

THE
**Kensington
Society**



**Annual Report
2001**

THE

Kensington Society

15 Kensington Square, W8 5HH

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 2001

Front cover:
Summer evening at the Libeskind Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery. See p21.
Photo: Merrilees Brown

The Kensington Society

PATRON

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

PRESIDENT

SIR RONALD ARCULUS, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.

VICE-PRESIDENT

THE RT.HON. THE EARL OF SNOWDON, G.C.V.O.

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Peter de Vere Hunt	The Hon.Laura Ponsonby
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Mrs Dianne Gabitass	Ms Celia Rees-Jenkins O.B.E.
Mrs Bea Hopkins	Mrs Ethne Rudd
Mrs Susan Lockhart	Robert Vigars
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VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ms Celia Rees-Jenkins O.B.E.

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs Ethne Rudd

HON. TREASURER: David Meggitt

VISITS SECRETARIES: Robin Price & Mrs D Gabitass

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Mrs Angela Darwin

EDITOR, ANNUAL REPORT: Robert Milne-Tyte

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Tributes to Gay Christiansen 1912-2001

From

HRH the Duke of Gloucester, K.G., G.C.V.O.



KENSINGTON PALACE
LONDON W8 4PU

It became apparent to anyone who met Gay Christiansen that she was of a strong minded and formidable personality. Her love of Kensington, and appreciation of the qualities of its various parts made her an able campaigner against those who did not share her views and were more inclined to follow immediate commercial instincts.

Her attitude inspired others to see the value of a collective expression of the desire to maintain the character of the borough in the face of changes inspired by forces from outside.

I recall her delight at the restoration of the Albert Memorial, which had previously been mothballed for some years by an uncaring Ministry of Environment. It was a consequence of her energy and the backing of the Kensington Society that many fine buildings were no longer threatened by wholesale redevelopment.

If the cost of liberty is eternal vigilance so much more so is the cause of Architectural Conservation and her successors owe her acknowledgement for showing the way, and should follow her example.

PATRON



Picture courtesy of John Bickel

Mrs Gay Christiansen with Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, in tribute to whom she built the Memorial Garden in the Town Hall forecourt.

From

Tom Wilmot, Chairman 1983-4

It was around 50 years ago that I first met that remarkable, courageous, unforgettable woman, Gay Christiansen. The Kensington Society had just been formed by her and I sought her help over the demolition of Holland House, after the Leader of the London County Council, Sir Isaac Hayward, had dismissed my pleas for restoration by telling me that it would cost £25,000, and in any case, the house was a relic of 'an outdated aristocracy'.

As a Committee member of the Society for many years I rapidly learnt that it was Gay who was primarily responsible for its success. In the 1950s there were very few local conservation societies and it was due to Gay's energy and ingenuity that the Kensington Society rapidly became an ideal model of its kind. Of course, not all of her campaigns were completely successful—only the East wing of Holland House was saved, for example, and only the tower of the Imperial Institute remains. But Gay's transparent public-spiritedness, coupled with her diplomatic persuasiveness ensured that year by year the Society's influence came to be held in increasingly high regard. Her achievements were so numerous that space forbids my doing justice to them, although high on

the list would come the series of superb Annual Reports, and the creation of the Princess Alice Memorial Garden at the Town Hall.

Over the centuries Kensington has produced many famous figures, but few can have had such a lasting effect on the Royal Borough as Gay Christiansen.

From

Robert Vigers, Chairman 1994-8

I too became aware of Gay Christiansen nearly 50 years ago, as a member for Kensington of the London County Council. Truth to tell, we did not always see eye to eye. There were no conservation areas and few listed buildings, and I was very concerned to promote the post-war recovery of London's economy. Smoke-encrusted Victorian buildings did not always appeal. But, of course, she was more far-sighted—she was not so much looking backward as forward to a time when we would deeply regret the loss of our inheritance from the past if redevelopment held sway without constraint.

So she battled—and how she battled!—for the Colcutt Tower on the Imperial Institute site, for Selwood Terrace, for the south-east corner of Kensington Church Street—the latter so as not to mar the view of St Mary Abbots Church from the Round Pond—and many other causes, great and small.

In later years—no longer in her eyes an *enfant terrible* perhaps—I became a member of the Society's Executive Committee and experienced at first hand her tireless devotion to the Society and to Kensington, and enjoyed too the warmth of her friendship.

Indeed, '*Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice*'.* We shall not see her like again.

* '*Reader, if a monument is required, look around you.*' The inscription on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren.

From the President

We all like to be consulted about things that concern us—genuinely consulted, that is.

The superficial face-lift of our High Street [consisting mainly of new lamp-posts, some modified crossings, and some expensive new paving] was indeed preceded by some lengthy consultations in a working party. The original idea was to 'save our High Street' from the competition expected from the new White City shopping complex. What has happened so far is tinkering with detail—with holes in the roads for months. Work on the Council House courtyard also dragged on for months.

Recently central assessors were sent to examine the Council's planners and planning procedures, and some residents attended a 'focus group' to give their opinions. The verdict was, really—'nice people, pity about the results.' In other words, residents have a hard time protecting our very special local environment, despite the basically sound principles in the Unitary Development Plan, and the restrictions meant to protect Conservation areas.

Most recently there has been similar consultation in small groups on 'strategic planning', i.e., how do we want the area to be in a decade's time. A degree of unanimity emerged on what we like about living here, and thus want to preserve—attractive streets, garden squares, parks, Albertopolis, village atmosphere, small businesses, services, transport, schools. Some were concerned about the future of the Notting Hill Carnival, and of Portobello Market. Most were worried about traffic, litter, crime, public order, noise and other increasing nuisances. There was anxiety at high streets being taken over by chains, lest small and useful shops be driven away. There were great contrasts between north and south areas in the Borough. The essential was to keep it liveable, and reduce as far as possible reliance on private cars. The idea of increased pedestrianisation in the future was not mentioned, at least in my group.

Central Government has imposed on local government a 'Cabinet System', replacing the committee structure. [The Council did not consult on this.] It is too early to say if the change will benefit residents.

Mayor Livingstone's proposed charges on cars entering central London before 7pm during the week continue to cause anxiety, though

half of those canvassed [presumably non-car users] expressed approval at the outset. Fears persist about the knock-on effects in an area like this which is just outside the controlled zone. Many evening activities in central London could be damaged if people jib at paying a fiver up to 7 pm. [An earlier limit, say six pm, would help, as I have urged on the Mayor—latest news is more consultation.] Not everyone is happy with public transport at night, and improvements to services should be seen first. The Mayor promises more taxis on the streets at later hours, but at the price of increased fares.

We had a brush with Central Government over yet another Diana memorial proposal, this time for a £3 million fountain somewhere in Central London's Royal Parks. We were not 'consulted' so had to see the Minister then concerned to say firmly that Kensington Gardens was not the right place, being crowded at the western end and already full of monuments, memorials, fountains and other attractions, including two Diana features—the playground and the special walk. The new fountain is now to be sited on the Serpentine near the bathing area. There will be a design competition and it will take several years. The Royal Parks could well do with the £3 million for better maintenance, staffing and policing, and should not be driven to increasing commercialisation to earn money. They are a unique public asset, the envy of other cities, and should be properly funded. Despite strong opposition from the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, a trial cross-park cycle run is in progress. Results will be monitored for safety reasons.

The new Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, invited views on the Budd Report on Gambling reform. Apparently we have five casinos, 20 betting offices, and 24 amusement arcades in this Borough—but so far no Bingo halls, racecourses or greyhound tracks. The proposed liberalisation looked similar to recent proposals to permit 24-hour drinking in bars and pubs etc, unnecessary and liable to abuse. We need to protect Kensington from becoming an alternative Soho.

Security and policing were in most people's minds after the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11, and the counter-measures launched in Afghanistan on October 7. But our police numbers are reduced and the Council sounded a note of alarm.

Our member of Parliament, Michael Portillo, is no longer on the front bench of political life, but has continued to be active in the constituency. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission has proposed changes involving the creation of two constituencies—Kensington, and

Chelsea and Fulham. This may catch [or miss] the next General Election.

This was also a year in which, very sadly, we lost Gay Christiansen after a long period of failing health. She was a unique figure deeply devoted to Kensington as the tributes paid in the preceding pages by HRH the Duke of Gloucester, and two former Chairmen, Tom Wilmot and Robert Vigers, have all emphasised. Gay's last outing was to attend in a wheelchair a tree-planting ceremony in her beloved Kensington Gardens. A fitting memorial service was held on November 28, attended by many. We all miss her greatly and strive to carry on her work.

So this is how the local scene looks at the time of writing [December] but there will be changes by the time this Report is in print. Our Newsletters are to keep you posted in between Annual Reports. Meanwhile, vigilance is constantly needed to try to keep the place we love as liveable as possible in the times in which we live.

At the last AGM of the Society, when Sir John Drummond bowed out, the name of my successor as Chairman was not, for procedural reasons, announced. Now Robin Price is in the saddle. In his Presidential Valediction in the Annual Report for 2000, Sir John called for younger members. Thus I am happy to note that your new Chairman is younger than the new President, whereas I was some years older than John himself!

Sir Ronald Arculus

AGM 2002

The Society's **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, April 24**, at the **Convent, Kensington Square**. Doors will open at 6.30 pm and the meeting will begin at 7pm. Wine will be served before and afterwards. This year's principal speaker will be **Viscount Norwich**, whose subject will be **The World Monuments Fund**.

Chairman's Report

The death of our founder, obituarised at the beginning of this Annual Report, was an event of great sadness. All would agree that her many-sided achievements over nearly 50 years were astonishing in their scope, energy and frequent success—we shall long lament her loss, and recall her with deep affection.

Other aspects of 2001 are recorded by the President in the immediately preceding pages.

Looking to the future, our strategies are these:

- [a] to increase membership and thus augment our effective base
- [b] to contrive to lead major actions, and support other actions affecting the whole Borough
- [c] to strengthen relations and make common cause on major issues with other Kensington conservation societies, and with like-minded societies in contiguous areas.
- [d] to monitor the new Borough governance and seek to improve its processes.

As to major matters, despite our support and the vigorous campaign of the Campden Hill Residents' Association, the Inspector reported wholly in favour of the proposal for the development of the Reservoir site. This rural corner of Kensington is now lost for ever, together with its tranquility. Not an advertisement for the justice and sensitivity of the planning process.

