, by providing the necessary proof material etc.
- (vii) Applications will not normally be approved except where they are from a locally based organisation or organisations with which the Council has a major involvement, is a major funder or is involved in a major joint venture.

Constitution of The Kensington Society

- 1 The name of the Society shall be The Kensington Society.
- 2 The objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington for the public benefit by stimulating interest in its history and records, promoting good architecture and planning in its future development and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic or public interest.
- 3 MEMBERSHIP. The membership shall comprise Ordinary Members, Corporate Members and Affiliated Societies, i.e. amenity societies for areas within Kensington who apply for affiliation with the Society and are accepted by the Executive Committee.
- 4 SUBSCRIPTIONS. Corporate members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £25. Ordinary members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £10. Affiliated Amenity Societies shall pay an annual subscription of £10. The minimum annual subscription for different classes of members (ordinary, corporate, affiliated amenity societies) shall be such sums as may be determined by the Executive Committee from time to time. Subscriptions are payable on January 1st each year.
- 5 THE OFFICERS The officers of the Society shall be the President, one or more Vice-Presidents, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer and such further honorary officers as the Executive Committee may from time to time appoint.
- 6 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than twelve members including the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer.
 - (a) The Executive Committee shall be the governing body of the Society. It shall have power to (i) Make bye-laws; (ii) Co-opt members and fill vacancies on the Executive Committee or among the officers of the Society that may arise for the current year; (iii) Take any steps they may consider desirable to further the interests and objects of the Society.
 - (b) A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members.
 - (c) Not less than three Executive Committee Meetings shall be convened in any one year.
- 8 THE COUNCIL. The Council shall consist of not more than thirty members. They shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The function of the Council shall be to support the

Executive Committee in any matters relevant to the objects of the Society.

9 GENERAL MEETINGS.

- (a) An Annual General Meeting of members of the Society, of which not less than 28 days' notice shall be given to members, shall be held in each calendar year at which the Executive Committee shall submit a Report and an audited Statement of Account for the year to the previous 31st December.
- (b) Other General Meetings of members may be convened from time to time by the Executive Committee on not less than 14 days' notice to members.
- (c) The date, time and place of each General Meeting shall be fixed by the Executive Committee, and the Chair shall be taken by the President or in his absence by some other Officer of the Society nominated by the Executive Committee.
- (d) Twenty persons present, being Ordinary Members or authorised representatives of Corporate Members or Affiliated Societies, shall form a quorum at a General Meeting.
- (e) Resolutions of the members in General Meeting shall (except where otherwise stated in these Rules) be passed by a simple majority of members present and voting on a show of hands, each members having one vote. Corporate members and Affiliated Societies must notify the Hon. Secretary of the Society in writing or the persons authorised to receive notice, attend and vote on their behalf, failing which they shall not be so entitled.

10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

- (a) The election of Officers of the Society (other than the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee) and of members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by resolution of the Members of the Society at the Annual General Meeting, and the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be effected by resolution of the Executive Committee at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting
- (b) Subject to paragraphs (c) and (d) below, any Ordinary Member shall be eligible for election as an Officer of the Society or as a member of the Executive Committee.
- (c) Candidates for such election, other than those standing for re-election under paragraph (e) below, must be supported by nominations signed by two other Members, which nominations must reach the Hon. Secretary not less than fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) In the case of election as an Officer, the candidates must

also be approved by the Executive Committee, which approval may be conferred either before the Annual General Meeting or at the first meeting of the Executive Committee thereafter. If such approval be withheld the Office in question may be filled by the Executive Committee for the current year.

