

THE
**Kensington
Society**



**Annual Report
2002**

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 2002

Front cover picture shows the Kensington Society's Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, in conversation with Tania Race at the Queen's Golden Jubilee street party held by the Victoria Road Area Residents Association last June. The patriotically-clad lady between the two is Chris Dixon, wife of the chairman of the Association. Tania Race, of Jakobs, Gloucester Road, was responsible for the delicious food served at the party.

The Kensington Society

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
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✓ Mrs Dianne Gabitass	✓ Ms Celia Rees-Jenkins O.B.E.
✓ Anthony Land	✓ Mrs Ethne Rudd
Mrs Susan Lockhart	Robert Vigars
Robert Meadows	George Wightman
✓ David Meggitt	Nigel Wilkins

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VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ms Celia Rees-Jenkins O.B.E.
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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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From the President

For many of us the state of our main shopping streets, and of the traffic, is a daily measure of the quality of life here. But the state of Borough affairs, and the relationship with central Government, is of underlying importance.

From this perspective a number of clouds hang over Kensington. There is the outcome of the new Local Government Grant reform, which will discriminate against our Borough, unless modified. Similarly there are adverse trends in Mayor Livingstone's Plan for London, on which the Chairman comments on a later page. His Plan relates little to Kensington directly, but the Council's well-founded critique of the Mayor's 400 pages itself ran to nearly 70 pages. For example, the Mayor said nothing about how the knock-on effect of the £5 congestion-charging scheme might be mitigated in areas like ours which are adjacent to the charging zone.

On the day-to-day level we also find at the time of writing [October] a number of adverse factors. Improvements to Kensington High Street are taking many months [though praised by Richard Rogers, who advises the Mayor] and congestion is worse. Cycling continues to threaten pedestrians in Kensington Gardens; the police in the Parks and on the streets are still thin on the ground, and pub and club rowdiness still disturbs the peace. Each of you has his own little list.

We looked for some improvement at the eastern end of the High Street through the redevelopment of numbers 37-53, adjacent to the NATwest Bank. Demolition duly happened, but no rebuilding yet. This is a most important site and the right new building could raise the tone of that end of the street. Penthouses continue to sprout on roof-tops, contrary to the UDP, although some applications have been refused successfully.

We continue to support the Council on major issues raised by Central Government, and their defence of our interests is vigorous. Individual letters do count, and also support through residents associations, amenity societies and other effective bodies such as the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, and of Holland Park.

However, we must also count our blessings—the rich resources of Albertopolis; the facilities of, e.g. the Royal

Geographical Society; several foreign cultural centres; the Commonwealth Institute; Kensington Palace and the Orangery; art and antiques fairs in various locations; private galleries; farmers' and other markets such as Portobello; institutions like the Town Hall and St Mary Abbots; restaurants and antique shops galore; further education facilities and an excellent public library. Not to mention our fine streetscapes [long stucco terraces, elegant rows of houses, large and small; 'villages'; red brick canyons of mansion blocks; Dutch gables and other architectural pleasures; garden squares, trees and avenues of blossom; tiny gardens that amaze foreign visitors; one of the best of London's Royal Parks, and other parks, especially Holland Park with its flourishing season of summer opera]. There is also a wide variety of cultural, historic and other specialised societies which cater for many interests—indeed, is there any other country which has so many of these?

Your Society exists to further these positive aspects and to do what it can to offset the negative ones. The more members we have, the greater our weight and influence.

Sir Ronald Arculus

AGM 2003

The Society's **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, April 2**, at the **Convent, Kensington Square**. Doors will open at 6.30pm and the meeting will begin at 7pm. Wine will be served before and afterwards. This year's principal speaker will be **General Sir David Ramsbotham, GCB, CBE**, former Chief Inspector of Prisons, whose talk will pose the question **'What price imprisonment?'**

Chairman's Report

This has been a busy year on what is necessarily a many-sided front. We have activated the greater part of the strategies outlined in my report last year: that is, continuing to lead and support major actions affecting Kensington and indeed the whole Royal Borough; strengthening relations with our constituent societies and making common cause with them on major issues, as well as with societies in adjacent areas; and monitoring the new Borough governance and seeking to improve its processes. We are also taking action to increase membership and in doing so to augment our effective base.

Major actions affecting Kensington and the whole Borough. The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership, referred to at the AGM last April, held its Borough Conference on November 2 in order to seek residents' comments on the guidance paper *The Future of our Community*, drawn up by the Partnership's Steering Group. The Kensington Society and the Chelsea Society are together very effectively represented on this body by Celia Rees-Jenkins, our Vice-Chairman. This guidance paper seeks to integrate all aspects of an efficient, lively, healthy and safe Borough.

The Mayor's *Draft Plan for London*, long on aspiration and rather shorter on methods of funding, was reviewed and commented on by your Society before the end of the response period on September 30. We were able entirely to support the Royal Borough's detailed and highly professional response. We added our own emphases, not least the difficulty of finding space for the prescribed level of housing in what is, after all, the most densely populated community in the UK. Fortunately there is little in the Draft Plan except this which directly affects the Royal Borough.

