

THE  
Kensington  
Society



Annual Report  
2000

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# THE Kensington Society

The objects of the Society are 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 2000

# The Kensington Society

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# Presidential Valediction

After fifteen years as President, I believe the time has come for someone else to take over and so this is the last Annual Report to which I will contribute the Foreword. I was very flattered when the Committee asked me to step in following the death of my old friend, the much admired Alec Clifton-Taylor. Alec had devoted his whole life to the business of buildings and the materials of which they were made. His book *The Pattern of English Building*, and his contributions to the *Pevsner Buildings of England* series are invaluable. I share his passion for architecture, though without his totally professional eye. Nevertheless, born and resident in Kensington, and with experience of both the architectural world and the heritage lobby, it did not seem totally inappropriate that I should accept.

The presidential responsibilities are far from onerous and I have tended to avoid public rows. My comments each year on the kind of problems which face all inner city Boroughs have been largely supported, whether about street furniture, parking, the state of the pavements, or inappropriate shop fronts. My views on dogs in the park brought a chorus of dissent, but I am unrepentant. Parks are primarily for people, not exercise yards for pets. But the matter seems not to have caused the revolution that was predicted. The proposal for the Diana Garden was successfully, and in my view, rightly contested, though I could have wished for greater moderation in some of the language employed by its opponents.

During my time there have been few disasters on the planning front. Little of great consequence has been lost, while some major achievements have been registered, notably the refurbishment, slow and expensive as it was, of the Albert Memorial. But at the same time, as the winning architect in this year's Stirling Prize for Architecture observed, Kensington's record in creating new structures of real distinction is pretty poor. As members of the Society know, I welcomed the Libeskind proposal for the extension to the Victoria and Albert Museum, because it was at least a striking statement by an international figure. Who knows whether it will happen, but if it does, I remain fairly certain that it will continue to be opposed by the Society. And that I very much regret.

Members of the Society are certainly discerning and concerned about their environment, but time moves on, and if the Society is to flourish, it needs not only more members, as I have often said, but younger ones. Otherwise, in the natural course of things it will eventually cease to exist.

I wish my successor and the Society well and I thank you for having given me the privilege of being your President.

Sir John Drummond

# Annual General Meeting 2000

A large audience was in attendance at the Convent, Kensington Square, on April 12, 2000, for the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Kensington Society, reflecting the prestige of the principal speaker, Ambassador Raymond Seitz, America's most senior diplomat in Britain from 1991 to 1994. Mr Seitz, now a banker in London and a resident of Notting Hill, spoke prior to the business of the meeting owing to a later commitment elsewhere, his theme being the awesome weight of responsibility likely to fall upon the shoulders of the victorious candidate in the United States presidential election of 2000. Summarising the contemporary geopolitical outlook Mr Seitz said that with America now the world's unchallenged super-power, its military strength backed by its ever-growing economic dynamism, there was a danger that too much global influence would breed arrogance. This could lead to the pursuit of American interests regardless of those of all other nations, friends and foes alike. Hints of this had already been perceived in some quarters. A primary task of the new President would therefore be to define the global role to be played by the United States in the coming few years. But of equal importance would be the restoration of dignity to the office of President, and the repair of Presidential relationships with Congress and the people of America.

At the conclusion of Mr Seitz's warmly applauded speech the President of the Kensington Society, Sir John Drummond announced, in opening the proceedings of the AGM, that he would be retiring in twelve months time, to be replaced by the current Chairman of Society's Executive Committee, Sir Ronald Arculus.

The meeting then followed the business of the agenda, the minutes of the AGM of 1999 being formally confirmed, and the Annual Report and Accounts moved and seconded. Congratulations were extended to Mrs Gay Christiansen, editor of the Report, on its continuing high standard. All existing officers and members of the Executive Committee were re-elected.

The Chairman then proceeded to review some of the activities of the Society during 1999, and to outline a range of matters which would need attention in the year 2000. Sir Ronald began by reporting a meeting with the new MP for Kensington and Chelsea, Michael Portillo, the thrust of his message to Mr Portillo being 'Don't forget us'. Mr Portillo had already interested himself in several issues of common interest, including leasehold reform, licensing and the royal parks. The impact of a Mayor of London was another matter which would require close attention, particularly on subjects such as transport improvements and

traffic control. The proposed alterations to pub licensing hours, allowing up to 24 hours opening, would also need to be watched. There was no indication as to how tough the Council was likely to be in defining opening and closing hours, but members were urged to write to the Home Secretary and Michael Portillo MP, before legislation was framed, to call for modifications to the proposal for 24 hours opening.

Additional matters touched upon by the Chairman included reference to the judicial review under way concerning rejection of the Council's appeal against Thames Water's plans for development of the Campden Hill site; housing developments at the former Kings College site, and the closure of the Kensington High Street market - any new plans for which would be closely monitored.

Sir Ronald concluded with the observation that although the weight of influence exerted by the Kensington Society had increased, additional members would add further to that weight. He therefore urged the audience to give thought to persuading other residents of the Borough to join the Society.

Mr Price, chairman of the Visits sub-committee, then reported on the Society's consistently well supported programme of outings and events.

## Gay Christiansen

After editing the Annual Report ever since the Kensington Society was founded in 1953, ill-health has finally forced Mrs Gay Christiansen to relinquish the task. To many people she *was* the Kensington Society, having brought it into being and remained its principal motivating force for more than forty years in the post of Honorary Secretary. Even after she relinquished her Secretarial duties in 1996 she continued to supervise the production of the Annual Report. Now, however, failing eyesight and other ailments have caused her to vacate the editor's chair. Under Gay Christiansen's guidance the Report was ranked high among such local society publications, winning several commendations for excellence and regularly providing members of the Kensington Society with a wide range of information on developments within the Royal Borough. Her achievements present a formidable challenge to those who follow her. Meantime she retains her links with the Society in her post as Vice-President, a role she shares with the Earl of Snowdon. The warm good wishes of all those with whom she has come into contact down the years will doubtless be extended to her at this moment.

## Pain Postponed

A last-minute decision by the Government, with a General Election in mind, to soften the impact of council tax increases in the coming financial year, may allow the continuation of some services in Kensington previously destined to be axed, or seriously reduced. A significant cut in the Government's 2001-2 grant to the Royal Borough had been forecast, and since the grant constitutes almost 70 per cent of total income, a tax rise of 10 per cent or more seemed a possibility. One of the problems which the Council has to confront is that the continuing growth in the local population is not matched by commensurate increases in Government grants. Thus whereas five years ago the grant was around £730 per head, in the next financial year it was expected to drop to £653. The change of heart regarding next year, forced upon a reluctant Chancellor by the Prime Minister, according to Press reports, may therefore postpone the evil day for 12 months, allowing an average nationwide rise of around six per cent, about the same as last year. It would be naive, however, not to expect the following year's grant to take account of the 2001-2 reprieve.

The possibility of cuts in services has already brought protests from parents whose children use the play area in Holland Park, where Council-provided supervisors were scheduled to be withdrawn. Whether they now remain will presumably be known fairly soon, but according to Councillor Christopher Buckmaster, chairman of the Education Committee, the Royal Borough is one of the few local authorities where such supervision still exists, most councils having already been forced to cut back. Whatever the outcome at Holland Park, there will remain a supervisor at the Princess Diana playground in Kensington Gardens, the popularity of the enlarged and enhanced site is such that the numbers of children entering need to be controlled to prevent overcrowding.

## The Secretary's Report

### The Millennium Clock

As all our members know by now, The Kensington Society donated a clock to the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to commemorate the year of the Millennium. Strangely enough there was no clock on the Town Hall, and the Council was delighted that we were prepared to remedy that.

We chose a clock whose design fitted into the 1960s building, and it is, of course, completely high-tech and never needs to be wound or adjusted. It has been placed on the wall above the Princess Alice Memorial Garden (which was also given by the Kensington Society) facing the library so that it can clearly be seen from Hornton Street.

On June 5th the clock was unveiled by our Patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester. At the same time 1,000 gas-filled balloons saying 'The Kensington Society' were released. After several speeches the Mayor of Kensington, Councillor Richard Walker-Arnott, kindly invited His Royal Highness and all present back to a small reception in his parlour. The cost of the clock was met by a donation from a very generous member of the Kensington Society. I should like to record my thanks to Robert Meadows and Celia Rees-Jenkins, who organised the whole occasion, chose the design for the plaque which commemorates the event - and must have organised the weather too!

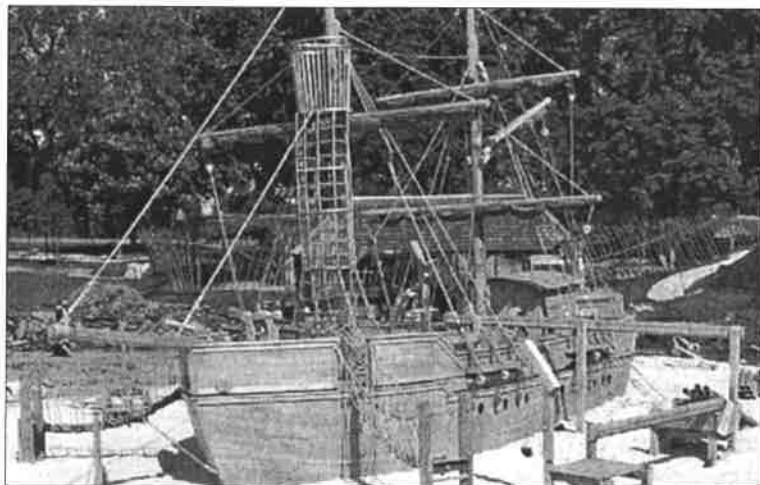
### Kensington Gardens

Anyone who visits the Gardens with children will have seen that the playground has been enlarged, rebuilt and dedicated to the late Princess Diana. Your Society has supported this throughout as it always seemed to us a much more appropriate memorial to the Princess, who was very fond of children, than a formal garden. The playground has a Peter Pan theme with a pirate ship and Indian wigwams, and the children seem to love it. We went to the opening by Gordon Brown, who was there as Chairman of the Princess Diana Memorial Committee. Rosa Monkton's daughter, who is handicapped and who was Princess Diana's godchild, made a charming little opening speech.

There is also the Princess Diana Memorial Walk, which is marked by raised plaques in the paths, and stretches for 7 miles, going right through all the Royal Parks. It is a good walk and it is hoped that tourists will use it.

We thought that that was the memorial for the Princess, and then we heard that £3 million has been allocated for a fountain in her memory. At the time of writing we have not been told where this fountain is to be, and it is a rather worrying development.

Any memorial to the Princess will attract large groups of tourists causing congestion on the edge of the Park where tourist coaches will park at the nearest point, ignoring double yellow lines. If the Parks Agency would consult us, and the Friends of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, we could discuss with them the problems which would arise from particular sites. But at the moment there is a veil of secrecy over everything and we are only told 'somewhere in the Park'.



*For the enjoyment of children. Captain Hook's Pirate Ship, a centre piece of the new Princess Diana Children's Playground.*

### Cycling in the Park

There is considerable pressure from the cycling lobby to allow cycling in Kensington Gardens, which has always been the 'quiet park', with no organised activities, leaving room for users to make their own enjoyment with picnics in the summer and football and games on the grass. Now the Parks Agency are talking about designated bicycle paths. The path on which they wish to allow cycling is south of the Round Pond, which is the most busy of all at weekends, with roller bladders, skateboards and micro-scooters, not to mention children and dogs.