- (e) Unless curtailed by death or resignation or under paragraph (i) below, the tenure of office of the persons elected shall be—
 - (i) in the case of the President, until the third Annual General Meeting after his election;
 - (ii) in the cases of the Vice-President(s), the Hon Secretary and the Hon Treasurer, indefinite;
 - (iii) in all other cases, until the next Annual General Meeting after their election; but in cases (i) and (iii) those vacating Office shall be eligible for re-election
 - (f) The tenure of office of any Officer of the Society other than President may be terminated at any time by resolution of the Executive Committee.
- 11 ALTERATION OF THE RULES. No rule shall be altered or revoked except by a resolution of the members in General Meeting passed by a majority consisting of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting.
- 12 DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY. The Society shall not be dissolved unless a majority of two-thirds of the subscribing members signify their approval of such a course by means of a postal ballot taken after receipt by the said members of a statement by the Executive Committee, whom failing by not less than ten Ordinary Members or the President of the Society, setting forth a summary of the arguments for and against such a course and their or his views thereon.
- 13 SURPLUS ASSETS. In the event of such dissolution the surplus funds (if any) of the Society may be transferred to such one or more charitable bodies, having objects similar to or reasonably consistent with those of the Society, as may be chosen by the Executive Committee and approved by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales

4th February 1991

Reports from Local Societies

The Boltons Association

Last year we reported that MGM Cinema's appeal against refusal of permission to enlarge from 5 to 8 auditoria had been dismissed by the DoE Inspector. Subsequently, the Cinema (now "Virgin") started High Court proceedings to challenge the validity of the decision, but two days before the case was due to be heard they withdrew it. Thus the Inspector's decision is now unchallenged.

Our main preoccupation during the year has been to keep the Fulham Road as a shopping street rather than a little Soho. Applications (some retrospective) for change of use from class A1 (retail) to A3 (catering) have abounded, as well as licensing applications for longer hours and increased seating. The Council's Planning Committee have taken a strong line but in one case have been overturned on appeal. Fortunately the Inspector made it clear that this was a marginal case, so the damage should be limited, and we have the Cinema decision as a defence against it. It would, however, be helpful if the Council's Licensing Committee took an equally robust stance.

A very important case has arisen in the Boltons itself. The former Convent that occupied Nos 21 and 22 has moved away and applications have been lodged to re-convert the house to single dwellings. This sounds good, but unfortunately No 21 (which now includes the whole of the linking block between 21 and 22) is proposing a vast extension in place of the chapel to the rear of the linking block with a swimming pool below. The chapel was not visible behind the linking block but the new extension will be. This we will strongly oppose and as the house is listed it is to be hoped that English Heritage will also object.

Chairman: James Macnair, 29 Gilston Road, SW10

Secretary: Barbara Schurer, 10 Gledhow Gardens, SW5

Cornwall Gardens Residents Association

This has been a relatively quiet year in Cornwall Gardens. Fortunately there have been no plans for development locally that would affect us adversely.

What does concern me is the increasing number of letters we receive from Estate Agents seeking flats to rent to foreign business people or companies. This presages a further dilution of the local community by a transient population with little interest in preserving Kensington as we would wish it to be.

I am also concerned about the gradual deterioration of the Gloucester Road from the "village high street" that it used to be not so many years ago. The southern part has already gone downhill with, for example, a rash of late night fast food establishments (and now a proposed autoloo outside Boots). This northern part looks like going the same way. How can we stop this?

Robin Balmer, Chairman, Miss Ursula Overbury, Secretary

Campden Hill Residents' Association

Since the introduction of an annual subscription in 1995, CHRA has published a newsletter three times a year. Judging by the response, members certainly feel more in touch with the Association's activities and we hope that this will continue.

Our AGM in May was enlivened by an excellent talk, given by Mrs Carolyn Starren, entitled 'Old Mansions of the Area'. The meeting followed by wine and snacks to accompany a viewing and sale of old photographs. This was clearly a popular choice as attendance was twice that of recent years.

The other highlight of the year was the Garden Party held, as usual, in the splendid gardens of Aubrey House. The theme was the 25th anniversary of CHRA and a magnificent cake had been baked by pupils from Holland Park School, who were responsible for the excellent catering. We had an excellent turnout, despite threatening weather – perhaps partly due to the impending sale of Aubrey House. We can only thank the owners of Aubrey house for their generosity in making their garden available to us for our annual Garden Party for so many years.