We have made it known that we approve highly of the Council's proposals to set up a Borough constabulary [or its equivalent of community support officers, provided for in the recent Police Reform Act] in order to achieve greater personal and domestic security. A private scheme in the Victoria Road area has significantly reduced crime. It is hoped that the first such personnel will be introduced more widely in the Borough by mid-2003.

Strengthening relations and making common cause. We have joined with the Chelsea Society in recommending a radical re-think of

the long-awaited but unacceptable traffic-flow plans for the South Kensington station area. Both Societies are also in consultation over the re-development of the station building. This is a sensitive site which demands sensitive treatment on a human scale and to an appropriate design.

Increasing use of the Royal Parks for commercial purposes has led to high pop-concert noise, lack of access to regular park users, and the destruction of tranquility and untrammelled enjoyment. As a result all the major amenity societies surrounding Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens have taken joint action to represent the case of local residents to the Government and the Royal Parks Agency. Such cooperation may well need to continue. We have also made common cause with societies adjacent to the Royal Parks in seeking to minimise cycling and its deleterious effects in the Parks on both residents and visitors.

The Kensington and Chelsea Societies continue to meet twice a year with the Leader of the Council to discuss matters affecting the whole Borough. We are grateful to the Leader for providing this opportunity to meet him in what must be an exceedingly demanding schedule. Most of the matters outlined in this Report, and some others, have been usefully aired in these meetings, not least the matter of improvements to the new Borough governance.

The Founder's Prize. As previously announced this prize, in memory of Gay Christiansen, is to be launched by the Society as an annual schools project, relating to Kensington. It will be open to pupils of Kensington secondary schools, both public and private. Discussions with the Council's Education Department are in progress and it is hoped that the scheme will be in place for the year 2003-4.

We have made representations on cycling, skateboarding and roller-skating on pavements as dangerous and illegal nuisances to pedestrians which must be controlled; so also on the continuance—and in the case of the High Street and some other places—the increase of begging in Kensington. This, too, could be more regularly, and firmly, policed. Both will in the future, we hope, become targets of the new Borough constabulary.

The huge but necessary disruption caused by the refurbishment and redesign of Kensington High Street—praiseworthy in itself—has been unacceptably augmented by Transco's sudden decision, at the worst possible moment, to excavate Kensington

Church Street, and a section of the Kensington Road, to lay new gas mains. Single traffic flows were the result for many weeks, with the north-bound side of Church Street totally closed, and long tailbacks for west-bound traffic at peak times in the Kensington Road. We have suggested to the Council that closer consultation with Transco, to say nothing of insistence that they should be continuously on-site, could have resulted in more even traffic flows, and in the case of Church Street, a two-way flow. Continuous on-site activity could have seen a more rapid completion of the job, although in the Council's defence it must be said that Transco was responding to instructions from the Health & Safety Executive which allowed little room for negotiation.

Nonetheless, I am sure we shall all be grateful to the Council for spearheading the excellent and radical new design of the High Street. It is attractive and heart-lifting to behold and one can foresee numerous awards for it, national and international.

Increased activity is likely to be the pattern for your committee in coming years. Pressures on space and amenity, whether urban or green, are likely to increase, and no government [whatever its protestations] is ever likely to be sympathetic to quiet and considerate enjoyment of the qualities of life. The tendency towards the commodification of all things must be fought in the interests of civilised human life, and on behalf of every individual in every part of the Borough.

This year we have been joined on the Executive Committee by Anthony Land, formerly Chairman of the Campden Hill Residents Association, who has taken over as Chairman of our Planning Sub-Committee from Robert Vigars, and by George Wightman, founder and former Chairman of the Bramham Gardens Association. We are much indebted to both of them, but especially so to Robert Vigars who not only served as the Society's Chairman for five years but also chaired the Planning Sub Committee at the same time and continued to do so until recently relinquishing the post. Fortunately he remains a member of the Executive Committee. We record with regret the resignation of Bee Hopkins, who has left the UK for a brief period as the result of her husband's secondment to Australia.

Finally, to strengthen our voice, **we need more, younger and active members.** Please go out and help bring them in.

Secretary's Report

This has been another successful year and we are very grateful to our membership secretary, Angela Darwin, for her devoted attention to the task of recruitment and her persistence in the all-important job of getting in annual subscriptions.

The keynote event of the year was the Queen's golden jubilee, which the Society marked by sponsoring a concert of Elizabethan and Royal music at St Mary Abbots Church on July 15. There were drinks before the concert and the audience, who responded enthusiastically to the music, were invited back to the Mayor's parlour for further refreshments at the conclusion of the event. It was a marvellous evening, the last of the numerous Jubilee celebrations held in the Royal Borough during the year, and it coincided with the Royal baton being carried through Kensington.

The year also saw the introduction of the Government's project on community affairs, entitled 'Our Community, Our Future', in support of which a number of meetings were held by the Council at the Town Hall. Members of the Society's committee were present at these meetings, where they participated in discussions on the proposed reaction of the Council to the Government's initiative. The project culminated with a Fair on November 2, a day-long event at the Town Hall which took the form of an Annual Borough Conference during which representatives of local voluntary and community groups demonstrated what they do, and asked for help in their work. The Kensington Society had a stall at the Fair, and drew numerous visitors.