We had a survey of our members in a recent Newsletter, asking how they felt about cycling in the park, and of those who responded about 60% were against and 30% for it. My own feeling is that it could be allowed if the route designated was one that was little used by most park users. The Friends are totally against it, and until the Parks Agency consult us, we shall support the Friends. When will the Government realise that if they would only consult local interests before they change the rules a lot of trouble and waste of time could be avoided.

Ethne Rudd

## The First Kensington Society

Members of our Kensington Society will be surprised to read that we belong to the second, not the first society to hold this honoured name. Even Mrs Christiansen had not heard of it, and asked me to write this article for the journal.

Kensington Square has always attracted intelligent, forward-looking people and in 1865 the eminent philosopher, John Stuart Mill, who with his step-daughter Helen Taylor, kept house at number 18, had no difficulty in inducing his neighbour, Mrs Charlotte Manning, to act as hostess for what would now be called a Protest Meeting. On May 3rd about forty brilliant young women, frustrated by the paucity of education and opportunity available to their sex, met to confer on possible remedial action. They chose their title, elected Barbara Leigh Smith as their Secretary, and passed a resolution calling for the extension of the franchise.

The names of those attending leap off the page, but the catalyst convener is now forgotten. Barbara Leigh Smith, although loved, educated and endowed by her father was also hindered by illegitimacy. After the death of his wife, Mr Smith had a second family without remarrying, so that some direct relatives, including Florence Nightingale and the Bonham Carters, never acknowledged Barbara although their paths often crossed. However, she became George Eliot's dearest friend and an exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

Already in 1862 her strong interest in social matters had led her to pioneer her 'Social Science Association' to such a pitch of esteem that it was permitted to hold a soirée, an unprecedented event, in the Palace of Westminster. Eight thousand women walked and talked there, some actually sat in the Chamber itself. *The Spectator* commented that 'the volunteer legislators took possession of the Treasury Bench', while the *Daily Telegraph* 'could almost imagine that women's rights had been ceded.'

Here is a sample of the group who responded to Barbara's warmth and drive in May 1865. Emily Davies (later Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge), Dorothea Beale (later Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College), Frances Buss (later Headmistress of North London Collegiate School), Elizabeth Garrett (recently admitted to the Society of Apothecaries, not yet a fully-fledged doctor), Helen Fawcett, the celebrated actress, and Millicent Fawcett, not yet the Prime Suffragette.

In June of that year James Stuart Mill stood as a Liberal for Westminster, and in spite, or because of, the enthusiastic support of the Kensington Society he won the election. All the more influential in this position, he continued not only to advise but to





*The political philosopher J.S. Mill, Kensington resident and early champion of women's suffrage.*

enlist support for a cause as close to his own heart as it had been to that of his deceased wife. In the November meeting of the committee a further resolution was passed calling for women's suffrage but after much correspondence with J S Mill and the friendly Russell Gurney, Conservative MP for Norwich, this was watered down to 'the extension of suffrage to widows and spinsters'. This was based on the fact that these women paid taxes without representation.

Barbara wrote to J S Mill that 'Miss Davies, Miss Parkes,

Miss Boncherett, Miss Garrett and myself begin at once to get signatures.' They moved their HQ to the home of the future Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in Berkeley Square and set to work. In one of J S Mill's letters he wrote that he presented the petition of Barbara Leigh Smith and others containing 1,499 signatures to Parliament in June 1866. This was the highest and final achievement of the Kensington Society. At the last meeting Barbara submitted her resignation and the society was dissolved.

Helen Taylor, Mill's step-daughter, proved a disastrous Secretary for its successor, the 'London National Society for Women', and the movement lost its way. The original group was split between the causes of education, enfranchisement and taxation.

Barbara had meanwhile married a Frenchman called Dr Bodichon who lived in Algiers. She contributed cogent articles to leading journals on all aspects of female emancipation, and she subscribed £1,000 towards the building of Girton College, the first women's college in Britain. That was opened in her time but she knew that women's suffrage would be a long haul. It is believed that she told Emily Davies 'You will go up and vote on crutches, and I shall come out of my grave and vote in my winding sheet.' In the event Emily walked to the poll in 1919, but Barbara had been dead for nearly 30 years.

A century later Gay Christiansen took up a similar social torch, inviting to her Kensington Square house - the very house where J. S. Mill had lived - friends and neighbours concerned about the appalling civic vandalism of the 1950s. Thus the second Kensington Society came into being, the catalyst becoming its pioneering Secretary. No charioteer in the Piazza Navona could have driven his team with greater passion and success than our

Gay. Conferences, Borough Departments, Enquiries, Quangos, humble neighbouring groups, all received stripes or sugar lumps according to their desserts.

We are proud of the first Kensington Society, who liberated stifled talent, and we are proud of Gay Christiansen, who for nearly 50 years stuck to her post through disappointment and achievement. Her name, without question, ranks with those of Barbara Leigh Smith and her Victorian colleagues.

Belinda Norman-Butler

*Note: The writer is greatly indebted to Pam Hirsch for the information and quotations used in this article, taken from her biography 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Feminist Artist and Rebel.'* B N-B

*Editor's note: Mrs Norman Butler is a great-granddaughter of the author, William Makepeace Thackeray, who lived for a number of years in Young Street, Kensington. Her husband was the first Treasurer of the Kensington Society.*

## AGM 2001

The Society's Annual General Meeting for 2001 will take place on Monday, April 30th at the Convent, Kensington Square. Doors will open at 6.30pm and the meeting will commence at 7pm. Wine will be served before and afterwards. This year's principal speaker will be Mr Michael Manser, CBE, RA, past-President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The subject of his talk will be 'New Buildings in Old Settings'.



## Chairman's Report

In addition to the controversial issues described by the Secretary (e.g. fountain, cycling) in her report we have been exercised *inter alia* by 24-hour licensing and by plans for Kensington High Street.

The Government's *White Paper on Licensing Reform*, issued after consultation with the trade but not with residents, is proving highly controversial. It would concentrate all licensing of alcohol and public entertainment in the hands of local councils. The magistrates and the police did not agree. Our Borough Council naturally welcomed 'putting in control local people capable of acting reasonably and fairly but with a rigorous control system as a safeguard. That is how it works for planning, and it should work just as well for licensing'. We pointed out that this would depend on councils and the police being given the resources and manpower to enforce a more liberal system; the dice must not be loaded in favour of the liquor/entertainment industry, which would constantly appeal if licenses were restricted or denied. And if 24-hour opening were the limit, to cope with a flood of applications for extensions beyond present hours would require tough attitudes on the part of councils. Would they always win the countless appeals? Jack Straw talks of reducing hooliganism, street drunkenness and rowdysim etc; is this compatible with drastic liberalising of opening hours? At least there should be a delay to permit proper and genuine consultation with residents. Already Islington has granted a 24-hour licence, while Westminster talked of cleaning up the West End. Late-night activity, if cut back in Soho, could easily seek to move to Knightsbridge and to the Royal Borough.

So there is much to be done before we can be reassured that things will get better, not worse. I am waiting for the day when one of our rowdy pubs actually loses its licence, when nightclubs are pulled back to more reasonable night hours, and our alleged 'quiet hours' from 11pm to 8am are really kept as such, especially on Sundays.

The plans for *Kensington High Street* have been moving at a snail's pace - like the traffic. Grandiose schemes have been shelved. There are plans for 'modern' street furniture, York and granite paving stones and a reduction of street clutter. One or two key junctions were selected for redesign to reduce congestion. A pedestrian crossing was to be added at the busiest point. A plan for redeveloping the block east of the NatWest bank went to appeal - this block badly needed improvement in architecture and quality of tenants. Personally I would begin by cleaning up our main shopping street, which would improve it at once.

Most recently we have been faced with Mayor Livingstone's proposed 'Road User Charge'. It would cost Kensingtonians a fiver

to drive to the West End, and make it difficult to go by car to evening activities in central London. People trying to avoid paying would tend to use Kensington and Chelsea as their 'park and ride', and/or seek 'rat-runs' through our streets. A Council questionnaire was circulated for residents to express their views; it spelled out the snags for us.

The worst feature of most of the threats that face us is lack of proper consultation with residents, and high handedness on the part of the central authorities. Eternal vigilance is required ....

Sir Ronald Arculus

## Remembering Diana

Regular walkers in Kensington Gardens will have become familiar with the plaques set along part of the seven-mile Princess of Wales Memorial Walk, a route consisting of two figures of eight covering four of London's royal parks, St James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. The route is marked by 90 plaques, about one third of them carrying indications to points of particular attraction. The one pictured here is situated in Kensington Gardens, its arrows pointing to the Italian Gardens in one direction, and Marlborough Gate in the other. The stainless steel plaques, designed by Alec Peever, carry a slate green outer surround and at the centre a Tudor rose emblem etched in aluminium. The Royal Parks Agency has no record of the extent to which the Memorial Walk has been used since its creation, but illustrated brochures are available from the Agency, and copies are sent regularly to hotels and other places where tourists are likely to congregate.



# The Shape of Things to Come

Within only a few weeks of taking up his post as the new **Town Clerk** of Kensington and Chelsea, **Mr Derek Myers** gallantly agreed to be interviewed on behalf of the Kensington Society about some of the major issues likely to confront the Council within the coming few years. Mr Myers, who took an economics degree at Manchester University, and, by spare time study, a law degree at London University, was previously Chief Executive of Hounslow Council. Now aged 45, his first work experience was as part of a bomb disposal squadron on Maplin Sands. The Society's interview, posing no explosive issues, took the form of a question and answer session.



*Mr Derek Myers, the Royal Borough's new Town Clerk.*

**Q:** A certain amount of concern exists about the future of Kensington High Street, especially in view of the impending opening of the large Chelsfield shopping development at Shepherds Bush. How is this seen by the Council?

**A:** There has been some modelling which suggests there will be an impact on High Street trade, but there's a lot to play for, and the Council, I can see, intends to be active in the matter, rather than passive. There is now a commitment to upgrade the High Street area, and a determination that it should remain a quality shopping environment and a continuing attraction, especially for local people, whose parking permits enable them to drive close to the shops. I also think there are question marks about how

accessible the Chelsfield project will be, how the network of local roads copes with the amount of traffic likely to result. I see Chelsfield as an opportunity to be managed, to decide how we counter those aspects likely to be deleterious to the Royal Borough. But at the same time we have to recognise that North Kensington has problems of unemployment, so that any new jobs created by the project will obviously be welcome.

**Q:** What is the Council's view of the Mayor of London's Transport strategy, especially the proposal to charge drivers entering the inner London zone?

**A:** We are at this moment trying to digest the first indicative document on this issue. You may recall that the congestion tax is supposed to link to the overall strategy, and, indeed, the Mayor is in effect required to say what he will do with the money before he invites anybody to agree to this form of tax. At the moment we have had the proposal about the tax before we have had the spending plan, so we need to discover whether there is sufficient detail in the plan to judge its likely advantages. And of course, we will also need to see how we can protect those residents who have to make journeys into the charging zone from time to time, what concessions we can obtain for them.