The major issue affecting CHRA residents is the potential development of the Thames Water reservoir at the top of Campden Hill, the site of Campden Hill Lawn Tennis Club. We have been quick to raise the issue with the Chairman of Thames Water, and we have been promised full consultation with regard to future plans. We are not opposed to change but are concerned about the considerable impact on our area that could result from unsympathetic development of this extensive site.

Finally, how has the new subscription affected our membership? We started the year with 368 members and finish with 383. This despite 25 households, who were members in 1995, deciding not to rejoin for 1996; a further four households left the area. It is apparent that subscribing members are much more active – we hope this will continue in 1997.

Mrs Anne Margaronis
Honorary Secretary

Edward Square, Scarsdale and Abingdon Association

Kensington High Street has been of great interest to the Association over the past year. Concern that the approved White City shopping development will damage the High Street's viability have spurred the various groups into action. Consultants were appointed and a draft planning strategy submitted to the High Street Working Group. While everyone agrees that improvements are desirable, welcome environmental improvements can cause traffic disruption and a compromise will be needed. We are encouraged that the draft plan is a good starting point with many useful suggestions.

Earls Terrace refurbishment is continuing. The Council raised fears that plans for a car park under the roadway and garden at the front would weaken its garden square protection policy. Plans for a car park under the roadway only were approved. ESSA took the view that if the larger car park jeopardised the garden square policy it would not be acceptable. We did not object to a car park in principle and were able to agree a number of conditions with the applicant. The large car park is now the subject of an appeal.

Fenelon Place is arousing interest again. Tesco have submitted detailed plans for the first phase of the development. They have outline planning consent so there is little scope for objections in principle. Tesco's limited ownership means that future development of Phase 2 is still in doubt.

We have responded in detail to various Government proposals to relax licensing regulations: we have also been engaged in a number of specific and contentious licensing applications. One such, for the Gipsy Garden, Marloes Road has been withdrawn.

Chairman: His Honour Judge Gordon, 7 Edwardes Square, W.8

Secretary: Mrs Suzanne Anderson, 8 Phillimore Terrace, W.8

The Earl's Court Square Residents' Association

In January we welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Joan Hanham, who spoke at our AGM. Her excellent exposition of current Council plans and policies and her continued support of the Association were greatly appreciated.

The approved Single Regeneration Budget is important to Earl's Court; the funding for CCTV alone comes to £220,000 and roughly 10% of this is subscribed by the local community.

There are concerns about individual liberty and privacy arising from television monitoring but we support the project while using our best endeavours to lessen intrusiveness in residential areas.

At Earl's Court Stadium Pop Concerts have had as many as 14,000 fans on their feet at once, to the worry of neighbouring residents. We have used our good relationship with the management to ameliorate some of the nuisance

We have actively sought to maintain and improve standards in our environment. We have monitored planning applications for new buildings and shops and alterations to others, we have campaigned against the proliferation of unsuitable shop signs, other eye sores such as graffiti and rubbish and have endeavoured to put matters right either by persuasion or by invoking action by the Council.

We have put forward proposals for certain buildings in the vicinity to be brought within the Conservation Area umbrella.

On the social side, we had a successful barbecue in the summer and our traditional Christmas Tree lighting and carol singing event in December, both in the garden.

All these events and relevant Council publications were covered by our bi-annual News Letters.

Chairman: Rodney Brangwyn

Secretary: Mrs Kate Marsh

Kensington Court Residents Association

Things do not change much and we are still battling with the same problems, of which NOISE is the most intractable.

We have strengthened our links with the Kensington Society and the Council, and maintained close collaboration with neighbouring associations. We have valued support from Councillor Daniel Moylan. We are contributing to the planning review of Kensington High Street to help it survive in the face of competition from nearby shopping centres (approved by planners ...).

We have concentrated on trying to protect our northern and southern flanks. To the south we continue to skirmish with those responsible for the rowdiness centred on Richmond College and the Builders Arms. To the north is the threat of various night clubs, constantly seeking extensions (and hitherto winning them at our expense), which produce rowdiness in the small hours and other nuisances.

There are faint signs of a more robust attitude by the local authorities, but already the late-night capacity of licensed premises in our immediate area runs into thousands. As I keep saying, this is not and ought not to be a mini Soho.