Unhappily the controversy over the proposed further memorial to the late Princess of Wales continues at the time of writing. The choice apparently lies between a moat-like structure, which would take up the whole of the car park by the Serpentine Bridge, and an island-like structure floating in the Serpentine. Your Society asked to be represented on the committee appointed to decide the matter, which is chaired by Rosa Monkton, we wanted to ensure that it included someone who knew the area, but the request was turned down.

Meanwhile the Henry More sculpture which used to grace the north side of the Serpentine beside the Long Water section continues



More no more. Ethne Rudd, and John Empson of the Friends of Hyde Park, stand among the dismantled sections of Henry More's sculpture.

to lie dismantled and unregarded in the magazine building. The site was visited recently by myself and John Empson, of the Friends of Hyde Park. It is, we fear, a sorry sight. If anyone feels strongly about this matter would they please write to me so that the Society can try to get something done about it.

Ethne Rudd

Treasurer's Report

The Society increased its subscription income in 2002, but receipts from Visits, Advertising and Interest were all lower, leaving overall income down from £9,842.22 to £8,337.71.

Expenditure on charitable activities during the year amounted to £4,421.43, as opposed to nil in 2001. The major sources of expense were a concert staged by the Society at St Mary Abbots Church to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee; lanterns in memory of Gay Christiansen placed in the cloister of the church, and the donation of a tree to the new avenue of trees planted alongside the Dial Walk, Kensington Gardens, as part of the Prince of Wales's Royal Parks Tree Appeal.

There were increased costs for stationery, printing, meeting room hire and the Visits programme, but the Annual Report cost less to produce. In all, expenditure rose from £7,297.52 to £12,103.14.

As a result of the increased charitable activity there was a deficit of £3,765.43 on the year. But this is manageable given that the reserves of the Society stand at £25,593.72. During the year the Princess Alice Memorial Fund was inactive, and the funds have now been included in the Society's High Interest Deposit Account.

David Meggitt

Full details of the Society's Accounts may be found on pages 65-66

1953–2003: Fifty Years of Vigilance

A brief review of the Kensington Society's first half-century of endeavour in the cause of the local environment

'Since the end of the war we have seen a great deal of inhuman rebuilding. Things just chucked down on the street--piecemeal rebuilding. And self interest has been the principal aim.' Thus in 1955 spoke a distinguished architect at a public meeting held by the fledgling Kensington Society. It was this depressing state of affairs which had brought the Society into being two years earlier. At that time such a watch-dog body was less than welcome among local bureaucrats, councillors and property developers. Why pay attention, was their attitude, to a mere collection of busy-bodies with no standing of any kind? So in that initial phase Gay Christiansen, the Society's indefatigable secretary, met many a cold shoulder in her approaches to authority.

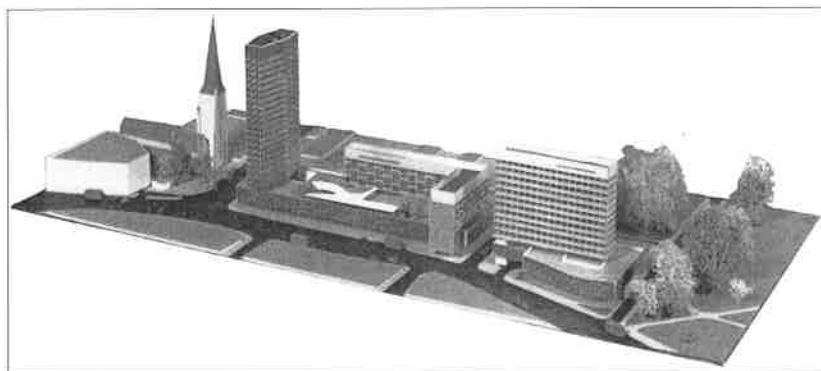
Kensington was then a property developer's dream, with many buildings bomb-damaged or totally destroyed, others showing decades of neglect, whole areas ripe for rebuilding or redevelopment. There was money, and lots of it, to be made for some people.

The first major issue with which the Society involved itself, however, concerned matters of history and aesthetics rather than the usual pounds, shillings and pence of building and rebuilding. It was the attempt in 1956 to prevent the Imperial Institute—built in the late 19th century from subscriptions from every part of the British Empire—from being demolished. It should go, authority decreed, to allow the expansion of Imperial College. The long battle to preserve it was eventually lost, but not before a debate in the House of Lords, a public meeting organised by the Society, approaches to the Royal Fine Arts Commission, and letters to influential sections of the Press. There was, however, one consolation—the tower of the Institute was saved from destruction and today dominates the Imperial College site.