**Q:** There seems to be a suggestion that tall buildings will once more be permitted in Kensington, what is the position on that?

**A:** There have been some interesting debates, but I don't think the fundamentals have changed. Although the Unitary Development Plan is being revised, there are no proposals to alter the general line of caution against tall buildings. However, individual applications will be dealt with on their merits, for example, the London Tourist Board's aspirations to provide another ten thousand beds will have to be thought through. The Royal Borough already has a large number of bed spaces and there will be caution about inviting more, but a small number of sites have been identified for potential hotel development. I think such projects are likely to entail some form of high rise building because they are small sites, and hoteliers will want to have an economic proposition. None the less I think it would be wrong to suggest the Council is moving from its historic position on tall buildings.

**Q:** How will the authority of the Mayor of London mesh in with, or impinge upon that of the Council?

**A:** The Mayor certainly has reasonably discrete powers over transportation, as well as large planning issues and things like air

quality and waste management, so that in time those strategies will have to be recognised when we come to design local solutions for local problems. Only if the Mayor wished to cut across local solutions would we have to think our way through. For example, in the matter of affordable housing, a subject he has already raised with some authorities, he can at present only attempt to influence policy, but in time he will have some formal authority - although only over large-scale developments. The re-development of the Lots Road power station site could be a matter where the Mayor will have an interest. My understanding is that he could certainly express a view, and that would probably lead to a planning enquiry. But he would not have a veto.

**Q: The Local Government Act, 2000, has now been enacted by Parliament, what are the implications for councils such as the Royal Borough?**

**A:** The Act brings to an end a system of local government which has served London well for the past 100 years, that is, the Committee system. Under that system all councillors are equal and only by acting in combination can they make decisions. And, of course, they normally sit in party groupings, with all members of the Council eligible to sit on all committees. But the Government now requires local authorities to decide on a new system selected from three options. Two of the options have a directly elected mayor, and both models then see the rest of the councillors elected to sit, in effect, as a scrutiny body. In one of these two options the mayor would choose a cabinet of up to ten councillors. In the third option we get a system closer to what we have now, which is that all councillors would be elected, as now, the council would then elect a leader from the majority party, and the leader would then pick a cabinet. The difference is that when we have a new form of governance, the mayor, or leader in cabinet, would have individual authority. You would also have, in effect, lead councillors responsible for discrete aspects of policy rather like government ministers, and they too would have direct authority. The government's proposals seek to make local government more transparent, to make it more obvious who is responsible for overseeing what policy. Names will be in the public domain and there will be an expectation of accountability.

**Q: What is the time-scale?**

**A:** We shall be consulting locally about the three options with the intention of providing a response to the Government by next June, with the expectation that all councils will have reformed by

2002. The Council itself, at a meeting in October, agreed in principle that the leader and cabinet model be supported; in other words, it does not wish to canvass a directly elected mayor. However, the Council will wish to hear the views of local people before a final proposal is agreed.

**Q: What other major issues confront the Council in the near future?**

**A:** Well, there are two I would specifically mention, the first being waste disposal. The borough, along with other London authorities is required to look ahead at arrangements to dispose of commercial and domestic waste. The present landfill site in Essex is filling up, and such sites are becoming harder to find and are subject now to a landfill tax. And so the Western Riverside Waste Authority, of which the borough is a part, is preparing to evaluate whether we should stick with landfill for a few more years in the hope of further technological advances, or look at the long-term option of incineration - which often inspires all sorts of fears. This is a big policy dilemma for central London, and the Council needs to decide its position over the next nine months.

**Q: And the second issue?**

**A:** This is Carnival. Nobody can ignore that two people died during last summer's event, and that there were more injuries, and more arrests than on any previous occasion. Our problem is to ensure that Carnival can continue, but in a way which seeks to reduce risk. There has been a suggestion that there should be a linear rather than a circular route, since that would be easier in operational terms. But that would entail the route going further into Westminster, which might be resisted. Another suggestion is staging it in Hyde Park, which is used to handling heavily attended events. The Council's view is that there definitely need to be some visible changes in next year's plan, but the extent and nature has to be discussed with the independent company which actually runs Carnival. The authority's role is restricted to agreeing with the police what roads to close, and the provision of cleaning, toilets, and licensing - which all in all costs the Council some £500,000 annually. It would be wrong, of course, to consider Carnival solely on what it costs the borough, clearly there has to be a response to the aspirations of local people, and to the huge numbers of visitors who help to make this biggest street festival in Europe. But changes are necessary.

## Meet the New President

**Our Chairman, Sir Ronald Arculus, is to replace Sir John Drummond as President after the latter's retirement in April. The ensuing profile introduces Sir Ronald to those members who may not be aware of his background.**

Ronald and Sheila Arculus, unlike the pattern of some on retirement, did not retreat to the country but moved into Kensington from outside London. The idea was to be handy for the various part-time activities Ronald undertook on retiring from the Diplomatic Service. These included pharmaceuticals, banking, hotels, medical research and Channel Tunnel passenger trains - an eclectic range of jobs meant to last five years or so but eventually extending to more than twelve. Several of these appointments involved foreign travel and there were also visits to factories and other places in Britain.

Meanwhile local affairs began to take up more time, starting with the local residents association and leading to chairmanship of the Kensington Society. In the first of these posts much experience of planning and licensing matters was gained, which is highly relevant to the second. He has also had a lively interest in architecture, which is useful whenever a major new development in Kensington comes up.

The prelude to his successful career was a period at Oxford University, partly before and partly after the war, his war service being as a member of the 4th Queen's Own Hussars, mainly in Italy. Having completed his degree course at Oxford he joined the Foreign Office in 1947 and was posted to San Francisco, later being transferred to La Paz, Bolivia. Returning for a spell in London he and Sheila, his newly acquired bride, were then posted to Turkey to which country they set off the day after their wedding. Their journey, by car and ship in wintry conditions, took them through flood, storm and snow - hardly a conventional start to a marriage. Another posting to London followed, and a period of child-raising, and then America again, in the exciting Kennedy era. Washington was the first destination, then New York. Next came Paris, followed by a spell as Ambassador to the UN Law of the Sea conference, in which Britain, as a maritime nation, had major interests at stake. Finally, realising a youthful ambition, he became Ambassador in Rome in 1979 - in time for the Queen's State Visit in 1980.

Despite so much travel, Ronald and Sheila still like to go abroad as often as possible, but while in London have become greatly attached to Kensington. Experience in cities overseas has underlined the importance of keeping city centres liveable and civilised. If they are allowed to deteriorate, regeneration is very costly and difficult.

## Preserving a Whiff of the Past

Drayson Mews, off Holland Street, still carries a hint of yesteryear in that, unlike so many other Kensington mews, the former ground floor stables have not been converted into living quarters. The principal property owner there is Mr Sydney Creamer, who arrived in Kensington as a three-year-old in 1927, and who now runs a business occupying no fewer than 15 buildings in the mews. And in the former stable area of most of these properties will be found Jaguar cars, because Mr Creamer's business is selling cars, he is, in fact, Jaguar's oldest franchise dealer. Apart from wartime service in the Royal Air Force he has lived in Drayson Mews for 73 years, brought there when his father, a chauffeur, was installed in one of the former stables by a kindly employer to enable him to pursue a second job as a motor mechanic.

In 1926 Kensington Council adopted the mews, but what they did not adopt, according to Mr Creamer, were the series of dung pits, one for each stable, which when horses were there were in constant use. And thereby lies the cause of an ongoing dispute between the Jaguar dealer and the Council. The latter wants to cobble over the concrete pads which indicate the site of each pit, officials say they are unsightly and in some cases in poor repair.



*Picture shows the yellow no-parking line skirting the concrete pads covering three of the Drayson Mews dungpits. The climbing rose, still blooming in mid-November, may be glimpsed (by the keen-sighted) above the van on the right*

Furthermore, they claim, the pits no longer exist, having been filled in years ago. Be that as it may, Mr Creamer wishes to preserve them as relics of by-gone Kensington, and in any case, he claims, they are his property. Under the terms of the 1926 adoption, he maintains, the Council is legally required to request the return of the land on which they are sited, and this they have never done. Not so, say the Council, the pits are no longer used for their original purpose, and therefore Sydney Creamer is no longer the owner. But, he counters, some years ago he was required by the Council to make repairs to some of the pads on the grounds that he was the owner.

While this matter remains unresolved, Mr Creamer's attitude may be judged from the yellow no-parking lines which have been painted in Drayson Mews. Rather than running straight along either side of the cobbled strip of road, at his insistence they carefully skirt round each of the dung-pit pads as if to emphasise that possession is nine parts of the law. Whether it is also the tenth part will probably need to be decided by lawyers eventually.

Meantime, while the issue rumbles along in a somewhat low-key manner, a pink rose bush has climbed almost to the roof of one of the two-storey buildings in the mews, a touch of nature amid the cobbles and the cars. Such is its vigour that one has to assume that somehow its roots have found their way to a rich source of nutrients, discovered perhaps somewhere among the disused dung pits.

## A One-Sided View

A few years ago, as the oldest inhabitant in Drayson Mews, Sydney Creamer was asked by the Council's planning authorities to provide them with a description of the mews and its inhabitants in the years before the Second World War. The great majority of the tenants, he reported, had been either motor mechanics or chauffeurs, among the latter group being the occupant of No. 16, a man with novel labour-saving ideas. Because his employer always got into the car on the same side the chauffeur decided that only that side needed cleaning. All went well until one evening when, making his usual journey to collect his boss at Kensington High Street station, he discovered him taking a different view of the car from the opposite side of the road. The chauffeur's economical cleaning methods were not appreciated and he was fired on the spot.

## Planning and Conservation in 2000

This report has had to be written shortly before the end of the year but it seems that over the entire twelve months there will be a total of 2,500 applications lodged at the Town Hall - an unprecedented number, it is thought. The Society's planning sub-committee monitors all those that relate to Kensington (as distinct from Chelsea) and lodges objections where appropriate - often with success. The more important applications were as follows: **St Philip's Church, Earls Court Road:** partial demolition for residential development. *Granted.* **Diana Memorial Walk, Kensington Gardens.** *Granted.* **Queen Elizabeth College:** two applications, one for residential conversion, one for use by two independent schools; *Pending.* **51-53 Abingdon Road:** residential development on the site of former dairy. *Granted.* **Sir John Atkins Building, Campden Hill:** residential. *Pending.* **Meanwhile Gardens, W10:** partial redevelopment for residential use. *Refused.* Site at corner of **West Cromwell Road/Warwick Road;** residential; *Pending.* **37-53 Kensington High Street and 5-13 Young Street, W8:** redevelopment for shops, flats and offices. *Pending.* This last application has perhaps, along with the Campden Hill proposals, aroused the greatest interest.

Representations have also been made on a number of appeals, notably car parking at **Campbell Court.** *Dismissed.* The Council's application to the High Court for review of the Inspector's grant of permission for residential development on the **Campden Hill Waterworks** site was, sadly, *Dismissed.*

Many other matters have been dealt with by the sub-committee, including successful representations for the listing of **48 Kensington Court** (former home of the celebrated electrical engineer R E B Crompton); consideration of law changes on **off-street parking;** comments on the long-term scheme for improvements to traffic and the environment in **Kensington High Street;** final comments on the revision of the **Unitary Development Plan,** and extensions to several **Conservation Areas.**

Indeed, there has been 'never a dull moment'!