Equally, in the case of the King's College site in Campden Hill Road, the Secretary of State decided in favour of the residential proposals as against the far more appropriate proposal for educational use. We entirely supported the Residents Association in their fight for educational use and thus we deplore a decision which does nothing to rectify the shortage of schools in the area. This decision will not only further imbalance the population of Kensington but, with the corresponding development on Campden Hill, will also compound the problem of traffic in an already overloaded and narrow street. These two decisions, taken together, are a poor result for what ought to be a protected and citizen-related planning structure.

We hear that the Government is considering a revision of planning legislation. This will necessarily take many years but you may rest assured that your Society will take a close interest in the process of

consultation, and that it will seek to have its say in due time. Having been here before, one has the uncomfortable feeling that any such revision will be in favour of developers and other commercial interests unless we are very vigilant and insistent.

Before closing I would like to pay especial tribute to my predecessor as Chairman, Sir Ronald Arculus, for his foresight, his multiple and energetic activities, and his geniality and efficiency of chairmanship during his years of office. We are fortunate indeed still to have him with us as an active and concerned President. His support and advice remain invaluable to us all, not least to me as his successor.

Final thanks are due to the Committee, whose teamwork makes all this activity possible. I am grateful for their support and hard work on what is inevitably a many-sided front.

Robin Price

Jan 17, 2002

Reports from the Secretary, Treasurer and Planning Subcommittee follow and form part of this Annual Report.

What's Missing?

There are in Kensington, Sir Ronald Arculus tells us in his Presidential report, no Bingo halls, no race courses, no greyhound tracks—leading most Kensingtonians, one imagines, to give thanks for not-so-small mercies. But what more desirable facilities does the Royal Borough lack, what would make life in this pleasant district even more pleasant, more convenient, more efficient. What, in other words, is missing? Answers please to the Kensington Society, 15 Kensington Square, W8 5HH, not later than October 31, 2002.

Secretary's Report

The Society has had another successful year, and our membership has increased again. The Membership Secretary ensured that members who do not pay by Bankers Order [which we much prefer them to do] were reminded of the date, and their subscriptions collected. We also received a much-appreciated legacy following the death of a long-standing member.

The sad event of the year, however, was the death of our much admired founder, Gay Christiansen. Many members attended her memorial service on November 28 held at St Mary Abbots, and conducted by the Revd Andrew Bishop. Our Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, sent his representative. The tribute was given by Sir John Drummond and the lessons were read by Sir Ronald Arculus and the present Secretary.

During the year we were fortunate enough to have the expert assistance of David Campion who designed our new website www.kensington.society.btinternet.co.uk. He is kind enough to update it from time to time, and has also included a page of beautiful photos of areas of Kensington.

Pressure from the authorities to erect another memorial to Princess Diana in Kensington Gardens was opposed by the Society. There is general agreement that there are enough statues and monuments there, and this view was presented to the Minister responsible for the Royal Parks when a delegation from the Society visited him. The memorial, in the form of a fountain, is now to be sited on the Serpentine near the swimming area.

Because of the interest in statues stimulated by the fountain proposals, John Empson, past Chairman and Archivist of the Friends of Kensington Gardens, arranged a special walk, commenting on each of the numerous statues and monuments to be found there. This most interesting event was attended by some 20 members and our Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, who is himself very knowledgeable about the statuary in the Gardens, and from time to time added interesting anecdotes.

The Council has been most active in inviting residents to evening workshops, the Government having instructed all local authorities to develop a 'Community Strategy' for their respective areas. The Kensington Society naturally wishes to play a major part in any decisions

and as a result members of the Executive Committee have been spending evenings at the Town Hall discussing the future with other residents. Most people agree that our greatest problem is traffic, but no-one appears ready to do without a car.

There has been another report on Kensington High Street 'improvements' showing pictures before and after. These changes seem only to result in different white lines being painted on the road, and a lot of expensive new paving stones.

Meanwhile we welcome our new Chairman, Robin Price.

Ethne Rudd



Picture courtesy of RBKC Press Office

The new-look Kensington High Street - at a very quiet moment

Treasurer's Report

The Society had a sound Financial Year in 2001, with an overall surplus of £2526.70. This compares with a deficit for the previous year of £4628.24, which was caused by the Society's expenditure on the gift of the Millennium Clock sited at the Town Hall. Overall income continues to exceed expenditure, although subscription income of £4483.20 was slightly down on the previous year.

Cash and Reserves are £26988.74, leaving the Society well placed to fund any unanticipated activities which may arise, such as the recent campaign over the Princess Diana Memorial Garden.

Following the sad death of Gay Christiansen the Princess Alice Memorial Garden Fund was inactive during the year. (See Statement of Accounts p64-p65)

David Meggitt

Planning and Conservation in 2001

Applications to the Council for redevelopment or change of use permission have continued at a high rate throughout the year — some 2,500 or more in all. The Society's planning sub-committee monitors all those that relate to Kensington [both north and south] and lodges objections where appropriate. Mercifully, the great majority relate to minor rear extensions, conservatories etc, on which the Society does not normally intervene unless requested by a member.

The more important applications were as follows: **140-142 Kensington Church Street**—granted after revisions to meet objections. **Rose House, Penzance Street**—granted after revisions. **116 Princedale Road**—refused. **131-135 Earls Court Road**—granted after revisions. **Junctions at Notting Hill Gate with Church Street and Pembridge Road** [overhead rings of light]—pending. **Holland Park playpark** and **Holland Park Cafe**—both pending. Also several applications for advertising—refused.

The Council granted permission for conversion of **Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road** for flats. The issues were whether it should be refused in order to give preference to use by two private schools, and whether affordable housing should be provided on site if permission were granted for flats. It has to be noted that on an appeal relating to affordable housing at the former **Thames Water site on Campden Hill Road**, permission was given by the Inspector for this to be provided off-site.



Picture courtesy of Kensington Public Library
Cromwell Gardens, one of three Square Gardens nominated for priority funding from English Heritage.

The Mayor of London has published *Towards a London Plan* for consultation. This is planning with a very broad brush and is unlikely

to affect the Royal Borough very materially, except possibly in relation to high buildings, which the Mayor favours. But he cannot direct the Borough to grant any application-only to refuse. He also favours a higher percentage of affordable housing in any new housing development.

The Council has nominated three Square gardens [**Redcliffe, Norland and Cornwall Gardens**] for priority funding under English Heritage's campaign for London Squares.

Robert Vigars

New Brooms

The successor to Sir Ronald Arculus as Chairman of the Society's Executive Committee is Robin Price. Robin spent his early years in south-west England before entering Cambridge University, where he read English Literature. Upon graduating he served in the House of Lords Library, subsequently moving to the Library of the Wellcome Institute, where from 1973 to 1996 he was Deputy Librarian. His eclectic range of interests has seen him serve on numerous committees, including those relating to Latin America, the history of medicine, and library and archive conservation. On all of these subjects he has published papers.



A particular interest has been making medical history available to medical students as part of their wider cultural background, a project now in the course of achievement. For ten years until 2001 he was Director of the diploma course in the history of medicine run by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. He is a Liveryman of that body, and of the Worshipful Company of Barbers. He was a member of the Council of the Royal Society of Medicine from 1994 to 1999.

Locally, Robin has served for a number of years on the committee of the Norland Conservation Society, occupying a variety of posts there. And with the Kensington Society he has been an energetic joint-secretary of the highly successful Events committee. Having survived an early passion for beagling, his interests now include gardens, 18th century literature, history, Mount Athos and, of course, sociability.

MS VICE CHAIRMAN

With the retirement of Robert Meadows as Vice Chairman, his successor is Celia Rees-Jenkins, O B E. Celia grew up on the borders of Westminster and Chelsea, and has lived in South Kensington since 1963. Since then she has moved house only once. Her static domestic existence is in sharp contrast, however, to her professional career in industry and government, which involved much travelling and covered a range of subjects, including film making, press and public relations, and general administrative work. Now, through the Kensington Society, she is interested to see local government at work.

Annual General Meeting 2001

The 48th Annual General Meeting of the Kensington Society, held on April 30, 2001, attracted a large attendance at the Convent, Kensington Square, those present including the Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, the Rt. Hon. Michael Portillo, Conservative MP for Kensington and Chelsea, and the guest speaker, Mr Michael Manser, CBE, a Past President of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Following a brief speech of welcome to the distinguished guests by the President, Sir John Drummond, the minutes of the AGM of 2000 were confirmed, after which the Chairman, Sir Ronald Arculus, moved the adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts. Sir Ronald explained in the process that a printer's error had led to a deficit of £4707 being shown as a surplus in the Accounts for 2000. The deficit arose as a consequence of the Society's gift to the Royal Borough of the Millennium Clock. The Report and Accounts were duly seconded and adopted, the meeting having been assured by the Chairman that the general state of the Society's finances was extremely sound.

The AGM was the last to be attended by Sir John Drummond as President of the Society, he having announced at the previous year's meeting his intention to stand down after 15 years in the post. In a brief parting speech Sir John recalled how he had, to his surprise, been invited by the previous President, Alec Clifton-Taylor, to succeed him in 1986, having subsequently learned that his attendance at meetings of the Executive Committee would not be welcome! Despite this he felt that during the past 15 years the Society had kept the faith in the matter of conservation, the worst had not happened, Kensington had lost relatively little and gained much that was good.

Sir John's proposal of Sir Ronald Arculus as his successor was seconded and supported with acclamation. All existing officers and members of the Executive Committee were re-elected.