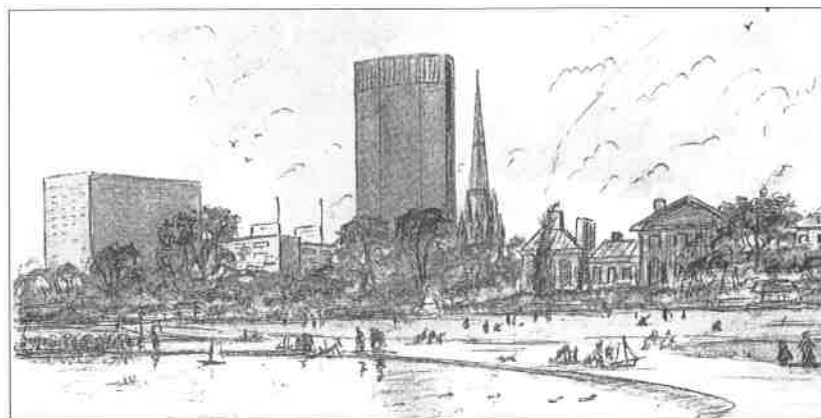
Two years later began the tower blocks campaign, a campaign by developers which, had it succeeded, would have seen a

rash of such buildings erected at the heart of the borough, where none had stood before. An application for a 16 storey block near Olympia, which the Society opposed, had no sooner been rejected, than another plan was presented which included a 23 storey office block [see pictures] precisely opposite St Mary Abbots Church. It was a scheme, the Society argued, which would see the new building dominate and overpower the church. The borough council saw no objection to the plan, thus flying in the face of its own planning committee which only a few months earlier had observed: 'Kensington is primarily residential in character and we do not doubt that the Council will wish this policy to remain unchanged.'

The upshot was another public meeting organised by the



Two views of what-might-have-been. A proposed 23 storey office block opposite St Marys Abbots Church (above) in model form, (below) how it would have looked from Kensington Gardens.



Society, and chaired by its eminent President, the architect, Lord Esher, who at the outset sounded the tocsin with the words, 'There is no doubt that if you want to keep anything of value standing in this city you have to fight every inch of the way against the commercial money-makers backed by their political supporters.'

In those early years the Borough Council was supporting numerous projects proposed by the 'commercial money-makers' but opposed by the Kensington Society—and later rejected by the final arbiter, London County Council. To be fair to the Council, however, new buildings meant more income for the borough in the way of new ratepayers.

The tall block opposite the church did not get planning permission but that did not discourage another developer who sought to tear down Plane Tree House in Duchess of Bedford Walk adjacent to Holland Park, and erect in its place a tower block, 180 feet high. That scheme too fell by the wayside, on the ground of lack of harmony with the immediate surroundings.

But it was a plan in 1963 for the development of the site to



The tower blocks which would have dominated central Kensington if 1963 plans had been allowed. The view is from the north east corner of Kensington Square.

the rear of High Street Kensington tube station, the old goods depot there, which raised the loudest cry of alarm from the local community

and from concerned bodies such as the Kensington Society and the London Society. The scheme, for which the Borough Council favoured planning permission, envisaged among other things two residential blocks of 22 storeys, both 290 feet high, and a third of 17 storeys. [See picture] By 1966, with a public inquiry in the offing, the application had been scaled down to one block 226 feet in height, and three others each of 125 feet. In the end only one block was built, a tall, broad 12-storey hotel more than 150 feet high located in Wright's Lane., It was an inevitably intrusive building quite out of scale with its surroundings, but preferable to what might have been.

Although plans for major building projects demand constant monitoring the Society has also been required from time to time to turn its attention to far less grandiose ventures, an example being the rescue from demolition of an early 19th century house in Selwood Place, a quiet backwater just off the Fulham Road. The London County Council had already been asked to upgrade the terrace from the supplementary to the main list of buildings of architectural interest, when on a morning early in 1963 Mrs Christiansen was alerted to the fact that demolition of a house there had begun. A telegram was instantly sent to the Minister of Housing while at the same time the LCC's Planning Committee issued a Building Preservation Order. Moving at lightning speed officials completed all the necessary legal and administrative procedures by midday of the following day, the documents were rushed to the Ministry, and within 48 hours of demolition commencing a formal notice to stop had been served on the owners. Subsequently a preservation order was placed on most of the houses in Selwood Place. The day was won, but only because of the early warning from residents and instant action by the Society's Secretary and by government officials. In all too many instances properties have been dismantled before the alarm could be raised.

Another issue of concern in the 1960s was the delapidated condition of many of the borough's garden squares. 'Some of the fences have large holes in them, or indeed are run down completely' declared the Annual Report for 1962. 'All sorts of unauthorised people trample over what were once flower beds. The grass is uncut, the paths and borders unweeded, the trees unlopped. Broken bottles, rusty tins, and waste paper litter the ground. filth of all kinds is allowed to accumulate. And no-one seems to take the slightest

responsibility.' Given the immaculate appearance of most of Kensington's garden squares today, it is difficult to envisage such a state of affairs.

The lack of concern among residents of some of the squares reflected their bed-sitter life-style, here today, gone tomorrow, but there was also the matter of expense. Almost all the gardens had lost their railings during the war, and replacing them was beyond the pockets of many residents and of little concern to square owners--no fewer than eight of whom rubbed salt into the wound by announcing plans to build garages under their squares. That never happened, but a decade later restoration of railings was still no more than a subject of discussion. Eventually, heavy lobbying by the Kensington Society brought relief. The Council was persuaded to urge the London Boroughs Association to seek amendment of legislation which prevented local authorities from giving financial assistance for the care of squares. The amendment was obtained and the result is evident today.