Robert Vigars



# Millennium Time

The presentation of the clock given to the Royal Borough by the Kensington Society to mark the year 2000, took place at a brief ceremony on June 5. The



ceremony on June 5. The clock, sited on the Hornton Street side of the Town Hall, was funded by a donation from an anonymous member of the Society. It was presented to the Council by HRH the Duke of Gloucester, the Society's Patron, and accepted on behalf of the Borough by the Mayor, Councillor Richard Walker-Arnott. At the conclusion of the ceremony 1,000 blue balloons, each bearing the name of the Kensington Society, were released to

sail in a southerly direction over London. A reception in the Town Hall followed the ceremony.



*Pictures, anti-clockwise. (1) The Clock. (2) the Mayor, responds to the Duke of Gloucester's presentation speech; also pictured, the Mayoress and Sir Ronald Arculus. (3) Mrs Gay Christiansen, accompanied by John Bickel, in conversation with Sir Ronald Arculus.*

*(4) Members of the Executive Committee, from left, Celia Rees-Jenkins, Susan Lockhart, Robin Price and Michael Bach, gaze skywards as (5) a thousand balloons soar free.*

*(Pictures by Arthur Farrand Radley)*



# How Deep are your Kensington Roots?

Who among members of the Society has the longest family connection with Kensington? In next year's Annual Report we hope, with the co-operation of members, to answer that intriguing question. Can you look back 100 years and claim a firm family link with the Royal Borough, 150 years, perhaps - or even longer? For the purposes of this inquiry distant relatives may be included, so long as hard evidence is provided of their Kensington associations. Contenders for the 'deepest-roots' title should ensure that their claims reach Mrs Ethne Rudd, Honorary Secretary of the Kensington Society, not later than October 31, 2001. Mrs Rudd's address is 15 Kensington Square, W8 5HH. As can be seen, the closing date for entries offers at least six months for detailed genealogical research - it could be an interesting period for some members.

## Darwinian Contenders

Mrs Angela Darwin, Membership Secretary of the Kensington Society, might well be one 'deepest roots' contender since her family connections with the Royal Borough stretch well back into the 19th century. Her husband is a great grandson of Charles Darwin, the eminent naturalist, whose *Origin of Species* first propounded the theory of evolution, and it is Charles Darwin's eldest daughter, Henrietta, who provides the Kensington connection. She married at the age of 28 in 1871, and lived with her husband, Richard Litchfield, at 31 Kensington Square until his death in 1903.

Aunt Etty, as she was known by her large tribe of Darwin nephews and nieces, is lovingly portrayed by one of those nieces. Gwen Raverat, in *Period Piece*, a reminiscence of a childhood spent largely in Cambridge but coloured by visits to Darwin outposts elsewhere, including Kensington Square. If the definition of a Victorian Lady was someone who never did a thing for herself, then childless Aunt Etty was emphatically that. At the age of 86 she confessed that she had never in her life made a pot of tea, never been out in the dark alone, not even in a cab, and is thought never to have travelled in a train without her maid.

The Darwin family as a whole seemed to enjoy the best of ill-health for much of their lives, and Aunt Etty was no exception. When, aged of 13, she contracted a mild fever, the doctor

recommended breakfast in bed for a while; during the remainder of her long life she never again got up for breakfast. As a professional invalid she proffered health advice liberally throughout the family, but her husband was the chief object of her concerns. Generally draped by her in a Shetland shawl, he would in cold weather find himself covered with a dust sheet when a window had to be opened to air the room. And regularly his reading would be interrupted by servants bearing bowls of Benger's food, which he patiently consumed.

As for Aunt Etty herself, to combat the threat of colds she devised a protective mask consisting of a kitchen-strainer stuffed with antiseptic cotton-wool. This would be fixed over her nose and mouth like a snout and held in place by elastic. Attired thus she would receive visitors, discussing matters of the day in a hollow voice as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

In that quiet, comfortable house, with its William Morris wallpaper and curtains, its blue china, peacock feathers, Arundel prints and its chintz-curtained beds, the rigours of Victorian London seemed far distant. But on visits to Kensington they would be graphically brought home to the Darwin children by the cab-runners who would follow their four-wheeler all the way from King's Cross station in the hope of a tip for carrying their luggage into the house. Their journeys were always in vain because Aunt Etty habitually engaged the Square-keeper to assist the cab driver. Somehow the cab-runners fell into the category of beggars, and therefore not among those who really needed help. Victorian charity was sometimes difficult to fathom.



*Conversation Pieces at the Millennium Clock ceremony:  
(left) Robin Price in earnest discussion with Sir Ronald Arculus,  
(right) in lighter mood, Lady Arculus with Tony Rudd and his wife,  
Ethne, Honorary Secretary of the Kensington Society.*



# Environmental Awards 2000

One of the duties of the Borough Council is to ensure a good standard of design in the built environment. It does this largely through the statutory planning process, and in particular, through 'development control'. However, the Council goes further, with its annual environment awards scheme, which encourages and recognises a high standard of design.

The awards are made in various categories of building work - **new building, commercial building, general environmental improvement, conservation/restoration**. An award is made for **good wheel-chair access**, and an additional award can be made in special circumstances. These award categories cause some problems, for a building may not fit into any group. So there is an on-going discussion about changing categories. In any case, buildings to be considered must make a significant contribution to the 'public domain' and not be hidden from general view.

The awards panel was chaired by the new chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Barry Phelps. As usual, there were representatives of the Chelsea and Kensington Societies on the panel. Once again it was considered that the number and quality of the nominated projects were disappointingly low, and that some of the better projects had not been nominated. This is the weakness of the scheme - projects must be nominated by someone, and sometimes this does not happen. Perhaps local amenity



*The Aroma Cafe, a triangular sliver of glass and steel in Wright's Lane, designed by Elsworth Sykes Architecture, which won first prize in the New Building category of the Council's annual environment awards scheme. 'An audacious and extraordinarily clever project' declared the judges, 'a wonderful use of glass ...'.*

societies should play a part in nominating worthy entrants.

However, there was no hesitation in making the award in the **New Buildings** category to the **new cafe in Wright's Lane**, close to Kensington High Street. Unashamedly modern, this elegant building makes imaginative use of an awkward triangular site.

In the **Conservation/Restoration** category, after some discussion the award was given to **The Bromptons** - a scheme based on the old Brompton Hospital. The 19th century Jacobean style building is converted into flats and extended in a similar style; the whole scheme is finished to a high standard and is well landscaped. But some of the assessors thought that the facsimile style of the new project devalues the style of the old, and alters its scale and character.

**The Royal Court Theatre** was nominated, but did not fit easily into any of the award categories. However, it was recognised that the refurbishment included imaginative alterations and improvements, and it was worthy of a **special award**. It was also given the award for **Access** - great care having been taken to make wheel-chair access available throughout the building.

The award for **General Environmental Improvement** was made for work in **Kensington Palace Gardens**. The new entrances, gatehouses, railings and hard and soft landscaping have been done to a high standard - a fitting adjunct to the collection of remarkable buildings in this avenue.

There was no award made in the **Commercial Buildings** category.

**Six commendations** were made. (1) Shop fronts in **Wetherby Terrace, Earls Court** have been restored and set a good example for other improvements in the area. (2) At **21-31 King's Road** good refurbishment includes improved entrances to the residential accommodation. (3) The **chapel** of the former college of **St Mark and St John** has been well restored and converted to other uses. But unfortunately the building is surrounded with Tarmac for car parking. (4) In the extreme north of the Borough **social housing on the St Quintin estate** has been upgraded sufficiently to gain a commendation. (5) **Pembridge Gardens**, near Notting Hill Gate, is a street of rather grand stuccoed houses, mainly converted into hotels. **Nos 1 to 9** have been well restored, in particular boundary walls, gates and piers have been reinstated in commendable manner. (6) **The Natural History Museum** has had restoration work at roof level and illustrates how important it is to pay attention to the roof-line/skyline of buildings, especially when in full view.

It is to be hoped that in future years the Environmental Awards scheme will attract and encourage more buildings of outstanding design.

Robert Meadows

# Going Places

**The Society's popular programme of visits, lectures etc. is the work of two members of the Executive Committee, Dianne Gabitass and Robin Price. In this joint article they write about the operation's many successes, and its occasional hiccups.**

It's very much a team effort, which is just as well since arranging and facilitating the programme can sometimes be rather more complex than either of us had envisaged - and sometimes not a little frustrating. And there is always the anxious moment awaiting the coach (in fact, pretty reliable), or the lecturer (usually reliable). Do lecturers always realise why they are greeted so effusively?

The world being the way it is, things do occasionally go wrong - as punters could easily have notice this year - either through lack of support at the right time (the Isle of Wight venture), or a last-minute unilateral and unabsorbable shift of date on a joint enterprise (the much-looked-forward-to Reform Club dinner). For these and others we apologise, and will try to do better next time. We yet hope, incidentally, to have that dinner at the Reform.

For 2001 we believe we have arranged a programme to suit most tastes, and most pockets. Lectures are a popular part of our offering in the winter months, and this winter we offer two. Later on we have two inner-London visits, plus two coach visits. For full details see the February-June programme, which follows this article. If you are able, please apply soon since numbers are limited on all events. If coach visits these days seem disproportionately expensive it is because the hire of even a mini-coach from the most cost-conscious of hire firms is itself expensive. Their prices are being driven yet higher by what some would regard as unreasonable EC demands.

All this, to say nothing of logging in the applications, makes us sound like martyrs to the cause. But, of course, we thoroughly enjoy it. It's good to meet you so regularly, and it's all very much part of the rich complexity and shared enjoyment of this most fortunate of Boroughs. Please keep on coming, and bring your friends ....

## Events

**February-June 2001**

**Wednesday, February 28**

Roger Morgan, former Librarian of the House of Lords, will give a talk on his father, Charles Morgan, the famous novelist of the 1920s and 30s (members may recall *The Fountain* and *The Judge's Story* among numerous other works), who was a resident of Campden Hill Square for many years. This will be an unusually interesting

**Lecture by**

**Roger Morgan**

Kensingtonian occasion. A glass of wine will precede the talk.

**Meet at 6pm for 6.15 at Lady Bearsted's £7.50 per person flat, 9 Campden Hill Court, Campden Hill Road, W8**

**Wednesday, March 28**

**The Temple Church, EC4**

The Temple Church, consecrated in 1185 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, was the London HQ Chapel to the Knights Templar, the soldier-monks who guarded pilgrims to the Holy Land after the successful First Crusade. It comprises the remarkable 13th century Round Church, a building of magnificent if sombre architecture housing the tombs of the Marshals, Earls of Pembroke, the most powerful family in early medieval England after that of the monarch. A well-informed talk, followed by questions, will precede a period of free time allowed to absorb this extraordinary survival from the reigns of Henry II and Henry III.