In his report to the meeting the Chairman took as read matters covered by the Annual Report and mentioned some more recent news. The location of the proposed *Princess Diana Fountain*, in one of the four central Royal Parks, was still unknown, he said. A delegation which had included representatives of the Kensington Society had recently

met the Minister for the Royal Parks, but whether the case they presented [i.e. that Kensington Gardens needed no more monuments] had made any impact was unknown. No early decision was likely. The *Queen's Jubilee Oak*, presented to the Royal Borough by the Society and situated in front of the Royal Garden Hotel, had not thrived and had consequently been removed. A new tree was to be planted in a more favourable spot just inside Kensington Gardens. The fate of the *Libeskind Building*, proposed as an extension to the Victoria & Albert Museum, still in doubt. *Planning*, the Council had recently lost two important cases on appeal, the Thames Water site on Campden Hill and the High Street block containing Kensington Market. The process of fighting undesirable projects was getting harder; the Government seemed to pay less and less attention to the views of local residents or the Council. *Local Government Act 2000*; a Council consisting of a Leader and a Cabinet had been the choice made for the Royal Borough. It was the least drastic of the three options offered, and was what the majority of Kensington's residents had opted for. *Profile of Kensington population 2001-2002*: One-quarter in social housing, two-thirds of those on State benefits. Half the population born outside the UK; 1770 asylum seekers being supported. *Future Plans* include measures to control fly-posting, to improve Notting Hill Carnival, and to strengthen the Royal Parks police. *Anniversary*; Kensington's 100th year as a Royal Borough occurs in November 2001.

In conclusion Sir Ronald referred to two recent books of relevance to Kensington and the Society, the authors of both books being present at the AGM. The first, a biography entitled *Hugh Casson* was written by José Manser, wife of the guest speaker, Michael Manser. Of interest to Kensingtonians was the fact that Sir Hugh Casson lived in Kensington for 35 years, first in Sheffield Terrace, then in Victoria Road. The second book commended by the Chairman was *Tainted by Experience*, the autobiography of Sir John Drummond, in which he recorded his three major achievements—BBC 3, the Proms, and the Edinburgh Festival. Sir Ronald thanked Sir John for his life's work for the arts, his love of Kensington, and his many years as President of the Society.*

Mr John Empson, Chairman of the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens, was then invited to address the meeting. Mr Empson said that commercial concerts in the Royal Parks, and the question of cycling in Kensington Gardens were both major matters of concern;

there was a lack of proper consultation between the relevant authorities and those bodies representing the interests of local people. The Friends would like to join with local residents associations to acquire greater strength and influence, they were appreciative of the support of the Kensington Society.

Robin Price, joint organiser of the Visits programme, reported on another successful and well-supported year. The dinner with the Thackeray Society, inadvertently cancelled in 2000, was likely to be reinstated some time during the year. Mr Price appealed for the use of one or two large drawing rooms for the purpose of lectures, which were popular aspects of the programme. A small number of members had provided such facilities in previous years but the Visits organisers were anxious to widen the range of such venues to avoid calling upon the same two or three people again and again.

In Other Business a member asked why the park gates at the top of Queensgate were painted in what appeared to be a red-brown undercoat and whether a more suitable colour might be employed, i.e. black. He was informed that English Heritage had decreed the colour, since the gates were painted thus when first installed in the 19th century. Another member asked who the next Chairman would be, to which the Secretary replied that the office would be filled by the vote of the Executive Committee at its next meeting, as provided in the Constitution.

HRH the Duke of Gloucester then spoke briefly in his role as Patron. He was, he declared, a great admirer of bodies such as the Kensington Society, and commended its aim to preserve the local environment. There were fashions in architecture just as in economics or politics but the Society should eschew fashion in the cause of continuity.

The guest speaker, Michael Manser, chose *New Buildings in Old Places* as the title of his talk, contending, with the aid of a series of slides, that too much was made of context when considering new developments. Conservation groups, which first emerged in the mid-19th century, often tended to demand that new buildings be 'in keeping' with their surrounds, but as the slides showed, many distinctive buildings sited out of context in past centuries seemed entirely acceptable today. Modern architects and their clients needed the confidence of the best of their predecessors, a confidence which also involved risks. The present practice of listing buildings after thirty years was too short a time to form a judgement since tastes changed over time. Fifty years

would be a far more satisfactory period. As an example Mr Manser quoted the Centre Point tower, much criticised when first erected, but today approved and listed. The same thing could happen in the case of the proposed Libeskind addition to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Architecture was about light, space and proportion, principles which did not change.

* Both *Hugh Casson* and *Tainted by Experience* are reviewed in later pages of this Annual Report.

Pictures by Dianne Gabitass



The Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, addresses the meeting.



The Rt Hon Michael Portillo, Conservative MP for Kensington & Chelsea, in pre-meeting discussion with members of the Society.



Convivial conversation over a glass of wine. In the foreground, right, one of the earliest members of the Society, Mrs Belinda Norman-Butler.

HAPPENINGS - KENSINGTON 2001

A pot-pourri of noteworthy occurrences in the year just passed

A Glimpse of Libeskind

Although work on the Spiral, the controversial Libeskind extension to the Victoria & Albert Museum, has yet to begin, a glimpse of the architect's style was on view in Kensington Gardens last summer when a temporary pavilion was erected on the lawn of the Serpentine Gallery. Entitled *Eighteen Turns*, the structure consisted of a number of inclined aluminium-clad planes 'assembled in a dynamic sequence' in the words of Daniel Libeskind himself. It served from June to September as the venue for a series of debates on urban design, and four evenings of poetry readings, the latter recorded by the BBC and broadcast during Prom intervals. The unorthodox building, containing neither doors nor windows, and sheltering those inside solely by the large panels inclined against each other, also provided space for a cafe. *Eighteen Turns*, designed in conjunction with the engineering firm Arup, bore reference to the Japanese art of origami, i.e. the folding of sheets



Libeskind's *Eighteen Turns* - a different kind of temporary structure. Photo: Hélène Binet

HAPPENINGS - KENSINGTON 2001

of paper into complex patterns. It cost the Serpentine Gallery £100,000 to commission as part of a series of annual architectural assignments, the first having gone to Zaha Hadid in 2000. The project was supported by a number of commercial firms and by funding from the Headley Trust and the Arts Council, with the estimated total cost approaching £500,000.

Daniel Libeskind, best known as the designer of the extraordinary Jewish Museum in Berlin, conceived *Eighteen Turns* as, in his own words, 'A lyrical counterpoint to Kensington Gardens and the Serpentine Gallery.' Although the structure was due to be dismantled with the onset of autumn, he said, 'It will leave a sharp after-image and the ineffable resonance of a unique space.' Whether after-image and ineffable resonance are still to be detected now, in deep mid-winter, must be left to the mind of the beholder, but what is not in doubt is that the building considerably boosted attendance figures last summer at the Serpentine Gallery.

Financially too the project was a success, since when the pavilion was dismantled in late September it was snapped up by a private purchaser for precisely the £100,000 originally expended by the Gallery.

As to V & A plans for the Spiral, the museum reports that the intention is to start work in 2003 and to complete in 2006. The original estimated cost of £80 million has been reduced somewhat by a re-examination of the plans, and more than £30 million has already been raised.

The Swan Surfeit

Twenty years ago the sight of a swan on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens was a rare occurrence but today up to one hundred birds may be seen there at any one time. And there is nothing the Royal Parks staff can do to control the numbers. Unlike such species as Canada or Greylag geese, swans, as the property of the Crown, may not be culled. And because a handful of park users make it their responsibility to feed the birds regularly, their numbers grow and grow. 'Swans will gather where people feed them,' says Malcolm Kerr, the man responsible for wildlife in the Royal Parks. 'And it's no good trying to move them elsewhere because they will only find their way back.'

For some eight years the numbers on the Round Pond were kept in check by a fearsome pair of birds who took it upon themselves

to police the area. They bred regularly on the Long Water, that stretch of the Serpentine reaching from the bridge to the Italian Gardens, but two or three times a week would stroll with their brood from there up to the Round Pond, where any other swan to whom they objected was rapidly chased away. 'But three or four years ago the male died,' says Mr Kerr, 'and the next season his mate went too. Since then the swan population has increased.'

A decade or so ago it was Canada geese which were the problem, when several hundred could be counted each summer on the Serpentine, although many fewer on the Round Pond. Their droppings made park paths almost unwalkable at times. A heavy cull solved that problem and today their eggs are pricked when discovered to prevent hatching. 'Canada geese and the Greylags don't normally breed in the parks these days,' Mr Kerr says. 'They come in for a few weeks to moult, then move on.'

The now-familiar sight of four or more cygnets gliding along behind their parents raises the question of how much larger the Round Pond swannery is likely to become. For although the occasional fox takes a bird or two, almost-grown cygnets are a common sight among the Kensington Gardens population. On the other hand, only about 50 per cent of hatchlings normally live to take flight, so the situation is perhaps not quite as dire as it might seem.

All swans in Britain have the Crown's protection, but the Queen claims ownership only of those on the Thames, where each July the annual Swan Upping census takes place on a stretch of the river between Sunbury Lock and Abingdon. This event first began in 996. Since the 15th century, however, two other swan owners have existed, the Vintners and the Dyers livery companies. Their birds are distinguished from one another, and from those of the Queen, by notches in their beaks. An overall survey of Britain's swan population was to have been made last year, but the outbreak of foot and mouth disease caused it to be cancelled. The previous survey was in 1990. Experts, however, estimate the total to be around 30,000 at present.

One result of the Round Pond's ever-growing numbers is an erosion of the pond banks, with the resultant repair work placing an unwelcome additional burden on the funds of the Royal Parks Agency. Such a fact is unlikely to dissuade the regular swan feeders, but so a heavy concentration of birds in so relatively confined a space raises

questions of hygiene, environment and appearance. Since, however, no law or by-law governs the matter, only the amount of available food will, it seems, decide whether numbers continue to expand, or gradually contract.

The Fall and Rise of the Princess Alice Garden.

The garden in the forecourt of the Town Hall, established in the name of the Kensington Society by Gay Christiansen as a tribute to her friend, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, had never looked worse than towards the end of 2001. Dead trees and shrubs were to be seen everywhere, moribund flower beds too—all indirectly resulting from the re-surfacing of the forecourt. Partly due to almost incessant rain from September 2000 to May 2001, work on the forecourt fell considerably behind schedule, with the result that the plants, which had been lifted and taken to a nursery while work was in progress, were required to spend considerably more time off the site than the one month originally anticipated. A few failed to survive the temporary transfer, although many did, but when they were eventually returned to their Town Hall location it slowly became clear that something was seriously amiss. More and more were seen to be ailing, and when the problem was eventually investigated it was discovered that the irrigation system had been wrongly re-set, so that the soil had become waterlogged. The garden contractors—not the guilty party—soon had the matter in hand, however, and recovery is now well on its way. Twelve tons of conditioner was forked-in during November to improve the soil structure, and a programme of re-stocking begun. By next summer a restored garden offering all-seasons colour and a generous quantity of scented flowers and plants should emerge.