Since the battle of the tower blocks in the early 1960s the Society's attention has in the main been focussed on less titanic issues, but in 1977 plans by the Russian Embassy to develop the old Barracks site in Kensington Church Street sounded another major call to action. The Russians, seeking more accommodation, had asked the Crown Commissioners for the Barracks site, their plans for it being anything but modest. They included a tower block containing 60 flats, a school, gymnasium, swimming pool, sauna, theatre, dressing rooms, car park, garden area and tennis court. And, with predictable concern for seclusion--or secrecy--envisaged a retaining wall no less than 60 feet high around the site. At a second site, 6-7 Kensington Palace Gardens, which they also hoped to occupy, they proposed a prestige building about the height of the Royal Garden Hotel. This would have involved the demolition of the two houses there, both listed Wyatt buildings.

Their plans alarmed the Crown Commissioners, who offered instead a site at the north end of Kensington Palace Gardens. To this the Russians declared they wanted that site and the other two. The Kensington Society had consistently argued that such a central location as the Kensington Church Street site should be developed for the benefit of the people of the area, not for that of a not particularly friendly foreign government. The Society backed this with a leaflet

campaign and a public meeting which drew an audience in excess of 1,000. The British government got the message and the Russians were told to scrap their plans.

What else? Well, another 1000-plus audience at the Town Hall, in June, 1998—the subject, the proposal to convert 27 acres of Kensington Gardens into a memorial garden to Princess Diana. A £10 million project expected to attract five million visitors annually—horrifying prospect for Kensingtonians! It did not happen, due in part, at least, to the campaigning of the Society. Another victory—but doubtless many more battles lie ahead in the next 50 years.

CELEBRATION

The Kensington Society will mark its 50 years of existence with a party at the Central Library, Phillimore Walk, W8, on Wednesday, June 11, from 6.30 pm. Invitations will be sent to all members. A small exhibition, reflecting aspects of the Society's work over the past half century, will be on view at the Library for several weeks from the date of the party.

The new Council governance —is it working?

Councillors and their senior officials are to be congratulated on the fact that the Royal Borough is one of only 22 English councils awarded an Excellent rating in the Audit Commission's first-ever local authority performance league tables, published in December. It means they will be set free from Whitehall, and enabled to spend their money as they see fit. It also means that the new system of governance needs to ensure that the public at large are better informed about Council activities than is the case at present, as Michael Bach explains.

The way the Council operates has changed considerably following the Local Government Act 2000. Most of the familiar committees have gone, apart from the Planning Services and Licensing Committees, with all the strategic decisions made by a ten-man Cabinet, which includes the Council's Leader. Other 'key decisions' are made by individual Cabinet ministers, acting rather like Ministers in a national government, with their decisions subject only to consideration by the particular Overview and Scrutiny Committee assigned to consider each Cabinet member's area of responsibility.

This new system has left councillors confused—unless they are Cabinet members. The rest feel they now have few committee functions and thus very little to do. The old committee system is recalled with a degree of affection. They could, of course, become more active in engaging their constituents—something the new system is supposed to encourage.

But councillors are not the only ones confused, members of the public are too, with amenity societies, residents associations and community groups finding difficulty in getting to grips with the new style of governance. They simply do not understand the decision-making process. An example is the Holland Park playground. The highly-articulate group fighting the proposals for the playground turned out in force at the Planning Services Committee which gave

permission for the development, yet at the subsequent Cabinet meeting, where the real decision to proceed was made, not a single member of the public was present.

Why don't they understand the system? Participation in local affairs is not everyone's idea of fun, but there is no reason why it should seem like a 'black box', a mystery—as it appears to be for 99 per cent of residents. All the signs are that decision-making has been removed from the public arena and is now practised in the privacy of Cabinet members' living rooms. The public find it hard to know what decisions are going to be made, when and by whom, let alone seeing any way to influence the outcome.

Yet there has never before been so much information available as there now is on the Council's website. But not everyone has access to it, and those who do still need to know what they are looking for, and how to get at it. The Council has recently completed a review of how their Governance Services section is working and this has shown that a lot more needs to be done to inform the public and raise awareness as to how decisions are made, to make clear when they are going to be made, and to garner more publicity for decisions by way of the local press and the Borough Newsletter. People need a training course to enable them to participate effectively.

At the moment, therefore, there seems to be a 'democratic deficit'—a lack of public awareness, let alone opportunities for involvement in decision making. This is bad for local democracy because if the main residents groups cannot get to grips with the system how can they perform their watchdog role. The Council needs to try harder to open up the process and so ensure an informed and engaged electorate. At the moment they are doing well compared with other boroughs, but if an involved element of local society is to be ensured, information needs to be more open, transparent and accessible. That is a real challenge.

Annual General Meeting 2002

Guest speaker at the Kensington Society's 49th AGM was Lord Norwich, Chairman of the British affiliate of the World Munuments Fund. The meeting, on April 24, 2002, drew a large number of members to the Convent, Kensington Square. Introduced by the President, Sir Ronald Arculus, as a former Foreign Office colleague, Lord Norwich, whose talk preceded the main business of the meeting, explained that since its inception the World Monuments Fund, founded 35 years ago in New York, had helped to restore some 120 sites in various parts of the world. Slides of a number of these were displayed at the AGM. At the moment, said Lord Norwich, 100 buildings around the world were on a special Watch List, those in Britain including Selby Abbey, Stowe, Castle Sinclair, in Caithness, St George's Church, Bloomsbury, and St George's Hall, Liverpool. The Fund, a privately driven venture, acted as a catalyst, itself providing an injection of funds for given projects, then persuading others, local and national governments among them, to contribute further. This approach had proved a considerable success, said Lord Norwich, who concluded with an appeal for greater awareness of the Fund.