**Meet at 2.30pm at the South Porch £10 per person (part of fee goes to Temple Lane off Fleet Street, EC4) of fee goes to Temple Church)**

**Tuesday April 24**

**The Gilbert Collection, Somerset House, Strand**

Join us for a visit to this magnificent collection of decorative arts. Our tour will be led by a curator and will last approximately one hour, starting at 2.30pm. One of the most important art bequests ever made, the exhibition is a must for closer viewing.

**Meet at 2.15pm at entrance to £15 per person collection within Somerset House.**

**Thursday, May 17**

**Harrow School, Harrow on the Hill**

Starting at 2pm our guided tour of this famous school will include some of the oldest buildings, along with those representing the expansion of the 19th century, and modern developments. The price of the visit covers entry fee and coach travel. The tour will last approximately two hours. We would expect to be back in Kensington Square by 5.30pm.

**Meet at 12.30pm sharp at £22.50 per person 18 Kensington Square, W8.**

**Tuesday, June 12**

**Stratfield Saye House, Stratfield Saye, nr Reading**

View the home of the Dukes of Wellington since 1817. This fine house contains the paintings, furniture and personal possessions of the first Duke of Wellington. The peaceful grounds include the Rose, American and Walled gardens. There will be a guided tour of the house. Lunch and tea are available at personal choice and charge. The price covers entry fee and cost of coach travel.

**Meet at 10am sharp at £27 per person 18 Kensington Square, W8.**

# Kensington Society Booking Form

Date	No.	Name of Event	Fee payable
Total £			

1. Please enter your bookings in date order.
2. When you have completed the booking form make out a cheque payable to 'The Kensington Society' (crossed 'Account Payee only' if not already printed on cheque), and sign it - but do not fill in an amount. However, to protect yourself, write at the bottom of the cheque 'Amount not to exceed £ ' (amount shown in total).
3. Forward booking form, cheque and a stamped addressed envelope to **Mrs Dianne Gabitass, 37 Kensington Place, W8 7PR.** The booking form will be processed and any events not available marked on it. Your cheque will then be completed and banked, and your booking form returned to you in your S.A.E.

Your Name.....

(block letters please)

Address .....

.....

.....

Telephone No. ....

Please add any suggestions for future visits.....

.....

.....

## Kensington Housing Trust

*"If a healthy race is to be reared, it can be reared only in healthy homes; if drink and crime are to be successfully combated, decent, sanitary houses must be provided; if 'unrest' is to be converted into contentment, the provision of good houses, may prove one of the most potent agents in that conversion"* H.M. George V, from a speech to representatives of the local authorities at Buckingham Palace, April 1919.

Seven years later KHT was set up to deal with the appalling conditions in north Kensington. Today, many of north Kensington residents are still much poorer than in the rest of the borough with over two-thirds of people living in social housing. Child density on the local estates is high and the area has one of the highest number of pregnancy terminations in England. Old people - many with disabilities - account for a quarter of the local population.

As a housing charity, KHT now provides nearly 4,000 affordable homes for those in need in the area. Nearly a third are for key workers; our nurses, teachers, transport and police officers - many of whom could not otherwise afford to live in the area and yet are vital to our community. As well as affordable homes, we create and support services needed by the community. These include a nursery providing subsidised places for particularly vulnerable children; a youth worker to work with young people experiencing difficulties and needing support; and a mobile warden service for vulnerable, elderly people.

The founders of KHT were predominantly local residents, who had the imagination, contacts, and determination to do something about inadequate housing. The first chairman was George John Gordon Bruce, 11th Baron Balfour of Burleigh. At the time estate manager Katherine Brown recalled,

*The whole housing scene in Kensington was dominated by the towering figure of Lord Balfour of Burleigh ... in an endeavour to awaken South Kensington to the lamentable conditions in North Kensington he would produce at a dinner party a matchbox of bugs collected in North Kensington. He never allowed us to forget that the Trust had been formed for the benefit of the 'Poorer Classes'.*

KHT still needs local support to fund community initiatives not funded through statutory sources. The Millennium Fundraising Programme to raise money for the Wornington Green Estate in North Kensington - our biggest estate and home to over 2,000 people - has been successful and there remains only £126,000 to raise for a much needed play area where children can play out of doors in safety. If you would like to support this project or would like to know more about our work please contact Sue Payne on 020 8743 3177.

## All the King's Women

On an October day in 1760 King George the Second died unexpectedly at Kensington Palace, and within a few hours there was not a horse to be hired in the whole of London. In that pre-telephone age the only way to spread news of such a momentous event was by horseback, and there were many well-born people around the country who needed to know. The reaction was reported by the *London Chronicle* the following day. 'Yesterday great numbers of nobility and gentry arrived in town, and more are hourly coming.' It was vital for such people to be on hand when a new monarch ascended the throne since there were many perks to be redistributed.

When Horace Walpole, author and dilettante, heard of the King's death he was surprised that it had occurred at Kensington. 'My Lady Howard,' he declared, 'told me a month ago that he had often told her, speaking of the dampness of Kensington, that he would never die there.' And Lady Howard ought to know because she had been the King's mistress for 20 years, a situation which allowed her husband to extract a pension of £1,200 a year - around £60,000 today - as the price of allowing her to remain within the royal household.

King George's wife, Queen Caroline, tolerated the liaison, realising, as the courtier Lord Hervey declared, that if her spouse must have a mistress then the insipid Henrietta Howard 'whom she despised and had got the better of,' was preferable to some successor whom her husband 'might really love, and that might get the better of her.' It was the practice of the King to visit the lady in her palace apartment every evening at seven o'clock, and there are accounts of the dapper little monarch pacing restlessly up and down the King's Gallery, watch in hand, waiting with Teutonic precision for the exact moment for the visit to begin.

For Queen Caroline those nightly visits were at least a relief from her husband's company, she being normally in his presence for up to eight hours a day, 'during which time' in the words of Lord Hervey, 'she was generally saying what she did not think, assenting to what she did not believe, and praising what she did not approve; for they were seldom of the same opinion, and he too fond of his own for her ever to controvert it.'

In 1734, tired of the King's bombastic ways, and tired too of her semi-basement apartment where fungi sprouted from the floor in damp weather, his mistress quit Kensington Palace and soon afterwards married for a second time. A replacement was not long forthcoming, however. King George, who was also Elector of Hanover, visited the province every second year and in 1735, within a few months of Lady Howard's departure, Amelia von Walmoden,

the 31 year old wife of a well-to-do citizen of Hanover, had been recruited in her place.

Queen Caroline, now confronted by a rival she had reason to fear, was at least well informed about the new liaison - the King himself reporting its progression in lengthy weekly letters to her. According to Lord Hervey the missives 'acquainted the Queen with every step he took, the growth of his passion, the progress of his applications and their success, and every word as well as every action which passed.' So minutely was the lady described, said Hervey, that had the Queen been an artist 'she might have drawn her rival's face at six hundred miles distant.' King George's letters were dutifully replied to by his wife, but her tolerance must have been near breaking point when, in the spring-time of his liaison with Madame Walmoden, he wrote asking her to try to ensure that when the Prince of Modena undertook a projected visit to England he brought his wife with him. The King had heard that this lady was 'pretty free of her person', and consequently he 'had the greatest inclination imaginable' to pay his respects to her. The response is unrecorded.

King George was so infatuated by his new mistress that to the Queen's annoyance he prolonged his stay six weeks beyond the original date of return, and when he did get back he was in the foulest mood, according to Lord Hervey. No English cooks could



*King George the Second, a long-time resident of Kensington Palace.*

dress a dinner properly, he complained, no English confectioner set out a dessert, no English player could act, no English jockey ride. No Englishman knew how to come into a room, and no Englishwoman knew how to dress herself. 'Whereas at Hanover, all these things were in the utmost perfection.'

The next summer the King was off to Hanover again, on an unscheduled visit. Madame Walmoden was pregnant and he had to be with her. Despite rumblings among the populace, and despite the sharp decline of social life at Court, his absence this time extended to six months, so that even his annual birthday celebrations had to be cancelled.

The Queen was by now understandably resentful but, at the strenuous urging of Prime Minister Walpole, she wrote a long, submissive letter to her husband inviting him to bring his mistress to England. 'We will get her here and humble her too,' Walpole declared, presumably referring to the treatment of Henrietta Howard. George's reply was so well composed that Walpole was led to observe that if only the King would confine himself to simply writing to women 'and never strut and talk to them' he would have more success than any other man in the world.

When he eventually returned, early in 1737, his effusive greeting to the Queen, and his subsequent kindly behaviour towards her, might have suggested that Madame Walmoden had never existed. And, reinforcing this impression, he was soon in pursuit of another mistress nearer home, Lady Deloraine. He had been in the habit of 'talking a little bawdy' to this lady in the evenings for some time, which prompted her to declare he had been in love with her 'these two years'. Certainly she seemed unresistant to idea of the monarch's bed because when the Prime Minister complimented her on her infant son and asked whose it was she replied, without offence, that it was her husband's. 'But' she added with a laugh, 'I will not promise whose the next shall be.'

Queen Caroline died in the summer of 1737, prompting this bitter couplet;

'Oh, Death, where is thy sting,  
To take the Queen, and leave the King.'

To console himself George arranged for Madame Walmoden to move to England, granting her the title of Countess of Yarmouth. At the same time he began to close up rooms at Kensington Palace. Thus the lady found herself in the same damp semi-basement apartment formerly occupied by Henrietta Howard, and when someone commented that there were still plenty of other rooms to be had she replied dolefully, 'Mais pas pour moi.'

She had indeed been humbled, especially since Lady Deloraine long continued to share the role of King's mistress.

Robert Milne-Tyte

## EVENTS 2002

**Tuesday 12 March 2002**

**Lecture by Meriel Larken on the  
Victorian steamship Yavari  
on Lake Titicaca, Peru**

Since 1987 Meriel Larken has led a Trust to restore this splendid steamship built in England and transported 1863-9 to Lake Titicaca (12,500 ft altitude), the highest navigable lake in the world, partly on the backs of mules.

The story, told with slides, of the Victorian vision and ingenuity which created such a ship (powered initially by dried llama dung) for so fiendishly difficult a site is fully matched by the vision and determination which overcame every impossible circumstance to restore Yavari to full working order. A glass of wine will precede the lecture.

**Meet at 6:00 for 6:15p.m. at Lady Bearsted's flat      £10.00 per person  
9 Campden Hill Court, Campden Hill Road, W8**

**Wednesday 17 April 2002**

**Wallace Collection**

Join us for a private guided tour of this fine collection at Hertford House in Manchester Square, central London.

**Meet at 2:30 p.m. sharp      £10.00 per person  
in the main entrance hall**

**Thursday 9 May 2002**

**Royal Star and Garter Home  
Richmond Hill**

Visit this splendid Home overlooking Richmond Park and built in 1924 specifically for disabled war veterans. Our tour will last approximately two hours. Limited numbers, book early.

**Meet at 2:00p.m. at the main entrance      £12.00 per person**

**Wednesday 5 June 2002**

**Polesden Lacey**

A National Trust property since 1942, this elegant Regency villa contains a fine collection of furniture, paintings, porcelain and silver. There are walks in the grounds in the Edwardian Garden. Price covers transport only. Refreshments at personal choice and charge. National Trust members free entry; non members \$6.00 payable in cash on the day.