The Princess Alice Garden, created in the mid-1980s, was not only funded and financially maintained by Mrs Christiansen, but until recently was regularly tended by her and her adopted son, John Bickel. Henceforward, however, the Council is to assume responsibility for it. Princess Alice, who resided at Kensington Palace for many years, was the last surviving grandchild of Queen Victoria. She died in 1981, aged 98. Her husband was a brother of King George the Fifth's wife, Queen Mary. One of the prize plants in Gay Christiansen's garden at her house

in Kensington Square was a myrtle bush, raised from a sprig given to her by Princess Alice and taken from her own garden at the Palace. That Palace bush had reputedly been grown from myrtle contained in Queen Victoria's wedding bouquet.

First Consider Your Tree

No-one buying a house is likely to do so without first obtaining a detailed survey of the property, but how many people, one wonders, take the trouble to call in an expert to check on any trees which might go with their purchase. A rogue tree can cause an awful lot of aggravation—and cost a sizeable amount of money. Victoria Road is an attractive street of moderately large houses, many of them with trees, including a chestnut at number 25. The chestnut at number 25, unfortunately for Oliver Lebus who owns the house, has down the years become a wilful, exasperating, thorough-going rogue. This year, 2002, Mr Lebus will have occupied his house for precisely 50 years but whether, with that tree in mind, he finds this a cause for celebration must be open to doubt. The tree, the subject of a preservation order, has been there perhaps twice as long as its current owner, and seems bent on stressing that fact by causing as much inconvenience as it can possibly contrive. With annoying regularity since the 1970s it has been thrusting its roots hither and thither to split the tall front wall of the forecourt, shove the garden gate out of kilter, wreck the forecourt, damage the sewage manhole there, dislodge paving stones in the street outside, push the adjacent kerbstones out of true, and in general, make life highly frustrating for all who reside in the house. Parts of the front wall had already been rebuilt twice, and a new garden door installed, when, as our picture shows, yet further renovation became imperative. It was undertaken recently. Since his insurance cover relates only to his house, Oliver Lebus has been forced to meet from his own pocket the trouble caused by his tree, and by the time the latest damage had been rectified, at a cost of £10,000, he calculates that over the years he has been forced to spend at least £15,000 on repairs.

With the tree listing further and further over the street, in June of 2000 permission was sought to replace it with a more tractable variety, but the application was rejected. He is thus aggrieved. 'There must surely be a limit,' he says, 'to the amount of inconvenience a householder has

to put up with, and the amount of money which has to be spent on repairs. The damage caused by my tree is obviously ongoing, do I have to wait until it falls into the street before it can be removed?"

And should that happen, he asks, 'will the Council take responsibility for any damage to my property, or to that of any third parties? And who would be deemed responsible should a pedestrian be injured by tripping over the distorted pavement outside the front gate?' Such questions as these were first put to the then Borough Surveyor during the 1970s but so far as Mr Lebus can recall, no reply was ever received. They are today even more pertinent.

The many ancient trees in Kensington are one of the area's major assets, and their preservation a matter of the greatest importance, no-one can deny that. Without the utmost vigilance, a few property owners would, and indeed occasionally do, remove or disfigure perfectly sound trees for the sake of whim or convenience.* On the other hand, a tree which is a constant problem would seem to be another matter. But at least the 30 year tribulations of Mr Lebus should offer a warning to all potential home buyers—first consider your tree.

* See report of the Campden Street Preservation Society, p52



Oliver Lebus, pictured against the ever-growing crack in his front wall.

Environmental Design Awards 2001

One of the most noticeable aspects of present-day London is the amount of re-building which is taking place. This is very much the case in Kensington and Chelsea, yet there were only 14 projects nominated for the annual awards scheme this year— clearly not an accurate reflection of what is happening in the Royal Borough. Thus this excellent scheme seems undervalued, and not truly serving the purpose of stimulating a high standard of design. Perhaps the Kensington Society and its Chelsea counterpart should play a more active part in nominating suitable projects for awards.

Those submitted this year were well distributed across the Borough, each one visited by the scheme's assessors. This provided an overview of the Borough, and a reminder of how much it varies from north to south. Awards are made in five different categories, and a special award may also be included if thought appropriate. To be judged worthy of an award a project must be in the 'public domain' and not hidden away on 'back land.'

There were only two entrants in the **New Build** category, and unfortunately neither was thought worthy of a prize. In the **Restoration and Conservation** class an award was made to **Earls Terrace**, this handsome 18th century terrace having been skilfully restored. A commendation was also awarded for the restored railings and planting at the Lansdowne Road-Clarendon Road communal garden.

The revival of **75 Stanhope Gardens**, formerly on the 'buildings at risk' register, was considered worthy of an award in the **Commercial** category, as the property is arranged as serviced apartments. At **Kensington Gate** the small open space has been laid out by the Council, with paving, trees and a piece of sculpture. This was much admired, and given an award for **General Environmental Improvement**. There were also two commendations in this category—the new statue with its plinth in front of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and the works in Acklam Road to the Westway structure. This consists mainly of a new lighting scheme which both enhances the environment and increases the sense of security.

Increasingly important is the design of **access to public**

buildings for people in wheelchairs, and the award in this category went to **Jurys Kensington Hotel, Queensgate**, where a chairlift has been well integrated with the main entrance.

It was thought appropriate to make a special award to **St Thomas Primary School, Appleford Road, North Kensington**, a school seen to have some rather dull blank walls facing the street. These have been much enlivened by two large mosaics which were done by the children under supervision—a very worthy enterprise.

The annual Environment Awards scheme is a splendid initiative of the Council, seeking as it does to encourage a high standard of design in all aspects of the built environment. Award winners receive a plaque to be sited at the successful project, but the number of nominated schemes has been falling in recent years. Perhaps most people are too busy to take and submit the required 'before' and 'after' photos. Let us hope that next year the number of entries will increase and thus make the event really competitive.

Robert Meadows



Picture courtesy of RBKC Press Office

Award for General Environmental Improvements.
Public space at Kensington Gate W8

Deepest Roots

The search for the member with the lengthiest family associations with Kensington, announced in last year's Annual Report, produced a number of interesting claims, as the following account makes clear.

Jonathan Green, a resident of Earls Court Gardens, based his claim on an ancestor who in 1681 sold a plot of land in what is now the Royal Borough to none other than Sir Christopher Wren. Mr Green would have won the competition hands down, except for one thing—the land was in Chelsea. It was a ten acre site near the river and the great architect wanted it for a particular purpose—to build the Royal Hospital, home of the Chelsea Pensioners. He got it for £550, the asking price having been £600.

Anthony Butcher, of Cottesmore Court, Stanford Road, is another member with an interesting ancestral link, his great-great-great-grandfather, Daniel Sutton, having been the first occupant of what became Gore House, but while he lived there, 1767-1774, was known as Sutton House. It was located where the Albert Hall now stands, and its later occupants included Admiral Lord Rodney, William Wilberforce, and the somewhat scandalous Countess of Blessington. There was, however, no unbroken Kensington link between Mr Butcher and Daniel Sutton.*

No-one meeting the continuous link requirement could offer ancestors of anything like such antiquity, although at least one of **Mrs Belinda Norman-Butler**'s considerable tribe of relatives was resident in the borough by 1843, her great-grandfather the author, William Makepeace Thackeray, [see *The Cousin Labyrinth* p32].

The search nonetheless brought to light a number of absorbing facts. For example, **Mrs Angela Gresham Cooke**, of Pembroke Gardens, had a great-great-aunt who in 1882 married the Rev Herbert Leigh Mallory at St Mary Abbots Church. Their first son, born four years later, was George Leigh Mallory, who became one of Britain's best known mountaineers, and who disappeared in 1924 with his climbing partner, A C Irvine, while attempting to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Only recently was his well-preserved body discovered on the mountain. The Mallory's second son, Trafford, became Air Chief Marshal Sir

Trafford Leigh-Mallory, one of the most senior RAF commanders of the second world war. He was lost in 1944 when flying to South East Asia to take up the appointment of Allied Air Commander in that sphere of operations.

Mrs Angela Darwin's family connections with Kensington began somewhat later than those of the Leigh Mallorys but the family can claim five generations living on Campden Hill without a break over the past 110 years. William Wallace Bruce, Mrs Darwin's great-grandfather, moved in 1891 to 9 Airlie Gardens, Campden Hill Road, eventually becoming the father of six girls, all accommodated in nurseries at the top of the house. Although working with a shipping company Mr Bruce was also a member of the London County Council, where, as Chairman of the Housing Committee, he was responsible for clearing the notorious slums around Seven Dials. After his death his widow moved to Little Campden House, on the corner of Hornton Street and Gloucester Walk, a property built by the future Queen Anne to house her sickly son, the Duke of Gloucester, while she and her husband, Prince George of Denmark, were in residence nearby at Campden House. Despite its name, Little Campden House was large enough to be divided in two when Mrs Darwin's great-grandmother moved in. She called her half Gloucester Lodge. The building was demolished by a bomb in 1944. Angela Darwin herself arrived in Gloucester Walk in 1967, a great-aunt having earlier sustained the Kensington link by living in Aubrey Road. The Darwin house faces the site of the former Gloucester Lodge, and what was the tennis court at the Lodge has now given way to Tor Court. One Darwin child still lives with his mother, thus providing the fifth generation of the family on Campden Hill.

The member offering evidence of the deepest roots, however, is **Mrs Susan Clifford**, who has lived in the borough all her life, for the past 40 years in Gordon Place. Her forebears' associations with Kensington stretch back on both sides of the family to the early part of the 19th century. Her mother's family, the Johns, were in Kensington by 1837, when Edward Johns, Mrs Clifford's great-great-grandfather, married Rebecca Mackelcan at St Mary Abbots Church. In 1891 Mrs Clifford's grandfather, Thomas Johns, married into the Chadwick family, who had been been active in property development in Kensington from at least 1840. According to the Survey of London [Vol 37] William Chadwick is first heard of in 1832 building a brick wall to enclose the newly established Kensal Green Cemetery, one of the seven 'hygienic'

cemeteries opened in London between 1832 and 1841. He subsequently built a Church of England chapel there in 1836. His links with Kensington may have begun as early as the 1830s but certainly by 1840 he was there, signing a series of contracts to build houses on the Ladbroke estate. Over the next two decades houses by Chadwick included 1-11 Ladbroke Road, 14-18 Horbury Mews, 13-33 Pembridge Road, and seven houses in Kensington Park Road. The Survey also shows another member of the Chadwick family designing and building houses in Airlie Gardens. The family, says Mrs Clifford 'seem to have moved a lot between Ladbroke Estate and Brompton Road. I suspect they moved into the newly-finished houses.'