From left to right, The President, Sir Ronald Arculus, with guest speaker, Viscount Norwich and the Mayor, Councillor Tony Holt

Subsequently the minutes of the AGM of 2001 were confirmed and the Annual Report and Accounts seconded and adopted. All existing officers and members of the Executive Committee were re-elected, and three new members co-opted, Mrs B Hopkins, Mr A Land and Mr G Wightman. The resignation was reported of Mr Harry Morgan, after 12 years as a member of the Executive Committee. Both he and Sir Angus Stirling, announced the Chairman, Robin Price, were joining the Society's Council.

In his report to the meeting Mr Price referred to a number of matters which had developed subsequent to the publication of the Annual Report. Concerning the **change of Council governance** from the committee system to the Cabinet mode which now prevails, the Chairman said that one result was that engagement with councillors and Council officers before decisions were made was now considerably less than under the previous system. Steps, however, were being taken to improve matters. The first was a prospective half yearly series of meetings between a joint delegation of the Kensington and Chelsea Societies and the Leader of the Council. The first joint meeting in February 2002 had been a success. Second was a seat, shared with the Chelsea Society, on the steering group of the governmentally-inspired Kensington & Chelsea Partnership. The purpose of the Partnership was to consider long-term improvement of facilities within the Borough, especially in deprived areas. It would involve input from a range of interests, including police, local health services, businesses, community and faith groups, and individual local residents. Ms Celia Rees-Jenkins, Vice Chairman of the Society, would represent the Kensington and Chelsea Societies on the Partnership committee.

On the matter of **Government-led initiatives for change**, Mr Price expressed the view that the paper on *Major Infrastructure Projects*, though developer-led, was not likely to affect the borough. However, a second major planning paper, **Delivering Fundamental Change**, could do so since although it sought to clear up anomalies and delays in the planning process, it failed to replace adequately the stringent policies laid down in the recently revised Unitary Development Plan. It could thus attract the greed of developers.

The siting of the **Princess Diana Fountain** near the Serpentine swimming area owed much to the efforts of the President and Secretary of the Society to ensure that a site in Kensington

Gardens was not selected, said the Chairman. Both deserved to be congratulated.

Letters had been sent to local societies affiliated to the Kensington Society, and to other local amenity societies, indicating that the Society's support would be forthcoming, if required, in matters of concern to them such as planning principles and similar major concerns. It was hoped that further cooperation could be reported at the next AGM. The Kensington Society wished to be seen as driving in a **positive** direction by encouraging appropriate modern architecture, well designed streetscape and all else relevant to planning and amenity. The Society—and the Royal Borough itself—were too often inaccurately seen as exclusively lovers of the tame and the pastiche. The Society hoped in future to play a part in the Borough's Environmental Awards Scheme and also to seek other ways to stimulate lively interest in the appearance of Kensington.

On the subject of excellent design, Mr Price added, the Council was to be congratulated on its **re-designed High Street**, with its trend-setting clean and clutter-free lines, plus attractive York paving.

Cycling in Kensington Gardens was to be reviewed with the conclusion of the trial period at the end of March, 2002. The experiment, said the Chairman, had been less than satisfactory in that some cyclists had ranged well beyond the permitted paths, had sometimes collided with pedestrians or their dogs, and had sometimes become abusive when challenged. Although the Royal Parks police were prosecuting offenders found using no-cycling routes through the Gardens on more than one occasion, much more careful thought needed to be applied to the problem. A show of hands at the meeting demonstrated that the bulk of the audience was strongly opposed to all cycling in Kensington Gardens.

Plans for **two memorials to the late Gay Christiansen** were announced by Mr Price in conclusion. [1] A pair of lanterns on either side of the west door of St Mary Abbots Church, which she attended from time to time and where her memorial service was held. The cost would be around £2,000. [2] A Kensington Society Founder's Prize, to be awarded annually to a pupil or pupils of secondary schools within Kensington for a special project related to the borough. A sub-committee was discussing precise details. Mrs Christiansen had left £20,000 to the Society and it was proposed to dedicate the

income—some £1,000 at five per cent per annum—to funding the prize. A further £15,000 had been left to the Council for the upkeep of the Princess Alice Garden at the Town Hall. Any member wishing to contribute to either memorial was invited to do so either at the end of the meeting, or by post.

Robert Vigars, Chairman of the Planning sub committee, followed Mr Price to comment on the RBKC's proposal to reconstruct Holland Park school. The sub-committee was troubled by the present scheme since it would infringe on open space around the school with its proposal to build residential property on part of the land. The purpose of this was to provide funds to assist the school's reconstruction. The Kensington Society had made strong representation to the Council on the matter.

The AGM was brought to a close following a question and answer session. Among the matters raised during this session were the need for the Society to recruit more and younger members; the discomfort caused to women pedestrians with thin-soled shoes by the studded paving stones designed to indicate to blind persons the beginning and end of pedestrian crossings; the cessation of all negotiations concerning the derelict Iran-owned site in Queensgate since the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, and the problem of enforcing a compulsory purchase order on 96 Gloucester Road, which has been shored up for 12 years, because 11 leaseholders are still living there.