**Meet at 10:00a.m. sharp      £25.00 per person  
outside 15 Kensington Square  
£25.00 per person      (N.T. members please bring  
membership card)**

**Guests are welcome at any of these events.**

## KENSINGTON SOCIETY BOOKING FORM

Date	No.	Name of Event	Fee payable
Total £			

1. Please enter your bookings in date order.
2. When you have completed the booking form make out a cheque payable to "The Kensington Society" (crossed "Account Payee only" if not already printed on cheque), and sign it - but do not fill in an amount. However, to protect yourself, write at the bottom of the cheque 'Amount not to exceed £      ' (amount shown in total).
3. Forward booking form, cheque and a stamped addressed envelope to **Mrs Dianne Gabitass, 37 Kensington Place, WS 7PR**. The booking form will be processed and any events not available marked on it. Your cheque will then be completed and banked, and your booking for returned to you in your S.A.E.

**YOUR NAME** .....

**(block letters please)**

**ADDRESS** .....

**Telephone number** .....

Please add any suggestions for future visits .....

## Peter Pan at Ninety

Peter Pan is 90 this year. The statue in Kensington Gardens, sited alongside the stretch of the Serpentine known as the Longwater, attracts thousands of visitors annually. It is one of the most photographed objects in all of the royal parks. Peter Pan's creator, the playwright and novelist J M Barrie, whose house was opposite the Gardens, based his internationally famous play on stories he had made up for the five sons of his friends Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. On the early deaths of both their parents, the childless Barrie provided a home for the boys and became their surrogate father. Peter Pan was first performed in 1904 and was followed two years later by a book by Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*.

It was on May Day, 1912, that the statue, by Sir George Frampton, suddenly appeared in the Gardens. Barry, who commissioned the work, intended it as kind of magical surprise for strollers in the gardens on that day, but not everyone took its appearance in the spirit which he had hoped for. There were complaints about the playwright commandeering a site in the park for his own delectation. Nor was everyone impressed by the sculpture, Barry among them. To Peter Pan's creator the figure was too saccharine, it did not show 'the devil' in the boy. Despite that, it remains today one of the major attractions in London, a city awash with attractions.



### Can you Help?

The lectures which form part of the Society's regular Events programme are invariably well attended, and often over-subscribed. However, a problem which tends to confront the organisers is finding suitable venues for these occasions. Hiring a room would put the price of admission well beyond what most people would wish to pay, and therefore the programme is dependent on the generosity of members willing to allow their houses or flats to be used from time to time. But rooms capable of accommodating audiences of between 20-30 are not easily found these days, and thus the same few people are called upon again and again. Can you help to ease this situation by providing a suitable location once a year or less? Devoutly grateful thanks will be vouchsafed by the Events organisers if you can. Please contact the Society's Secretary Mrs Ethne Rudd, at 15 Kensington Square, W8, (tel: 7376 1111) for further information.



# Kensington's Vanishing Pubs

*Robert Cook charts a matter of concern to the drinking class.*

The traditional English inn was long considered a changeless feature of the landscape, but recently disputes over the closure of pubs for conversion to residential use, and bewildering changes of name, have upset this sense of stability.

This has prompted me to compare old directories with current usage to see just how the pub scene in Kensington has changed.

In the 1820s the public houses in Kensington were confined to just a few centres of settlement, notably in Kensington High Street, which was almost full of pubs. On the north side was perhaps the grandest inn, the *King's Arms Hotel*, standing at the very gateway to Kensington, next to the entry to the Palace. It was here that Thackeray set some scenes from *Henry Esmond*. The hero, with his friend, Dick Steele, had 'emptied scores of bottles at the King's Arms', and later in a climactic scene he watched, out of the tavern window, the proclamation of George 1 as king—an event occurring in 1714. By the end of the 19th century the pub had transmogrified into the *Royal Palace Hotel*, and in the early 1960s was rebuilt as the *Royal Garden Hotel*. At that stage it was enlarged so that it also incorporated the former premises of the *Duke of Cumberland* a few yards away. On the south side was the *Goat Tavern*, still open today under the same name and claiming foundation in 1697, and next door the *Three Tuns*, now closed. Between there and Kensington High Street, on either side, were the *Coach & Horses*, the *Wheatsheaf*, the *Three Compasses*, the *Marquis of Granby*, the *King & Queen*, the *Grapes Tavern* and the *King of Prussia*.

In Kensington village were to be found the *Builders' Arms* and the *Greyhound*, both still surviving—despite the latter being wrecked by a gas explosion some 25 years ago. And in Kensington Gore stood the *Hand & Flower*, *Campden Arms* and *Prince of Wales*, all now gone. Further west, in the High Street, were the *Adam & Eve*, where the dramatist Richard Sheridan ran up a large slate, and the *Holland Arms* [formerly *White Horse*]. In Kensington Church Street were the *Catherine Wheel*, [formerly the *George Inn*], the *Artichoke* and the *Churchill Arms*. Apart from that, the only other pubs were the *King's Head*, in what is now Kenway Village, Earls Court, and at Notting Hill

Gate [then known as the Gravel Pits] the *Coach & Horses*, *Plough Inn*, *Swan* and *Hoop Tavern*. This made a total of scarcely more than a couple of dozen hostelries within the boundaries of the ancient parish of Kensington.

By 1900, when the borough was incorporated, the position was quite transformed, the built-up area being by then largely complete. Many of the old pubs in the High Street gave way to retail use, some built over by Barkers. They were replaced by numerous Victorian pubs arising in the major new thoroughfares and residential corners of the more outlying areas. There were upwards of 150 pubs and beer retailers in 1900, since then the numbers have fallen to about 100. But they have not all been turned into restaurants, the reasons for closures have varied considerably. Some 60 pubs from a century ago, or about 40 per cent, remain open on the same sites and under the same, or very similar, names. This continuity is evidenced by such well-known establishments as the *Zetland Arms*, *Stanhope Arms*, *Hereford Arms*, *Hoop & Toy* and *Anglesea Arms* in South Kensington; the *Prince of Teck*, *Courtfield* and *Coleherne* in Earls Court; the *Kensington Arms*, *Princess Victoria*, *Elephant & Castle*, *Pembroke Arms*, *Scarsdale Arms* and *Windsor Castle* in Kensington; the *Castle* and *Duke of Clarence* in Holland Park Avenue; the *Earl Percy* and *Eagle* in Ladbroke Grove; the *Sun in Splendour* and *Duke of Wellington* in Portobello Road, and the *Duke of Norfolk* and *Earl of Lonsdale* in Westbourne Grove.



Picture courtesy of Kensington Public Library

The *Elephant & Castle*, Gordon Place, a Victorian survivor.

The great loss of pubs has resulted from demolition for redevelopment, mainly in the north of the borough. The first wave came in the 1950s with road widening at Notting Hill Gate. Huge old inns like the *Coach & Horses* and the *Plough* were pulled down, but the *Hoop* was rebuilt slightly further west—although more recently it has given way to a Woolwich Bank branch. Round the corner in Kensington Church street *Ye Olde Swan* was also rebuilt—and is now a *Rat & Parrot*.

Then in the mid-1960s came the building of Westway and its access road to Shepherds Bush roundabout. This required massive demolition and the redevelopment of adjacent areas. Fourteen pubs disappeared in the process. Others have succumbed to retail or office use, with pressures first affecting those in prime shopping centres such as the High Street and Church Street. The *Civet Cat*, for example, situated on the corner where these two streets meet, was transformed first into a branch of Barclays Bank, and more recently to a Pizza Hut. But its metal sign still hangs each side of the premises. More than a dozen other pubs have been converted to domestic use, mainly smaller premises in largely residential areas, particularly north of Holland Park Avenue. Several more are now restaurants, their old names replaced by such as *Dakota*, in Ledbury Road, *Orsinos*, in Portland Road, *Cactus Blue* in Fulham Road, and *Cafe Flo* in Kensington Church Street.

About 20 per cent of the pubs from a century ago survive under different names, almost all of them changed relatively recently. Many of these result from the statutory Beer Orders of the late 1980s. They include several *Rat & Parrots*, among them the *Old Swan* in Kensington Church Street, the *Harrington Hotel* in Gloucester Road and the *Mitre*, later [the *Raj*] in Holland Park Avenue. The latter still has stone mitres on its parapet and its original name engraved in granite concealed under a signboard bearing the current name. There is also *Finnegan's Wake*, formerly the *Gloucester Arms*, with the arms still engraved on the pub's windows in Gloucester Road.

Elsewhere in the area, the *Bolton Hotel* in Earls Court has become *O'Neill's Brewery*, the *Denmark* in Old Brompton Road is now the *Abbaye Bar Brasserie*, while in Portobello Road the *Golden Cross* is now the *Market Bar*, and the *Princess Alexandra* has become *Portobello Gold*.

Despite so many closures a few new pubs have emerged. In Earls Court Road, for example, the Midland Bank branch has been transformed into the *Blackbird*; a furniture shop in Portobello Road became first the *Beat Bar*, and then the *Mau Mau Bar*, and at Notting

Hill Gate *All Bar One* has opened virtually next to the site of the old *Coach & Horses*. Which almost brings this process of change full circle. But I suspect it has some way to go yet before the situation stabilises. The latest names and uses are recorded above as when last observed, but they may have been overtaken by events. Within days of writing about the *Duke of Clarence* in Holland Park Avenue I saw it closed and boarded up, while the *Blenheim Arms* in Blenheim Crescent was shortly to open as a South East Asian restaurant. Should anyone require further information I will attempt to respond at [robertcook@cix.co.uk](mailto:robertcook@cix.co.uk)

## Acknowledgements

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## Book Reviews

### TAINTED BY EXPERIENCE:

By Sir John Drummond. [Faber & Faber, £25 hardback, £14 99 paperback]

At the last AGM I warmly commended our retiring President's outspoken autobiography, then in hardback. Now it is more widely available in paperback, and a review is perhaps in order since John, born in Holland Park Avenue, has become over the years an ardent and knowledgeable Kensingtonian. On first publication his book was very extensively noticed in the press, no doubt because of his strictures on the 'Birtist' regime at the BBC, and other frank criticisms of people and policies. I read it rather as one whose life was much enriched over the years by each of John's three areas of achievement—BBC Radio 3, the Edinburgh Festival and the Proms.

A note at the beginning of the book explains the title and sets the tone. The offending phrase which forms the title was used as a reproach to the author by one of John Birt's 'hench-persons' in an argument over policy at the BBC. There is also an introduction which recalls the characteristic risk which John Drummond took in beginning the second half of the 1995 *Last Night of the Proms* with a difficult Birtwistle piece called *Panic*, a work which produced 'stunned mystification' in the audience and thousands of protesting phone calls to the BBC. He refers too to David Attenborough's description of his 'unlimited capacity for indignation.' But despite all, he defiantly holds to his belief that 'the arts can transform the world.'