There is still too much fast-food litter, bottles and cans thrown away on our streets, and also abandoned shopping carts. Sunday shopping is a new threat, impinging as it does on residents' parking. The remedy is not obvious.

Now that the authorities want one objector to speak for others in disputed hearings, we shall need to co-operate more closely with neighbouring associations, and shall be happy to do so. It takes time and effort to develop and deliver a strongly reasoned and supported case at a hearing. Individual letters from residents are an important element in this.

We have joined with the Council and many other associations in opposing changes to the liquor licensing legislation to extend the hours on Friday and Saturday nights, to the detriment of our peace and quiet. As I opined to the Government, this is deregulation gone mad.

Sir Ronald Arculus, Chairman
Kensington Court Residents Association



Old view of Kensington, about 1750

The Ladbroke Association

Unquestionably the most significant event of the year for our Association was the making by the Council, on 12th July, of their first Article 4(2) Direction under the new powers granted to them by the General Permitted Development Order 1995. Those of us who were worried that this Order had removed from planning control alterations to doors and windows within Conservation Areas will have greeted this event with relief. The Council had commissioned a report in 1994 from McCoy Associates – the authors of the excellent Conservation Area Proposals Statement for Ladbroke – on suitable subjects in Ladbroke for application to the Secretary of State for an Article 4 Direction under the old rules. This covered a much wider range of matters and action on it had been held up pending the emergence of the new Order, so it was conveniently available to form the basis (after modification) of the Council's first new Direction. The Direction gives protection to a long list of fine buildings in our area against alterations to doors and windows fronting a highway, as well as preventing the turning of more front gardens into car parks under permitted development

– a growing problem in recent years. We hope that they will now proceed rapidly to bring similar protection to other equally deserving areas, as well as implementing the other aspects of our report which will still require an application for a full Article 4 Direction as before.

Our second meeting for committee members of all our 15 communal gardens was at least as successful and important as the first, and was attended by Dr Harriet Jordan, English Heritage's Inspector of Parks and Gardens. On the basis of her advice and the feeling of the meeting we have applied for all these gardens to be listed on English Heritage's Register to give them some further protection against unwelcome alteration, particularly to surviving original boundary features, which were also covered in the so-far unimplemented part of the McCoy report above.

The continuing success of the Notting Hill Gate Improvement Scheme, and our campaigns against estate agent's boards and against the brutal "pollarding" of trees in front gardens in our area, show that we have not been inactive in this our 30th year, which we celebrated with a party kindly hosted by Sir Angus and Lady Stirling in June. We have not yet, however, succeeded in persuading the powers that be at St Peter's Church to get their clock going and striking again following the restoration of the building. Has anyone any experience of whether a striking clock constitutes a "noise nuisance" nowadays?

Chairman: Stephen Enthoven
15 Ladbroke Square, W11

Norland Conservation Society

In the absence of major planning applications within the Conservation Area, we have been able to focus on matters of larger significance to West London and to London as a whole. The most local of these is the re-instatement of very well-designed railings for Royal Crescent Gardens, a project whose trajectory has been entirely the will and effort of the Royal Crescent Garden Committee, and fought for through numerous difficulties.

Other concerns have included the 1995 amendment to the General Development Order, whose effects we hope to mitigate, following guide-lines to be produced for conservation societies by the Council of the Royal Borough as a result of our efforts; also the results of the recent Cell 23 traffic study of the Norland Square area, following which improvements will be provided by the Borough; the effects in terms of traffic of the massive and unwisely permitted White City Shopping development; and, not least, the proposals for Terminal 5 at Heathrow, which will more than double its passenger capacity, bringing even larger traffic flows – if indeed the traffic will be able to flow at all – to this area of Kensington.

Robin Price, Chairman

Onslow Neighbourhood Association

It has been an eventful year in the area we cover. Our two main "problem" sites have been the subject of town planning approvals and the main estate, formerly owned by the Henry Smith Charity, has been sold to the Wellcome Trust.