Planning and Conservation in 2002

The High Court agreed early in 2002 that there should be no helicopters landing on **Harrod's** roof. Final approval was given by the Council for the conversion into flats of the **Queen Elizabeth building** in Campden Hill Road, and later in the year the redevelopment of the unloved **Sir John Atkins building**. The Council issued guidelines for **Holland Park School**, presaging further construction in the Campden Hill area.

In the spring, John D Wood advertised a startling **new £15 million house in Addison Road**: there are no reports yet of its purchaser's identity. **Debenham House**, the equally startling De Morgan tiled house further north in the same road, opened its doors in late August for a rare look. It was worth it.

Refusal of planning permission protected, among others, listed buildings in **Campden Hill Square** and **Hortensia Road**. **Conservation** areas [**Oxford Gardens**, **St Quintin**, **Norland** and **Ladbroke**] are being extended. New conservation areas are proposed for **Lexham Gardens** and **Kensal Green Cemetery**. Public space near **Gloucester Road tube station** is being enhanced. Arguments continue as to how best to improve the area around **South Kensington tube station** and the station itself.

The year as a whole has seen a significant level of development proposals from **North Kensington**. This seems likely to be the pattern for the future as the area north of Westway continues to attract buyer interest.

The **Notting Hill Carnival** changed its route slightly. Improved traffic and parking controls, introduced last year, brought further relief to affected householders and businesses. The chances of radical rerouting—for example to Hyde Park—are low.

After many years of looking after planning issues for the Society **Bob Vigars** has retired as Chairman of the planning group. We have sadly lost **Mrs Bee Hopkins**, who has moved to Australia. **Robin Price** and **Robert Meadows** remain as members.

Anthony Land

HAPPENINGS-2002

NEW TREES

The Duchess of Gloucester explains a point to the Society's Chairman, **Robin Price**, at a tree planting ceremony in Kensington



Gardens. The event, in May, was in connection with the Prince of Wales' Royal Parks Tree Appeal, launched in 1987 after the parks had suffered heavy losses in the hurricane in October of that year. The Prince's Appeal has over the years raised more than £750,000, with donated trees coming from individuals, companies and voluntary organisations such as the Kensington Society. The Kensington Gardens ceremony saw the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester plant the final sweet chestnut tree in an avenue of such trees flanking the Dial Walk, the path running from the main gates of Kensington Palace towards the Kensington Road. The Duke and Duchess, who themselves donated a tree, were joined at the ceremony by a number of sponsors together with members of the Royal Parks Agency. Several other parks have benefited from the scheme, notably Hyde Park, where 76 sweet chestnut trees now form a new avenue in Rotten Row to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Queen.

OLD MUSIC

An evening concert in celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee was sponsored by the Kensington Society at St Mary Abbots Church on July 15. [See Hon Secretary's Report] The event, compèred by **Roderick Swanston**, Reader in Historical Studies at the Royal College of Music, drew a large invited audience representing some 180 groups and organisations within the Royal Borough. It featured the **London Handel Players**, and the **Floreat Sonus** choir under the direction of **James Gorick**. The works of six 16th-17th century composers were performed, the six being Henry Purcell, William Byrd, Thomas Morley, John Farmer, John Bennet and Thomas Weekes.



Among those attending the concert were, left to right, Mr Anthony Rudd and his wife, Ethne, Honorary Secretary of the Kensington Society; James Gorick Director of Floreat Sonus; the Mayor, Councillor Professor Sir Anthony Coates; the Rev Gilleen Craig, Vicar of St Mary Abbots, and Roderick Swanston, of the Royal College of Music, who compèred the event.

NEW VICE PRESIDENT

General Sir David Ramsbotham GCB CBE, Chief Inspector of Prisons from 1995 to 2001, has joined the Earl of

Snowdon as a Vice-President of the Society. The post became vacant upon the death of Mrs Gay Christiansen. Sir David, a graduate of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and an Honorary Fellow of the college, joined the Army as a National Serviceman in 1952. He subsequently took a regular commission in the Rifle Brigade and served in a variety of posts in England, Germany, Kenya, Borneo and Northern Ireland until retirement in 1993. He commanded 2 Royal Green Jackets and later 39 Infantry Brigade in Belfast, 3 Armoured Division in Germany from 1984-87 and the UK Field Army from 1987 to 1990. His final appointment was as Adjutant General from 1990-93 during which period he was also an ADC [General] to the Queen. After retirement he wrote papers for the UK government and the UN Security Council on the management of UN peacekeeping operations. He also chaired Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust. His recreations include shooting, sailing, gardening, history and art history. He and his wife have lived in Kelso Place since 1977.

NEW COUNCILLORS

Two new members have been appointed to the Society's Council, they are **Sir Angus Stirling**, and **Harry Morgan**.

Sir Angus, who lives in Notting Hill, has been a Life Member of the Society since 1985. He is Chairman of the Greenwich Foundation for the Old Royal Naval College, a charitable Trust set up in 1996 to manage the college following the departure of the Naval Staff College. Immediately prior to that appointment he was Director General of the National Trust for 12 years. He has wide-ranging interests in the arts and the heritage, and before joining the National Trust served for nine years as Deputy Secretary-General of the Arts Council. Among the non-executive posts he has held was membership of the Board of the Royal Opera House from 1979-96, where he served as Chairman during his last five years on that body.