He had joined the BBC in 1958, doing various jobs, none of them really satisfying. However, a visit to Moscow in 1961 was relished. A post in the BBC's Paris Office followed, where he really blossomed. Famous names flit across the pages, from Dietrich to Monnet, Ustinov to Balanchine. Subsequently he became a producer of documentaries dealing with music and the arts, and was in due course appointed Director of BBC 2 Arts features. In this post he cultivated a range of talented individuals including Daphne du Maurier, Samuel Becket, JB Priestley, John Betjeman and Alistair Cooke. In the 1970s architectural series *Spirit of the Age*, which took him all over the country, he first encountered Alec Clifton Taylor who, a decade or so later, he succeeded as President of the Kensington Society.

Having failed to get the job of running the Theatre Museum [just as well since it was years before it got its own premises] in 1978

he accepted the Directorship of the Edinburgh Festival. There he tried out 'themes'—*Diaghilev* in 1979, *Vienna 1900* in 1983. Music was the backbone of the Festival, youth orchestras being encouraged, as at the Proms when he was Director there. But a large range of other orchestras were involved, as were theatre and ballet companies from such countries as Russia, Cuba and the USA.

In 1983 John left the Festival, tired of 'inadequate buildings, widespread prejudice and philistinism' all of which remained 'undented', despite his efforts.

Two years later he was back at the BBC as Controller of Music for Radio 3. Here, as usual, he found much that was wrong—entrenched attitudes to programming, and 'so many no-go areas.' In due course the jobs of Controller of Radio 3 and Controller of Music were merged, and John got both. A pundit commented that for his predecessor, Radio 3 was a kind of senior common room, whereas for John it was an artists' cafe. His innovations, however, upset other departments, and he himself disliked the reforms of John Birt, the Director General, whose 'promised land' was full of management consultancy and 'meetings about meetings.'

The Proms were much more to his taste; there, unlike the Edinburgh Festival, every artist and orchestra positively wanted to perform. But the job was not without its complications, there was drama, for example, over *Rule Britannia* during the Gulf War, when Mark Elder jibbed at conducting it, and had to go. On another occasion Nigel Kennedy turned up wearing 'a kind of Dracula outfit', with the resultant row leaking into the Press. The book also contains a frank account of the difficulty of working with an egotist and showman like Leonard Bernstein.

John laments the passing of the era in which conductors stayed with orchestras for many years [e.g. Ormandy, Ansermet], but is proud of the fact that foreign musicians participating in the Proms were amazed that the season could consist of as many as 70 concerts, with 35 orchestras, over a period of 58 days. He was not impressed, however, by the BBC's Governors, who are chided for their lack of interest in the Proms, or radio at all, as opposed to TV.

John ran the Proms from 1992 until after the centenary season of 1994-5, following which he came to find himself 'a non person' so far as the BBC was concerned. Several close friends advised him not to write his book lest he appeared 'an embittered old person who had lost his battle', but he was unwilling to give up while philistinism remained

to be resisted. He had no fear of unpopularity, and admits 'I am often dangerously frank in my lectures and speeches, but I refuse to apologise for that.' He indeed has hard things to say, not only about the 'Birtists' at the BBC. The Prince of Wales, he claims, 'rubbished' major modern architects, and knew 'nothing' about modern music. Yehudi Menuhin's wife Diana was 'a dragon', Woodrow Wyatt was a 'creepy little horror.'

John Drummond's outspokenness cost him several jobs which he applied for at the BBC, yet he fought on for the arts, especially modern music and drama. He had friends [and some enemies] all over the arts world and so his Parthian shot, on the final page, was, typically, 'the new century—will be worth much less if it cannot incorporate some of the old values.' Agreed.

Ronald Arculus

#### HUGH CASSON: A Biography, by José Manser [Viking, £25]

For 35 years, from 1945 to 1980, Sir Hugh Casson was one of Kensington's most distinguished residents, living first in Sheffield Terrace, then in Victoria Road. Throughout that period his multi-faceted career as architect, designer, lecturer, illustrator, writer, broadcaster and high achiever in sundry other fields led him to become, in seemingly effortless fashion, one of the best-known names in Britain. But as José Manser makes clear in her biography his success was far from effortless, hard work, and a great deal of it, forming the bedrock of his career. Mrs Manser, who has written extensively on aspects of design and architecture, and is the wife of a past President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, has capitalised on her subject's highly eclectic range of interests to produce a book which, while written with expert knowledge, is of considerable appeal to the non-expert.

Hugh Casson was 38 when a telephone call from Gerald Barry, the recently appointed Director General of the Festival of Britain, invited him to become Director of Architecture for that event. The year was 1948. In discussing the reason for his selection ahead of numerous other talented architects Casson modestly opined that it was because he did a lot of things superficially well 'and never quarrelled with people.' But the fact that his aunt and uncle, Dame Sybil Thorndyke and Lewis Casson, had many friends in high places is thought to have done him no harm either. The sense of euphoria surrounding his appointment was soon dispelled, however, by the death in a gliding accident of his friend and business partner, Kit Nicholson. This severe blow took time to overcome but eventually a new partner emerged, the rather younger

Neville Conder. The firm of Casson Conder established its main office in Thurloe Place, South Kensington in the early 1950s and is still there today.

The popular success of the Festival of Britain in the summer months of 1951 was achieved in the face of opposition from a largely Tory press and much of the Establishment, who, Hugh Casson believed, saw the event as a smokescreen for the advance of Socialism. Therefore to the army of architects, designers, builders and others whose skills were devoted to the project for up to three years, the public response was a triumphant rebuff to the carpers and doubters. Only Gerald Barry, as Director General of the Festival, received immediate official recognition at its conclusion, with the award of a knighthood, but at the beginning of 1952 Hugh Casson found himself similarly honoured. A knighthood suited him admirably, but his wife, herself a talented architect and designer, was less enthusiastic. The limelight was not to her taste and a title, she felt, would be a bore in her professional life.

The Casson's residence in Sheffield Terrace had always been on the small side, required as it was to accommodate eight people, themselves and their three young daughters, together with a housekeeper, her young son and her sister's son. So a few months after the knighthood the family moved to a larger house, in Victoria Road, where they remained for the next 28 years. The timing of the move was efficacious because, as Mrs Manser shows, Sir Hugh's enhanced renown brought a flood of new opportunities and a surge of visitors to Victoria Road.

An early career advance was his appointment as Professor of Interior Design at the Royal College of Art, a job he contrived to fulfil while retaining an active role in his architectural practice. At that point he had already been commissioned to work as an interior designer on the royal yacht *Britannia*, and a few years later was asked to advise on the modernisation of Sandringham, to which he was often invited as a guest. All told his association with the Royal Family lasted more than thirty years, the Duke of Edinburgh describing him as 'our architect and friend.'

As his career burgeoned his services as a public speaker and broadcaster were also in demand. Theatre design, for Glyndebourne and Covent Garden, was another new path along which his talents took him, while the restoration of the east wing of Holland House, and the creation of a building there for the Youth Hostels Association, was yet another venture. Casson's career reached its apogee with his appointment as President of the Royal Academy following retirement

from the Royal College of Art at 65, it was a post involving a highly active social life and attendance at numerous major functions—all much to his liking. On the other hand his wife found such events challenging, although over the years she learned to cope. Lady Casson, as Mrs Manser makes clear, was happier in her work as a Senior Tutor at the RCA or spending time with her family, which often became extended by long-staying guests at 35 Victoria Road, a few lame ducks among them.

In July, 1980, Victoria Road ceased to be the Cassons' address, following a decision to move to the other side of the park. This was motivated by a wish to be nearer their three daughters, all of whom lived north of the park. It was not a step lightly taken, however, Sir Hugh being particularly reluctant to depart. According to one of his daughters, getting him to leave his home of 28 years was like drawing a snail from its shell.

Numerous Kensingtonians still recall with pleasure the Cassons' long sojourn in the Royal Borough, and talk wistfully of Sir Hugh, puckish, amusing, emollient, generous, convivial and, above all, hugely successful. José Manser's book, over 350 pages long and containing many of her subject's brief and often amusing sketches, does his fascinating career ample justice.

Robert Milne-Tyte



*Picture courtesy of Carola Zogolovitch*

An example of the lightning sketches with which Sir Hugh frequently illustrated letters to friends.

## Reports from Local Societies

### Campden Street Preservation Society

Our Society struggled mightily to prevent the last small garden opening on to Campden Street coming under the ubiquitous developers' concrete. Sadly the planning application was granted. We then went to great lengths to protect the two beautiful lime trees in the garden. But the developers and their builders deliberately cut through the roots of one of the trees, and it had to be felled. Campden Street residents are devastated by this wanton destruction, and we trust that the Council will prosecute the owner of the garden. Solicitors suggest a penalty of £20,000. Another development was closely monitored. A charming artist's studio behind a high red brick wall was incorporated into the small house next door. Sadly the property developer cut down a lovely old fig tree without planning permission.

The Chairman continues to encourage absentee and resident owners to paint the exterior of their houses to improve our lovely street. There are small interior decorating and china shops at the bottom of the street, one even has a Royal Warrant. The Churchill Arms pub has again won an award for its floral display. The Chairman worked hard to persuade the Council to install road-humps in the street and it has proved a major aid to controlling speeding motorists.

Finally, the coming recession may save some of the beauty of Kensington from the greedy ravages of property developers.

Evelyn Ellison,  
Chairman.

### Cornwall Gardens Residents Association

This has been a very quiet year with no major planning issues. The possibility of reinstating the railings of all three garden squares within Cornwall Gardens was discussed again this year but at present there is not sufficient support for this £500,000 project to proceed.

Sadly our Treasurer, John Morris, passed away this summer. He had been actively involved in the Gardens sub-committee, and the Residents Association for almost 20 years and will be greatly missed. Mr Ted Wynne has kindly agreed to take over.

Dr Theodora Bond,  
Chairman.

### **Earls Court Gardens & Morton Mews Residents Association**

The Association elected both a new Chairman and a new Secretary at the AGM this year. After 20 years Sir Geoffrey Littler stood down as Chairman, to be replaced by Simon Prior-Palmer, while after a similar period in office, Lady Diana Farnham, the founder and first Chairman, also retired, to be succeeded as Secretary by Mrs Carolyn Butler. Down the years Sir Geoffrey and Lady Farnham had swapped office according to the dictates of their circumstances. Lady Farnham's work, with the local police force in particular, has played a pivotal role in ensuring that Earls Court Gardens and Morton Mews remain clean, safe and desirable places in which to live. Presentations were made at the AGM to thank both for their long and expert service.

Representatives from the police force and the Council's planning department were present at the meeting, where one item of interest related to a new gym in Earls Court Gardens. Entitled *Naked Health*, the gym is owned by Ms Tabitha Ritchie, who assured the audience that no inconvenience to residents would result from its opening. On the contrary, it would have something to offer everyone, young and old alike. The meeting also noted that the house at 3 Earls Court Gardens, seriously damaged by fire some two years ago, had now been restored—an ambitious project which has added enormously to the aesthetic appearance of the street. Conversely, the internet lounge at the end of our road continues to cause a degree of noise and nuisance; however, an application to enlarge the site to include an internet cafe has been firmly rejected by the Residents Association.

Carolyn Butler  
Secretary

### **Earls Court Square Residents Association**

The Association has now fashioned its Mission Statement. This is a folded card with six printed faces, which is sent to all members. It sets out its aspirations under four main headings:

- 1) to preserve architectural integrity
- 2) to ease traffic and parking problems
- 3) to enhance residential amenity
- 4) to undertake social events

It also contains artist's impressions of the north terrace (1875) and the south terrace (1888). A map shows the Square's conservation area. Mention is made of the Earl's Court Working Party, chaired by the leader of the council.