William Chadwick's son, who married a lady living in Pelham Crescent, joined his father's business, and presumably looked forward to an equally successful career. Living variously in Kensington, including Earls Court Square and Royal Crescent, he and his wife produced eight children. But when a slump in the building industry occurred in the second half of the 19th century Mrs Chadwick and the children were forced to move to Boulogne, where the cost of living was cheaper. Eventually things improved, and they returned—to Kensington, of course. 'We all seem to end up living in Kensington' muses Mrs Clifford, whose daughter and son-in-law continue the tradition.

* The story of Daniel Sutton, medical pioneer, will be told in the next edition of the Annual Report.

Annual Report Contributions

Anyone wishing to submit an article for publication in next year's Annual Report is requested to do so by October 31. Contributions should not exceed 1,500 words, and should relate to aspects of life in Kensington, past, present or future. The decision whether or not to publish will rest with the Editor, although, where necessary, contributors will be offered guidance to enhance the likelihood of publication. Articles should be addressed to the Hon Secretary, Mrs Ethne Rudd, at 15 Kensington Square, W8 5HH.

The Cousin Labyrinth

Belinda Norman-Butler, one of the earliest members of the Kensington Society, was born in 1908, and has lived since 1946 in a pleasant house, with a pleasant garden, in St Alban's Grove, Kensington. Her husband, the Society's first Treasurer, was wounded in the 1939-45 war and died in 1963 at the comparatively early age of 56. By that time he had become General Manager of Martin's Bank. Her son also died, so that today she is left with one married daughter, who lives in Holland Park. But if these details seem to indicate a certain isolation it must quickly be stressed that few people can have enjoyed such a network of eminent relations, past and present, as Mrs Norman-Butler. And many of those relations have lived, at one time or another, in Kensington.

When she was a child, her father used to read the works of William Makepeace Thackeray to her, which was not surprising since Thackeray was her great-grandfather. Her maternal grandmother, the wife of a prominent social reformer, also read to her, but her choice was Sir Walter Scott, 'Which I much preferred' she confesses. 'But, you know, we were not allowed to talk about such people as 'Thackeray', or 'Dickens', or 'Browning', or 'Macaulay' it had to be *Mr* Thackeray, *Mr* Dickens, *Mr* Browning, *Mr* Macaulay. You see, they and numerous other writers were either relatives, or friends of the family.'

Thackeray lived in one part of Kensington or another for much of his adult life, notably in a still-surviving house in Young Street. His last residence, however, was in Palace Green, where he re-built a derelict a house in Queen Anne style. It is now the Israeli embassy.

His elder daughter, Anne, also favoured Kensington when in England. She had married Richmond Ritchie, a second cousin, when she was 40 and Ritchie 23. He first proposed to her when still at Eton. In 1877, the year of his marriage, Ritchie joined the Indian Civil Service, being knighted 30 years later and becoming Permanent Under Secretary for India two years after that. Anne Ritchie, Mrs Norman-Butler's grandmother 'was alarming at times, but could be enormous fun'. She was a friend of such eminent Kensington residents as Henry James, Robert Browning and Mrs Holman Hunt, wife of one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painters. But she was also respected in her own right as, in her grand-daughter's words, 'a very good second class writer'. Two of her novels, *The Village on the Cliff* and *Old*

Kensington, both written before her marriage, earned particular acclaim.

In 1867 Thackeray's younger daughter had married Leslie Stephen, editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, but she died suddenly eight years later. Stephen's second marriage was to his next-door neighbour in Hyde Park Gate, the widowed Julia Duckworth, mother of two sons. She subsequently produced four other children, one of them Virginia Woolf. Was it not one of Virginia's two half-brothers, Mrs Norman-Butler is asked, who molested her when young and upset her for the rest of her life? 'That might have been Gerald,' she replies. 'his brother, Sir George, was terribly proper and pompous.' Another great-aunt, on the Ritchie side of the family, married Douglas Freshfield, lawyer, mountaineer, geographer, and founder of the law firm which bears his name and is today one of the most prominent in the City of London. 'The Freshfields bought 1 Campden Hill Road and added a wing for entertaining,' says Mrs Norman-Butler, 'their terrific concert and supper parties vied with those at Leighton House.'

So much for Thackeray connections, but there was also her mother's family, the Booths. Her grandfather, Charles Booth, residing in Grenville Place, was not merely a prominent Victorian ship owner but author of *Life and Labour of the People of London*, an illuminating social document largely instrumental in ensuring the passing of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908. For more than a decade before the Act Charles Booth and the army of researchers he employed, had gone from door to door throughout London to gather evidence of the poverty and deprivation existing in numerous parts of the city. Honours were showered upon him in consequence, Privy Councillor, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Doctorates from the universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Liverpool. His second son, George, was a Director of the Bank of England and, in the period 1916-18, Minister of Munitions. He built the New House, in Kensington Park Road, which still stands today. 'The Booths were fond of building houses' says his niece.

It was the large size of Victorian families which provided cousins by the dozen for Mrs Norman-Butler. Her Booth grandmother, formerly Mary Macaulay, was a niece of the celebrated historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and used to tell of being taken by her father across Kensington every Sunday to visit the great man at his house, Holly Lodge, off Campden Hill. He wrote, she reported, standing at a tall desk because he felt free to walk about and consult other books, thus combining scholarship with exercise.

Meanwhile one of Thomas Babington Macaulay's sisters had

married into another family of distinguished historians, the Trevelyan, owners of Wallington, in Northumberland. 'The trouble with visiting that lovely house,' says Mrs Norman-Butler, 'was that the Trevelyan family always bathed naked in the lake, and invited their guests to do so too. I always found some excuse for not swimming there. Of course, Northumberland was scandalised by the whole business.' Wallington is now owned by the National Trust.

In addition to the Macaulays and the Trevelyan, links through marriage were formed with the Potters, and the Fletchers, the Potter family tree including, Beatrice Webb, the social reformer, her nephew the Labour minister Sir Stafford Cripps, and Malcolm Muggeridge, who married into the family. The Fletcher family, less prolific but equally distinguished, offered mainly lawyers, academics and a sprinkling of politicians, although among those entering by marriage was a du Maurier.

On her husband's side of the family there was a Butler great-aunt who married Charles Darwin's scientist/explorer friend Sir Francis Galton, and lived in Kensington Square. And there was a Norman great-aunt who lived for many years in the Red House, Hornton Street, a building pulled down after her death to make way for the present Town Hall complex. This lady's son was the eminent Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England from 1920 to 1944, the man required to cope with the series of financial crises which beset Britain between the two world wars. He lived at Thorpe Lodge, on the fringe of Holland Park, 'and transformed it into a small palace, with a lovely garden.' After the second world war the house came to form the core of Holland Park Comprehensive school.

The Norman-Butler name came into being when, to distinguish themselves from the rest of the prolific family of Butlers, those of the clan whose mother had been a Miss Norman before marriage decided to combine the two names. The Butlers themselves were formidably able, boasting, apart from the Tory politician 'Rab' Butler, a series of highly eminent figures in the world of education. In the first half of the 19th century, for example, George Butler became Headmaster of Harrow, a post he held for 24 years. But his son, Henry, subsequently eclipsed him by being appointed Headmaster of the same school at the age of 27, holding the post for 25 years and then going on to become the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, for a further 32 years. His son, James, Professor of Modern History at the University from 1947-51 was appointed tutor to Prince Albert, later King George the Sixth after the first world war.

There are many more distinguished figures, past and present, to be detected within the labyrinth, scholars, politicians, social reformers, businessmen, lawyers all have their places there. Belinda Norman-Butler herself, spurred on by her Victorian forebears' sense of duty to the community, has held numerous voluntary posts in the course of her long life—including governorship of several local schools, Chairmanship of the English Speaking Union's Cultural Committee for 28 years, trustee of the Campden Charities for 43 years, and member of a Home Office panel which conducted a two year inquiry into after-care. And then there is gardening, her St Alban's Grove garden having won the Chelsea & Kensington Cup on several occasions, most recently in 2000. She is, finally, custodian of the last significant relics of William Makepeace Thackeray; in her house is the table upon which he wrote *Vanity Fair*, the spacious chair in which this large man, 6ft 5ins tall, habitually sat, and above all, the Samuel Laurence portrait of the author which is reproduced endlessly in books and articles. In due course the Garrick Club will inherit the chair and the portrait, if not the table: 'He loved "the little G"' says his great grand-daughter, 'he had no wife for many years, it was his second home.' She herself, living today in matriarchal tranquility, appears never to have required the consolation of a club—the labyrinth has always been sufficient.



Mrs Norman-Butler and family. The picture was taken in 1950 in the garden of the house in St Alban's Grove where she still lives today.

The new-style Council— How is it working?

Not as well as it should be in the opinion of Michael Bach

Since last July everything has changed at the Town Hall—although it is unlikely that you will have noticed, unless you take an interest in how the Council operates. Did you, for example, vote last year in the referendum on the three options for change of governance offered by Whitehall—the majority of the electorate couldn't be bothered. Will you vote in the Council elections this coming May? If so you will be among only 25 per cent who do—such is the decline of interest in local government.

Those who *do* concern themselves with such matters will know that under the old system councillors were elected every four years to look after the interests of you and your area. And they would also know that the Council had committees, meeting regularly, to involve themselves with all the main subjects of local government. Under that system, at least three days before each committee meeting the public could get hold of papers to see what recommendations were being made, and could speak to their councillor or members of the committee. And if you were really concerned you could even address the committee before they made their decision.