At long last, planning approval has been granted for the Terry Farrell designed redevelopment of the South Kensington Station site. It has been modified a number of times in design and content to alleviate some of the concerns of local residents. While the reduction in office space proposed has been reduced, thereby going some way to reducing the expected traffic generation, we still are worried about the impact on the already heavily overburdened local traffic system. This will not be helped by the unsatisfactory provision for the servicing of the large retail element. The bonus of course will be the much needed improvement to the underground station itself.

Our second "problem", the former Brompton Hospital North Block site, has also received planning approval, for conversion of the original hospital to luxury flats and the erection of new residential blocks to the east and west boundaries. We objected to the proposals for the latter on the grounds of overdevelopment and that they overstep the building "footprint" suggested in the original Planning Brief which was prepared when the hospital vacated the site. Also a couple of amendment applications have been submitted, one relating to the size and overall number of units proposed, the other, the conversion of the chapel building for use as a health and fitness club. The latter is a Grade II* listed building with fine Victorian church fittings. This proposal has been objected to by English Heritage, vigorously supported by ourselves and the Brompton Association. We believe there to be only one satisfactory use for the building, its return to that for Christian worship, preferably under the control of the adjacent St Paul's church.

The sale of the Henry Smith Charity Estate has obviously made a big impact on local residents. Recent legislation has encouraged the enfranchisement of leasehold properties and a large number of leaseholders in the estate have taken up this opportunity to purchase freeholds. The Estate proposed a management scheme and the Lands Tribunal has been considering this and hearing objections and suggested amendments. The Association was represented and proposed a number of amendments relating to the environment protection of the area. The Tribunal has recently issued its decision and included a number of these in its findings.

Our regular activities have included the Annual General Meeting, this time held at the conference centre at the Royal Marsden Hospital. Our guest speaker was Mr Dickon Weir-Hughes, Assistant Director of Nursing at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. The Annual Garden Party in late June was again held in

the west garden of Onslow Square by kind permission of the new landlords, the Wellcome Trust. The weather was kind and a good turnout enjoyed a pleasant occasion.

Chairman: Hugh Brady, 16 Selwood Terrace, London SW7 3QG

Royal Crescent Report

The big news in 1996, the 150th anniversary of the building of Royal Crescent, is that the project to replace the garden railings has, finally, got underway. The original railings were removed for the war effort over 50 years ago.

Royal Crescent residents have been working for 10 years to amass sufficient funds to start on replacement work. Enough money had been raised to start the work on 9th October. These funds have come from garden rates over the last decade, grants from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and English Heritage and donations from residents, other societies, notably the Norland Conservation Society, and local businesses. Money is still being collected to ensure the full sum of some £200,000 is met. Support and assistance from the council's planning department, from Dudley Fishburn, MP, and from councillors has been very welcome over the period.

The railings project is being supervised by Susan Walker Architects, the main contractor is Metalcraft Tottenham. Both companies have worked on a number of successful garden railings projects of late. The plans for the Crescent railings have met with enthusiastic approval from residents – the “real thing” will be in place during 1997.

The railings were the dream of Elizabeth Dun, a long term Royal Crescent resident, and she did much to inspire others to embark on the long task of their realisation. Elizabeth died last year and the Garden Committee hope that the new railings will serve as a fitting tribute to her energy, her efforts and her memory.

Hywell Bevan, Royal Crescent Association

Victoria Road Area Residents' Association

The last two major developments in our area are nearly complete: Prince of Wales Terrace and South End. Prince of Wales Terrace will be a major improvement after a decade of dereliction, but getting the finishing touches right is important. We want junction/entry treatments at the Kensington Road entry points of both Prince of Wales Terrace and Victoria Road, as well as reinstatement of Victorian lighting.

The South End development, on the other hand has proved to be an overdevelopment – at least one storey too high – totally changing the intimate, village scale of South End.

The “Waitrose site” is now finished, it looks good, but its usefulness to the local community is in doubt. The ground floor shops are small and the signs are that all we might get are more restaurants – the last things we need!