On planning matters the Association is at present opposing the application to turn the houses at 6, 8 and 10 into a students hostel. After all the trouble it has had with the management of the Old Chelsea Hotel it is fearful of the future management which may emerge over the years, also the impact of large student numbers in this quiet area. The former Chelsea Hotel, now called Matiere Place, has by this time passed almost completely into the hands of new residents, and building works completion is expected shortly.

The traditional summer Barbecue took place in the garden, courtesy of the Garden Committee, and proved both enjoyable and financial successful. We thank the Committee also for donating the Christmas tree, the lighting of which, coupled with carol singing, mulled wine and mince pies, resulted in a merry evening enjoyed by children and grown-ups alike. The AGM was held in the rooms of the Siam Square Restaurant, a comfortable location.

Rodney Brangwyn  
Chairman

### **Kensington Court Residents Association**

Our little area seems to have been under seige in the past months. The large redevelopment between Kensington Court and the National Westminster bank on the High Street will affect many residents of Kensington Court. It went through virtually unchanged on appeal, and construction began in October.

Roof-top extensions to mansion blocks continued to be a problem; also night-clubs on the High Street which back on to Kensington Court. The passageway between the Court and the High Street has become more or less an outside cafe zone—and also a site for intrusive demonstrations.

The Builders Arms and Richmond College students continue to give trouble—this has been ongoing for a decade. We joined others in opposing the development of the Roof Gardens at 99 Kensington High Street. It would be nice if we could win one or two battles in the next year.

Sir Ronald Arculus  
Chairman

### **Norland Conservation Society**

The Society has had another busy year. Again the focus has been on encouraging membership, the consideration of planning

applications and environmental matters, along with organising our Annual Lecture. We are pleased to report that membership numbers have remained stable, and now stand at about 230. As to planning, a major redevelopment, Rose House [1-12 Penzance Street] would in its initially proposed design have proved visually detrimental to the area. Thanks to the efforts of the Society, this is now the subject of discussion between the Octavia Hill Trust, its architects, the Borough Council and the Society in an attempt to arrive at a solution reasonably satisfactory to all parties. This type of approach is all too rare.

Traffic problems, especially concerning volume and speed, remain, with little indication as to their resolution. Extensive lobbying of the Council regarding the situation affecting Norland Square has not succeeded in moving matters forward.

The Annual Lecture was again of a high standard. A large audience was enthralled by Robin Price's account of his travels to, and the history of, the Mount Athos area. We extend our appreciation to him.

Our web site, [www.norlandsociety.org.uk](http://www.norlandsociety.org.uk), appears to be under-utilised. Please take time to log on. Offer input if you can and let us have comments or suggestions regarding its format and utility.

Anthony Perry,  
Chairman

### **Onslow Neighbourhood Association**

For the past year our predominant concern has been the planning application submitted by Christies for an additional storey to their buildings at the rear of their Old Brompton Road auction rooms. The only vehicular access to these is via the narrow arched approach of Barnaby Place. In conjunction with South Kensington & Queens Gate Residents Association, we decided that by opposing the application, proper consideration would be given to alleviating the continuing traffic congestion in this section of the Old Brompton Road. Much of this is caused by pantechnicons loading and unloading to service the auction rooms, and in so doing continually flouting the council's regulations. This in spite of numerous promises of compliance by Christies' management. Together we have organised a publicity campaign, lobbied councillors and held a public meeting at which a packed house voted unanimously that any planning consent should contain stringent conditions regarding parking control.

Another concern has been the proliferation of applications for

alterations to many of our fine stock of listed residential buildings. Many of these alterations damage the original architectural details and thus the character of the area. They are difficult to monitor for often the application details are sparse and poorly presented.

For a change the chosen date of the year's Garden Party was fine and warm. This, and increased publicity, resulted in a record turnout and a most enjoyable evening. Once again we are indebted to the Wellcome Trust for the use of the beautiful Onslow Square Gardens.  
Hugh Brady  
Chairman

### **South Kensington & Queen's Gate Residents Association**

Most recently the Association has spent its time rallying local support, and also that of the Council's officers and Ward councillors, in an effort to limit the growth of Christie's auction operation in the Old Brompton Road, South Kensington. Most residents in the area, and, indeed, further afield, have noticed the huge lorries belonging to Cadogan Tate that are almost permanently parked, illegally, outside Christie's vast showrooms in the Old Brompton Road, causing disruption and traffic chaos in an already congested area.

After much lobbying from the Association, and the Onslow Neighbourhood Association, the management at Christie's, with some encouragement from the Leader of the Council, Merrick Cockell, and Ward Councillor Shireen Ritchie, managed to get an open forum in early April, where local residents made their views and unhappiness known. Following that meeting, and increased pressures from the Councillors, a formula was evolved that encompassed a 106 [requiring the company to adhere to certain conditions] which allowed their planning application to be agreed.

The formula appears to have satisfied residents of the area concerned, Sumner Place, Barnaby Place, Onslow Square and Cranley Gardens—a satisfactory outcome for the Association's committee. Not every challenge within our area is met with success, but like most Associations, we will always try to place the resident's interest first.  
Caryl Harris,  
Chair.

### **Victoria Road Residents Association**

The last year has, I suppose, been relatively quiet. However, our Committee has had to be vigilant, as always, and ready to oppose



inappropriate development applications by newcomers to our area. The new 'flavour of the month' seems to be applications to instal sizeable swimming pools in small gardens, to the great annoyance of adjoining owners, whose party walls are put at risk.

The 'famous victory' which I mentioned last year relating to extended commercial development at 27 Kelso Place has been consolidated through the Council winning an Appeal. The property has now been sold on and the new owner seems to be contemplating something much more in tune with the wishes of local residents.

We continue to be concerned with the problems of De Vere Gardens—noisy buses at night, and the possible health risks posed by the proliferation of mobile phone telecom towers on roofs of the hotels located there. At least we have had regular meetings with the hotel managers, and Councillor Daniel Moylan has been supportive on these and other matters.

An interesting project concerning neighbourhood security has been carried out by residents of Eldon Road and adjacent streets. During the summer they employed a security guard, complete with dog, to patrol from 10pm to 8am, and this has resulted in a considerable drop in crime. This project has now been extended into the winter, and other streets to the north of this part of our area are considering doing something similar.

Peter Dixon,  
Chairman.

## 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.** Subscriptions are payable on January 1st each year and shall be such sum or sums as shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee.
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.
7. (a) The Executive Committee shall be the governing body of the Society. It shall have power to (i) Make byelaws; (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 Accounts 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 member having one vote. Corporate members and Affiliated Societies must notify the Hon. Secretary of the Society in writing of 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 effected 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 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.

## MEMBERSHIP

**I wish to become a member of The Kensington Society**

**I enclose the sum of £        for my annual subscription**

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Title) .....

Address .....

.....

Signature ..... Date .....

*Corporate Membership: £25*

*Annual Subscription: £10*

*Affiliated Societies: £10*

Annual Subscription will simplify the collection of their subscriptions if they will fill in the Banker's order

Cheques should be made payable to: "The Kensington Society"

## BANKERS ORDERS

TO ..... BANK

..... ADDRESS OF BANK

..... ACCOUNT NUMBER

**Please immediately pay Barclays Bank PLC, Kensington (20-47-34) to the credit of The Kensington Society (70519138) my subscription of £ ..... and continue the same on January 1st until further notice.**

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Title) .....

Address .....

.....

Signature ..... Date .....

**Please Return to:**

**The Membership Secretary, The Kensington Society  
c/o 2 Camden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, London W8 7HX  
(Tel: 020 7937 2750)**

## THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

# Statement of Accounts for the year 2001

## Year to December 31, 2001

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Y/E 31/12/00</b>	<b>Y/E 31/12/01</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Subscriptions	4886.30	<b>4483.20</b>
Donations	78.94	<b>1000.00</b>
Visits Receipts	2909.00	<b>2748.37</b>
Advertising in Annual Report	1080.00	<b>860.00</b>
Interest from assets	1193.87	<b>732.65</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>10148.11</b>	<b>9824.22</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Millenium Clock	7325.00	<b>0.00</b>
Visits	1896.20	<b>999.50</b>
Annual Report	3450.00	<b>3822.80</b>
Stationery/Printing	644.47	<b>951.28</b>
Postage/Telephone	229.58	<b>326.42</b>
Typing	110.00	<b>306.00</b>
Meeting Room hire	180.00	<b>0.00</b>
Subscriptions	112.76	<b>40.00</b>
Catering	84.84	<b>358.94</b>
Accounts	0.00	<b>407.58</b>
Advertising	75.00	<b>85.00</b>
	<b>14107.85</b>	<b>7297.52</b>
Transfer to the Prince Alice Memorial Fund	668.50	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>14776.35</b>	<b>7297.52</b>
<b>Net receipts/ [payments] for the year</b>	<b>[4628.24]</b>	<b>2526.70</b>
<b>Bank balances B/F</b>	<b>29290.28</b>	<b>24462.04</b>
<b>Bank balances C/F</b>	<b>24462.04</b>	<b>26988.74</b>

## The Kensington Society

### Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 December 2001

	<b>Princess Alice Memorial Fund</b>	<b>General Core Fund</b>	<b>2001 Total</b>	<b>2000 Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
High Interest Deposit account	0.00	14,219.03	<b>14,219.03</b>	13,842.91
National Savings Account	0.00	8,628.21	<b>8,628.21</b>	8,288.91
Current account General Core Fund	0.00	4,141.50	<b>4,141.50</b>	2,330.22
Current Account- Princess Alice Memorial Fund	2,370.41	0.00	<b>2,370.41</b>	2,370.41
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>2,370.41</b>	<b>26,988.74</b>	<b>29,359.15</b>	<b>26,832.45</b>

### Princess Alice Memorial Fund

	<b>Y/E 31/12/00</b>	<b>Y/E 31/12/01</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	40.00	
Interest	7.17	
Receipts from General Core Fund	668.50	<b>NIL</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>715.67</b>	
<b>Payments</b>		
Plants & Bulbs	217.26	
Other expenditure		
Annual Report	350.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>567.26</b>	
<b>Net receipts for 2000</b>	<b>148.41</b>	
<b>Bank balance b/f</b>	<b>2222.00</b>	
<b>Bank balance c/f</b>	<b>2370.41</b>	

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## THE BLUE CROSS

ANIMAL WELFARE CHARITY

HM the Queen formally opened the new Blue Cross Animal Hospital in Victoria in November 2001. We are grateful to the Kensington Society and especially the support and generosity of Mrs Gay Christiansen in making this achievement possible.

The Blue Cross Charity has 11 Animal Adoption Centres and 4 Veterinary Hospitals and relies entirely on public donations.

Please help by filling in and sending the coupon.



- ☐ Please send me further information  
☐ I enclose a donation of £ . . . . .  
(made payable to The Blue Cross please)

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

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**Please return the completed coupon to:  
The Blue Cross Animal Hospital, Sheppard  
House, Hugh Street, London SW1V 1QQ**

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## HELP WITH FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

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