All, or almost all of this has changed since July. With the exception of the Planning Services Committee, which deals with a small minority of planning applications, and the Licensing Panel, which deals with licences for premises like restaurants, bars and clubs, there are no committees. Instead, following the referendum last year, the Council has adopted a cabinet system of government.

The New System

This entails

- [1] a leader, chosen by the majority party, who also chairs the cabinet
- [2] Nine cabinet members, each with a portfolio, who make all the key decisions in their specialist areas, except those referred to the cabinet.
- [3] Five Overview and Scrutiny committees, who are able to scrutinise the key decisions of the cabinet, and of the individual cabinet members and the departments for which they are responsible.

This means that the 54 councillors now fall into three groups:

Ten members of the cabinet

Six 'lead members' who support cabinet members on specific issues

The remaining councillors are members of one or another of the Overview and Scrutiny committees

The reasons for the changes were to 'streamline' the decision-making process by releasing councillors from lots of committee meetings, thus enabling them to play much more active roles as ward councillors—to give them time, in other words, to get in touch with their local communities. It was also intended that the whole process should be 'modernised' by having a list of all 'key decisions' to be taken in the ensuing four months, with all this information available on the Council's website.

The Show So Far...

Over the last six months the Council—both officers and councillors—have been trying to work out how to make the new system work for them, and adjusting to their new roles. The privileged few who are cabinet members now have huge powers and responsibilities. Most of the key decisions in their portfolios will be taken by them in the privacy of their own homes, without the benefit of a committee to debate the decision. The paper on the proposed 'key decision' will be sent to them and to members of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee with a clear indication of the date when the cabinet member will announce his or her proposed decision. This decision will take effect unless the issue is requisitioned for the next overview and scrutiny committee.

The paper to inform the decision is prepared by Council officers and should present the options with pros and cons and, perhaps, a recommended course of action. The cabinet member then has to make the decision. The report has, by law, to be made public so that anyone affected can know what decisions are being taken and can, if need be, make representations to the decision maker.

Less Transparency

In practice, despite the Council's efforts to make information available, it is now more difficult than previously to find out what is going on and to influence the decisions that the Council makes. Under the old system you would know exactly when a committee was due to meet, when the papers would be available, who would participate in making the decision and, with the chairman's consent, you could address the committee.

Now it will depend whether you have access to the Internet, or if not, on making regular calls to the Town Hall to find out what is going on. Those on the Internet will have to check regularly the progress on key decisions, or have their names added to a mailing list. But few people are likely to take that much trouble. And if they do they will need to be very strongly motivated to contact the relevant cabinet member to seek to influence the decision.

Thus there is now a much higher hurdle for participation in local affairs.

Consultation

Without any real debate—the Council chamber now being even less a place for debate—the key question is what input can the electorate make to the way we are governed? What opportunities are there for our views to be heard?

One of the main assurances by the Council was that opportunities for participation would be as good, if not better, than before the changes. It is not clear how this will be achieved. Very few of the key decisions so far taken appear to have involved prior consultation, and few are even being approved for consultation.

The Council appear to have relatively limited formal consultation processes which involve the Kensington Society and other local organisations, although we understand such processes are under review. Certainly in the last six months there have been very few issues on which the Society has been consulted.

The new Community Strategy is a major step forward, as will be the revival of local planning forums, but there are a number of important issues in planning, environment and transport where the Council needs to rethink how it engages amenity societies and residents associations.

The May elections will be a test of voters' interests in local government, and the Council will have a big hurdle to overcome in seeking to re-engage the electorate and re-invigorate local affairs. Let us hope they are up to the challenge.

Obituary

A Jabez-Smith

Antony Raymond Jabez-Smith, 'Tony' to all his friends, died in May 2000, shortly before his 86th birthday. He had been a resident of Kensington for many years, and became extremely knowledgeable on its history, highways and byways. He took a great interest in the Kensington Society, to whose Executive Committee he was appointed in 1982. Two years later he became Chairman, serving in that post until 1986, then becoming Vice Chairman until 1989. In 1990 he joined the Society's Council, of which he was still a member at the time of his death. He was a regular contributor to the Annual Report, and for some time also proof-read some of the material in the Report.

Tony's father had been a bank manager and company director, while his mother, Dorothy, née Lamplugh, gave him the background for his lifelong love of the Lake District. He contributed much to the work of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archeological Society, of which he was a leading light up to the time of his death. The Society also benefited by a substantial bequest from him.

Tony was educated at Clifton College, within the area of his parental home. After reaching the rank of corporal in his school's Officer Cadet Force he joined the Territorial Army in February 1938. He qualified as a solicitor before being called up at the outbreak of the 1939-45 war, when he became a Second Lieutenant in the Queen Victoria's Rifles, which later became part of the Royal Green Jackets. He had risen to the rank of Captain before being captured at Calais in 1940, from where he was marched by the Germans a substantial trek to a Prisoner of War camp, where he remained for five years. He was released from the Army in 1946.

After the war he served as a Solicitor to H M Customs & Excise, and also worked in the Cabinet Secretary's office. He was heavily involved in drafting a new constitution for Nigeria. Tony subsequently became a partner in the City solicitors, Herbert Oppenheimer, Nathan & Vandyke, remaining there many years, enjoying a widespread practice which included drafting Ghana's Customs statute. Genial, reliable and painstaking he became a friend for life with his partners and staff alike. During his time in private practice he was Chairman for several years of the Law Society's Solicitors' Clerks Pension Fund, which became the Cheviot Trust.

Tony's interests were very wide - an inveterate traveller, he was also an art connoisseur, and interested himself in genealogy to the extent of a close study of the Bagot family in Northumberland. Well-read, he was a keen Freemason, bon viveur, excellent

company, and keenly interested in the activities of the young - he had several godchildren with whom he kept closely in touch - as well as his own contemporaries. Some years ago he broke a leg in Abu Simbel while visiting Egyptian temples. Although this slowed him up permanently it did not stop him continuing to be interested in the charities and other organisations with which he was most connected.

He died a bachelor, survived by his sister, and is much lamented by his numerous friends, his former partners and many Kensington residents.

Peter G. Nathan, O.B.E., D.L.

Welcome Back

By the time this is read the Princess Alice Memorial Garden at the Town Hall, a gift of the Kensington Society, should be back in place. The garden was planted in memory of Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria and a long-time friend of Mrs Gay Christiansen. For the last six months or so it has been dismantled owing to the resurfacing of the Town Hall forecourt, which required all the plants and soil to be removed. The poor state of the forecourt was realised when rain water began to leak into the car park beneath the Town Hall and into store rooms and offices also at the underground level.

The work has entailed replacing the base membrane, which had deteriorated badly, and laying new tiles. It began early last summer and is not expected to be finished until next August, a total of some fourteen months. The length of the operation is partly attributable to the unusually wet weather last autumn. The plants were removed by a firm of horticultural experts and taken to their premises in Essex to be stored in a mulch bed - theoretically for one month. In fact their stay was considerably longer, but most survived, the larger species faring better than some of the smaller ones. Any casualties of the lengthy mulch incarceration will be replaced, so that by mid-summer the garden is expected to present its usual attractive display of plants and shrubs.

More Rich Local Lore

Earl's Court and Brompton Past by Richard Tames, with illustrations chosen by Carolyn Starren. Historical Publications. £15.95.

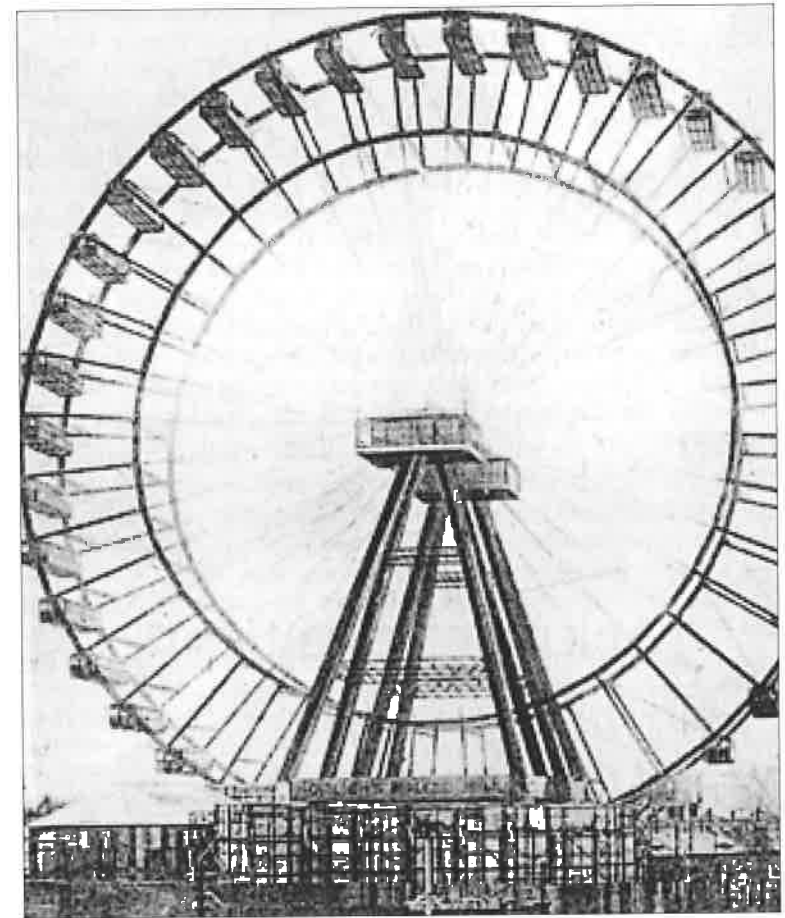
After *Kensington Past*, reviewed in this publication two years ago, comes another large slice of local history, dealing this time with two other districts in which the Kensington Society has a close interest. Few other areas of London, indeed of England, can have seen so much up-market development, can have housed so many celebrated inhabitants, as Earl's Court and Brompton since, in the first half of the 19th century, the market gardens of the area began to give way to bricks and mortar. Originally these were rural districts bisected by a single turnpike road, linked to occasional meandering lanes, but by the 1880s Earl's Court and Brompton were full of paved streets, large squares, communal gardens, shopping parades and impressive buildings. As Richard Tames shows, two events in particular were the catalysts for the almost explosive speed at which the area developed, the first being the Great Exhibition of 1851, staged in Hyde Park, the second the arrival of the tube in the Kensington district two decades later.