We are still pressing for more traffic calming measures – we would really like to be the first 20mph zone. We welcome the North-South Cycle Route, as much for the improvements to traffic calming and the replacement of existing measures in improved materials as for the safer route for cyclists.

Problems with running battles on 10 Cottesmore Gardens and 40 Victoria Road promise to run on in 1997. To prevent unnecessary and damaging changes we are seeking a review of the list of buildings of architectural and historic interest. We are pleased that the Council has proposed an Article 4 Direction for Victoria Road to prevent unsympathetic changes to windows and doors.

The pressure for change continues both within and immediately outside our area – our job is to stay vigilant.

Chairman: Kenneth Woodward-Fisher
14 Albert Place, W8

Hon. Sec: Anne Woodward-Fisher

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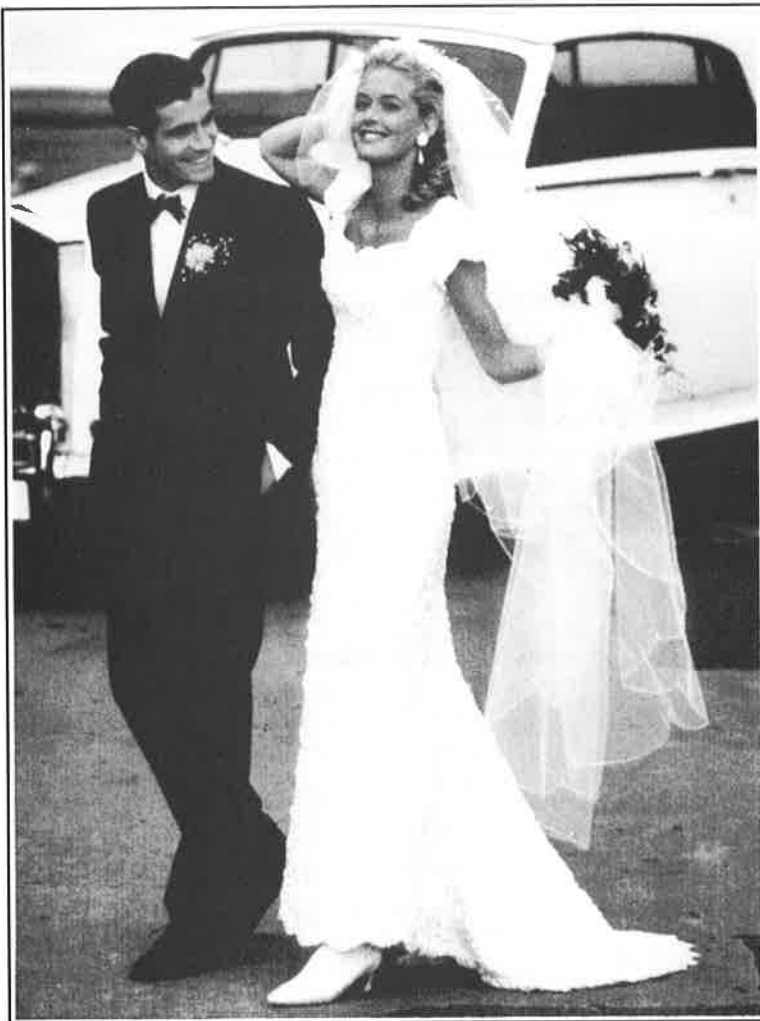
Statement of Accounts
for the year
1996

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET FOR 1996
WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ON APRIL 24th 1997

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY
PRINCESS ALICE MEMORIAL FUND
for the year ended December 31st 1996

1995 £		1996 £
	Income	
2818	Donations received	90.00
0	Sale proceeds	0.00
22	Interest	28.59
<hr/> 2840		<hr/> 118.59
	EXPENDITURE	
	Cost of Memorial Garden	
555	Plants and fertilisers	393.26
125	Garden Help	0.00
0	Repairs to Irrigation	197.04
214	Bulbs and Shrubs	222.62
0	Costs of Sale	0.00
20	Peat and Soil	24.68
<hr/> 914		<hr/> 837.60
<hr/> 1928	Surplus (Deficit) to Balance Sheet	<hr/> -719.01

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