From as far back as the 17th century, when the development of Kensington Square began, the lure of vast profits from building in the Kensington area has led speculators to disaster. The 19th century optimists who came to grief included Lord Kensington, a local landowner, James Bonnin, whose projects included Brompton Square, Trevor Square and Alexander Place, and the firm which built on both the Edwardes and Gunter estates. This company went bust with debts of £1.5 million, some £66 million today.

Although predominately a haven of horticulture, pre-expansion Kensington had none the less contained numerous fine houses, inhabited mainly by a selection of the great and the good. Gore House, for example, built during the 1750s in Kensington Gore and demolished 100 years later, is best remembered as the sometime home of the colourful Countess of Blessington, whose salon became for a while the centre of London's literary life. But Admiral Romney had been an earlier occupant, and after him arrived William Wilberforce. While it is questionable whether Kensington Gore or the Albert Hall area, also referred to by Richard Tames, qualify as parts of either Brompton or Earls Court, the large house occupied by John Hunter, the surgeon and anatomist, most certainly does. Earls Court House, demolished in 1886 to make way for Barkston Gardens, was where much of his anatomical research took place, a process enhanced by the fact that he had first refusal of any animals expiring at the Tower of London zoo.

By the beginning of the 20th century, with almost all of the

great houses gone, the population of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had expanded from little more than eight thousand in 1801 to more than 160,000. And to the area were drawn celebrities from every trade and profession imaginable, as they continue to be today. From the stage such legendary figures as Fanny Kemble and Ellen Terry, from politics Andrew Bonar Law, briefly Prime Minister, from journalism the legendary William Russell of *The Times*, the world's first war correspondent, from literature the equally legendary Beatrix Potter, born and raised in The Boltons, and from the cinema, Alfred Hitchcock.



The Great Wheel of Earls Court, 19th century forerunner of the London Eye. Situated in the vicinity of the present Exhibition Centre, the wheel, in use from 1895 to 1907, was 100 yards in diameter and contained 40 cars. Each car could carry 40 people, so that a maximum of 1,600 could be accommodated at any one time. Teas and ices could be obtained by passengers.

The beginning of the flood of such people into the area was to no-one more welcome, one imagines, than Charles Digby Harrod, whose father had taken over an ailing Knightsbridge grocery store around 1850. The younger Harrod was twenty when he bought out his father in the 1860s, and within a few years was employing five assistants. By 1880 the staff had risen to 100. Harrod, whose business had survived a serious fire in 1883, sold out six years later and retired to Evelyn Gardens. His departure saw the business falter badly, to be rescued by a former rival, Richard Burbidge, who arrived from Whiteley's, which he had recently rejuvenated. Over the next twenty years the number of employees rose to six thousand, and profits expanded ten-fold.

The glamour surrounding Harrods has brought it world renown, but possibly as widely known around the globe today is the humble rawplug, which Richard Tames interestingly reveals, was invented in 1921 by George Rawlings in his lock-up garage in Ashburn Mews, off the Cromwell Road. By 1939 the Rawplug Company Ltd had established a world wide business.

As in the case of *Kensington Past* the illustrative material contained in *Earl's Court and Brompton Past* has been selected by Carolyn Starren, and an intriguing range of pictures she has produced - more than 150 in all. Old photographs, old drawings, portraits, maps, advertisements, press cuttings - an illustration on almost every page, two or three on many pages. And all combining to purvey the impression that although the social mix may have changed somewhat, Earl's Court and Brompton at least *look* very much as they did a century ago.

R. M-T

Acknowledgements

The Editor would like to thank Carolyn Starren, formerly in charge of the Local Studies section of Kensington Public Library, and her successor, Richard Marshall, for their assistance in obtaining much of the pictorial material used in this edition of the Annual Report, and to John Rogers for the provision of transparencies. Arthur Farrand Radley, a member of the Society's Council, is also to be thanked for providing pictures taken at the presentation of the Millennium Clock.

The Kensington Society is indebted too to the staff of the Borough's Press Office for the loan of photographs and for their helpful responses to various questions put to them during the preparation of this publication. Finally, gratitude is expressed to Barry Hills, the long-time liaison channel between the printers, located in Harpenden, and the Kensington Society.

Reports from Local Societies

Abbotsbury Residents Association

The Association was formed some 27 years ago, and has regularly had a paid up membership of nearly two-thirds of eligible households. We have successfully represented members negotiating with the Ilchester Estate, buying our freeholds. We also monitor and make representations as necessary to the Ilchester Estate and local authorities to maintain high standards within our area, in particular with regard to Holland Park, pollution, traffic, parking and associated matters in general. We hold an annual Pimms party for members each summer in the Orangery in Holland Park, which is always enjoyed. The Committee met four times last year, which has been a relatively uneventful period. We hold our AGM in November at which such matters as house maintenance and the 'noise and pollution' caused by roving peacocks from Holland Park are the most recurring themes for discussion.

Hugh Marsden
Chairman

Campden Hill Residents Association

The final act in the five-year Thames Water drama was played out in a stuffy tribunal room near the Law Courts, one day's legal arguments was sufficient to persuade the judge that Thames Water should indeed be allowed to demolish the reservoirs, rebuild the tennis courts (and perhaps the clubhouse too - planning application pending as I write) and erect a chunky collection of houses and flats on the, by now, generous site.

This was a bitter blow to nearby residents and the wider Campden Hill area, threatened now - as predicted - by further assaults, from the developers of King's College, with yet more traffic and pressure on parking. A gallant last-minute effort to sustain educational use - at the very least in the listed main building on Campden Hill Road - won widespread support.

Elsewhere Campden Hill residents have warmly welcomed the farmers' market at Notting Hill Gate, though its current site in Edge Street remains controversial. By contrast, virtually no-one seems to support the Council's decision - felt necessary by commercial pressures on Kensington High Street - to ban traffic turning into Argyll Road. The tailback both ways for traffic turning into Campden Hill Road - soon to be the only north-south route between Melbury Road to the west and Kensington Church Street to the east - seems a price not worth paying for supposed commercial advantage.

As the increasingly populous Notting Hill Carnival promises to overwhelm the narrow streets astride the Portobello Road and northwards to the Harrow Road, the spill-over effect on Campden Hill intensifies each year.

So for the Residents Association it's been a difficult year seeking to engage and influence powerful external forces. You might not think it, walking through its serene, often stately roads, but Campden Hill these days feels like an embattled enclave under siege.

Anthony Land
Chairman

Campden Street Preservation Society

In this lovely street the Chairman and the Committee struggle mightily against wanton property developers. Another of our aims is to prevent the destruction of the few remaining trees. We are greatly indebted to the staff in the Planning office at the Town Hall, and to at least one of our most able councillors. Campden Street, in conjunction with three neighbouring streets, is about to have road humps. Campden Street and Peel Street campaigned vigorously for their introduction, so that speeding in this area will be much reduced.

Residents are encouraged to paint the front of their houses, and many tend window boxes to great effect. We also advise residents to leave rubbish and recycling bags on the pavement only on the correct days since they disfigure our street, and it is against the rules of the Council. The residents of this street are campaigning to have the Notting Hill Carnival moved to a large, open area or 'savannah'; where it can be enjoyed and safely controlled. There is an active Neighbourhood Watch in Campden Street, and the Chairman's front windows have become the 'village pump', where police notices and other information regularly appear.

'The Churchill Arms', the pub at the bottom of the street has again won an award for the best exterior floral decorations. The Preservation Society held its AGM at the Community Centre in St. George's Church, Aubrey Walk, on May 31, 2000. We were delighted to welcome Mr Robin Price, representing the Kensington Society.

Evelyn Ellison,
Chairman

Cornwall Gardens Residents Association

This last year has been very quiet and comparatively uneventful for Cornwall Gardens. There has been no further news on the proposed development by the freeholder of land on the east garden, nor any other contentious planning applications. Our summer party was a great success, for the third year running, with everyone seeming to have a marvellous time and record profits resulting.

The Association circulated all 473 garden rate payers with a questionnaire about their views on the proposal to re-install the railings in the central and east gardens, at a cost of £500,000 (plus VAT). The results indicated that approximately 70% of the residents were opposed to the plan, in view of the cost.

The Association would like to express sincere thanks for all her services to Miss Ursula Overbury, who stepped down from the post of honorary secretary after fifteen years on the committee.

Dr Theodora Bond,
Chairman

Earl's Court Square Residents Association

The Association has continued to monitor all activities in the Square in order to preserve or enhance its pleasant ambiance. Reports are included in our Summer and Winter Newsletters.

The £6 million redevelopment of the old Chelsea Hotel, providing over 40 flats, is well under way and is scheduled for completion in October, 2001. After discussions the developers have generously agreed to contribute towards much-needed restoration work on other important properties.

Situated between two main arteries, the Earl's Court Road and Warwick Road, traffic problems are ever with us and several management schemes have been devised and accepted by the Council to alleviate these troubles.

At our Annual Meeting in January, the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Priscilla Fraser, gave a very well received talk about the Borough, as she had seen it during her period of office, and congratulated the Association on its valuable contribution in assisting the Council's work.

In the summer a well-attended Barbecue took place in the Square Garden by courtesy of the Garden Committee. The Committee are also thanked for the Christmas Tree which they donate each year. This provides the centre piece for carol singing and the provision of mulled wine and mince pies, both welcome on what is usually a cold December evening.

Douglas Eaton

Kensington Court Residents Association

As our area is so close to the High Street we are concerned with many of the larger problems which affect the Kensington Society and are discussed in the reports of the Chairman and Secretary elsewhere in this issue - including developments in the High Street and in Kensington Gardens, licensing hours, and 'road user charging'.

During the year we have tried to limit rowdiness from the Builders Arms in unholy alliance with Richmond College. In particular we tried to break the link between the two and made some progress in this. The College (at last) showed signs of

collaboration, and so did the brewery, but the pub itself has clearly regretted the absence of hard-drinking students. The campaign goes on. It is not clear how much help Jack Straw's proposals may be in restraining street nuisances of various kinds.

Similarly we have opposed extension of hours by many nightclubs whose departing clients can cause disturbance in the middle of the night.

We have supported residents in seeking remedies for nuisance caused by restaurants/clubs on the High Street which back on to properties in our area, and opposed over-development in or near mansion blocks, which threatens other residents.

Our local Ward Councillor, Daniel Moylan, is now deputy leader of the Council, and we work closely with him.

Sir Ronald Arculus,
Chairman

Marlborough Court Residents Association

We entered our garden again this year in the Brighter Kensington & Chelsea Garden Scheme, and they were kind enough to give us a Very Highly Recommended Award in the Managed Property section - thereby encouraging us to ever greater efforts. The garden remained colourful throughout the summer, and formed the background for our annual garden party. Much as we love our garden, it is now showing problems of maturity, many of the plantings of recent years have reached their optimum size and will need to be kept very much in order.

Pembroke Road itself is now lined with young tulip trees which look very well, while in the past year the Royal Borough has made important plantings along Cromwell Road West and Earl's Court Road near St. Philip's Church. They promise a notable upgrading of the environment.

The Town Hall has also kept us, as a residents association, informed on a variety of topics, sending material of general interest in the fields of planning, housing, traffic control, licensing and so on. Thus we have been able to offer views - a busy Town Hall keeps us on our toes.

Wildlife favour us with their presence; as well as smaller birds there are magpies, crows, wood pigeons and squirrels. A fox came once but has not made a second visit.

Michael Dunlap,
Chairman

Norland Conservation Society

At the beginning of the session the Executive Committee decided to focus its efforts on four aspects.

There were:

- (a) Increasing awareness in the area of the existence of the

Society, and increasing membership.

- (b) The annual lecture.

- (c) Planning matters.

- (d) Environmental matters, including traffic and amenities.

How have we done?

(a) Progress on awareness and membership has been an outstanding success. An effective illustrated brochure, which outlines the role of the society and invites membership, has been published and distributed throughout the NCS area. Copies are held by local estate agents and given to new home-owners. Membership has increased significantly, especially new Life Members. However, more members are still needed and efforts will continue to this end.

(b) The Annual Lecture was again an unqualified success. It was very well attended, with an enthusiastic speaker in David Lidgate to whom we extend our appreciation.

(c) A large number of planning applications have been considered and appropriate comments made which seek to uphold and preserve the unique character of the Conservation Area. The major application for 20 Penzance Place, which had aroused considerable concern among members over a period of at least 18 months, was rejected by the Council in November 1999. No new application for this address has so far been received.

(d) Several environmental matters were addressed. In particular, proposals by the Council to increase the number of residents' parking spaces in the area, to consolidate metered (ticketed) visitors' parking, and reinstate the short-term shoppers meters near Holland Park Avenue. All were generally well received by residents. Most of the proposals have now been implemented, taking into account the concerns of residents, where applicable.

Anthony J. Perry,
Chairman

Onslow Neighbourhood Association

Once again our greatest concern has been the control of traffic, particularly the continued congestion in the Old Brompton Road. The revised road markings (coupled with the blitz by the wardens) have helped a little. Perhaps improvement would continue with the implementation of the Council's radical traffic management proposals for the South Kensington station circuit, which suggest a return to the original two-way system in lieu of the present complicated one-way layout. This has received guarded support from the Association but its success will lie in the accuracy of the forecasts of traffic flow by computer modelling. We understand that it has been referred back to the consultants to take on board comments and criticism by local residents. Still on this subject, we

have generally welcomed the increased restriction on the use of residents' parking spaces, thereby extending the benefit enjoyed by permit holders.

Our Millennium Membership Drive was duly carried out, some 1,500 householders were targeted, resulting in a gain of some 180 new members. This increase was reflected in a record turn-out for the summer garden party, for once blessed by good weather, and voted a great success. This was repeated at our AGM, at which, for once, we had no guest speaker but instead members were invited to question our guests, Mr Michael French and local ward councillors. Our thanks to them for their contribution to some lively debate.

The only contentious planning application during the year has been that by Christies for an additional storey and increased warehouse space in their building at the rear of the Old Brompton Road showrooms. The Association, and in particular surrounding residents, have objected on the grounds of over-development, increased noise pollution and the addition to existing traffic congestion.

Hugh Brady,
Chairman

Victoria Road Area Residents Association

As I approach the end of my first year as Chairman, I look back with satisfaction to the early part of the year when we increased our membership by one-third as a result of a recruiting drive, and at the same time made sure that everyone in our area is represented on our Committee by someone who is active.

During the course of the year we had some significant meetings - the Headmaster of Thomas's school, a Vice President of Richmond College, and the Managing Director of Kensington Palace and Park Hotels - in each case to discuss complaints by neighbouring residents over noise and/or traffic. Very recently we had a meeting with Councillor Adrian Fitzgerald primarily in relation to traffic-calming and parking restrictions in our area.

On the planning side we recorded one famous victory - for the time being, anyway - when an application to extend the commercial use of 27 Kelso Place was thrown out by the Planning Committee. Whilst on the subject of Kelso Place I should like to pay tribute to the sub-committee of residents there and in Stanford Road on their successful negotiations with London Underground.

I believe the Association is in good shape and ready to fight any battle with which we may be faced.

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.** Corporate members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £25. Ordinary members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of £10. Affiliated Amenity Societies shall pay an annual subscription of £10. The minimum annual subscription for different classes of members (ordinary, corporate, affiliated amenity societies) shall be such sums as may be determined by the Executive Committee from time to time. Subscriptions are payable on January 1st each year.
5. **THE OFFICERS.** The officers of the society shall be the President, one or more Vice-Presidents, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer and such further honorary officers as the Executive Committee may from time to time appoint.
6. **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than twelve members including the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer.
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.

4th February 1991

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 Subscribers will simplify the collection of their subscriptions
if they will fill in the Banker's Order

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

BANKER'S 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 Campden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, London W8 7HX
(Tel: 020-7937 2750)

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

I,
(Full name)

of.
(Address)

HEREBY COVENANT with THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY,
c/o 15 Kensington Square, W8, that for a period of
..... years from the 1st day of 20, or
during the residue of my life, whichever shall be shorter, I will pay
annually to the said Society from my general fund of taxed income
such a sum as after the deduction of income tax at the rate for the
time being in force will amount to the net sum of £10.

IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this ...
..... day of 20

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

WITNESS

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

OCCUPATION

SIGNATURE

.....

PLEASE NOTE

1. The number of years for which the covenant is being made should be inserted in the space provided. This can be for any period from four years upwards or for life.
2. The date to be inserted as the beginning of the period should not be earlier than the date on which the covenant is executed.
3. Unless your first subscription under the covenant is paid on or after the date when the above period begins, the Society will not be able to reclaim the Income Tax on such payment.
4. The document should be returned as soon as possible after completion, in order that it may not be out of date for stamping.

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Statement of Accounts
for the year
2000

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Year to December 31st 2000

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

INCOME	Y/E 31/12/99	Y/E 31/12/00
	£	£
Subscriptions	4,821.30	4,886.30
Donations	585.68	78.94
Visit Receipts	3,160.50	2,909.00
Advertising	1,270.00	1,080.00
Interest	982.81	1,115.10
Total	10,820.29	10,069.34

EXPENDITURE

	£	£
Visits	2,101.45	1,896.20
Typing	336.84	110.00
Stationery/Printing	640.42	644.47
Postage/Telephone	338.01	229.58
Millennium Clock	-	7,325.00
Annual Report	3,679.78	4,118.50
Subscriptions	68.00	112.76
Advertising	60.00	75.00
Meeting Room Hire	332.00	180.00
Catering	141.83	84.84
Total	7,698.33	14,776.35
Surplus/(Deficit)	3,121.96	4,707.01

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Balance Sheet as at December 31st 2000

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	Y/E 31/12/99	Y/E 31/12/00
	£	£
Cash - Current A/C's		
General Fund	3,125.65	2,330.22
Princess Alice Memorial Fund	2,541.10	2,370.41
Cash - Deposit A/C's		
High Interest Account	18,254.49	13,842.91
National Savings Account	7,710.14	8,210.14
	31,631.38	26,753.68

REPRESENTED BY

General Fund b/f	25,968.32	29,090.28
Surplus/(Deficit)	3,121.96	4,707.01
	29,090.28	24,383.27
Princess Alice Memorial Fund b/f	3,023.26	2,541.10
Surplus/(Deficit)	-482.16	-170.69
	2,541.10	2,370.41
TOTAL RESERVES	31,631.38	26,753.68

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY
PRINCESS ALICE MEMORIAL FUND
Year to December 31st 2000

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

INCOME	Y/E 31/12/99	Y/E 31/12/00
	£	£
Miscellaneous Income	413.78	389.40
Interest	11.20	7.17
	<u>424.98</u>	<u>396.57</u>
 EXPENDITURE		
A/R Costs	-	350.00
Tablet	580.00	-
Plants & Bulbs	275.91	217.26
Sundry	51.23	-
	<u>907.14</u>	<u>567.26</u>
 Surplus/(Deficit)	 -482.16	 -170.69

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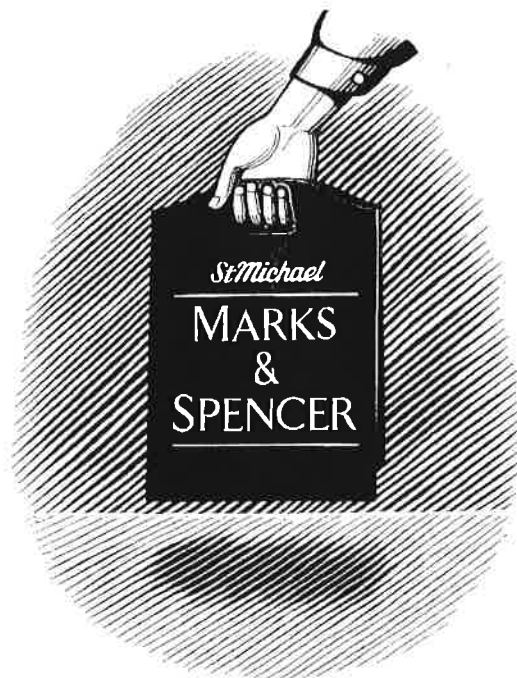
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Front cover shows Kensington High Street in 1898. The Royal Garden Hotel now stands on the site occupied by the three-storeyed premises on the right. Watercolour and pen drawing from studies made at the time by E. Walker