In the past Sir Angus has been Senior Policy Adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and Chairman of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. His present activities include Trusteeship of the World Monuments Fund in Britain, the Samuel Courtauld Trust, and the Preservation Trust for Stowe. He has recently succeeded the late Sir Peter Parker as Honorary President of the Friends of Holland Park.

Harry Morgan was a member of the Society's Executive Committee for 12 years until moving from Kensington in 2001. He had lived in the Royal Borough for over 50 years. Under the pseudonym Harry James he wrote the *Grapevine* column for the *London Weekly Times* series of local newspapers during his 15 years as a journalist. This column, dealing mainly with the impact on the quality of everyday life caused by planning and licencing decisions, achieved something of a cult following.

Harry was born in Alexandria, Egypt, where his father, a born-and-bred Londoner, was an engineer with Imperial Airways. Harry himself worked in an aircraft factory for much of the war, before joining the Royal Navy, where for more than three years he saw service in the Suez Canal zone, Palestine and Lebanon. Upon demobilisation he pursued a business career for the next twenty years, latterly running companies involved with the entertainment industry. His years as a full-time journalist ended when the *London Weekly Times* group of newspapers was sold to new owners, when he opted for semi-retirement. He now lives in Putney.

Before Gore House

*Gore House, upon whose site the Albert Hall now stands, had a distinguished history from its erection in the 1760s until its demise a century later. Among its occupants were Admiral Lord Rodney, a hero of the Napoleonic wars, William Wilberforce, the anti-slavery campaigner, and the Countess of Blessington, whose salon attracted some of the most prominent men in the land during the first half of the 19th century. But Gore House was originally known as Sutton House, the home of Daniel Sutton, medical pioneer and great-great-great grandfather of a member of the Kensington Society, **Anthony Butcher**, who recounts below the fascinating career of his eminent ancestor.*



Gore House: Picture courtesy of Kensington Public Library

Daniel Sutton moved into the newly built house in 1767, and from there carried out the successful Suttonian method of inoculation against smallpox. Thus he was fighting the disease well before Edward Jenner's celebrated discovery of vaccination in 1796.

Inoculations had taken place in England since 1721 but were clumsily performed and were not too successful, so that smallpox

remained a terrible scourge. In 1757, however, Daniel's father, Robert, who also inoculated patients, found that the smaller the incision the more likely it was to be successful. His son, practising then at Ingatestone in Essex, proceeded to simplify his father's method and in 1764 was called in when the disease struck Maldon, a village on the Blackwater Estuary. A subscription had been raised there as soon as the first case of smallpox was detected, allowing every inhabitant of Maldon to be inoculated. As a result not one patient died, and three weeks later there were no further cases.

The success of this first 'mass' inoculation was a breakthrough, and Daniel's practice increased rapidly. In 1764 his income totalled 2,000 guineas, two years later it had risen to 6,000 guineas. [One guinea at that time was today's equivalent of £65.] Poorer patients were sometimes treated free, being sent home immediately afterwards, but the charge for in-patients was usually between three and seven guineas. The fact that some people were sent home immediately after treatment led to Daniel appearing at the Chelmsford Assizes in 1765, charged with causing the spread of smallpox. But he was acquitted by the Grand Jury.

Now 32, his thoughts turned to London, and in March 1767 he was installed at Sutton House. The neighbouring property was Grove House, then the home of Anne Pitt, sister of the Earl of Chatham and aunt of William Pitt who, a few years later, would become Prime Minister. The south front of these houses overlooked about two acres of grounds, which sloped down to the market gardens of Brompton, with views of the distant Surrey hills. To the north was Kensington Palace, the grounds of which had been opened to the public at certain times since the reign of George the First half a century earlier.

The diary entry of Lady Mary Coke for June 7, 1767, notes 'the little Prince of Brunswick is inoculated by Sutton.' The child, born the previous year, was a nephew of King George the Third. In August of that year Daniel Sutton was married, to Rachel Westley. Four days before the event his application for a Coat of Arms had been granted by the College of Arms.

Word of the Suttonian method of inoculation had spread beyond the shores of Britain by this time, and in December 1767 came an inquiry from Vienna on behalf of the Empress Maria Theresa. The official reply from King George's doctors declared 'the



Daniel Sutton; portrait attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds.
The Wellcome Library.

art seems to be carried out to very great perfection.'

Daniel now had his portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, but his London practice fell short of expectations and there were complaints that 'men in mean circumstances' sometimes came to the house. Inoculations at Kensington Gore were thus abandoned, to be continued elsewhere. Sutton House was still a family residence,

however, and two children, Daniel and Frances, were born in 1770 and 1771. But when the children's mother died in 1773 Daniel Sutton moved his family elsewhere a few months later.

Meanwhile his brother Joseph was inoculating in Paris, and Lady Mary Coke's Versailles diary for 1774 records that King Louis the Fifteenth had smallpox and that on May 8, 'when the physicians began to despair they advised sending for Sutton.' He came, but it was too late to save the monarch, who died two days later.

Daniel Sutton died in 1819, as the *Gentlemen's Magazine* recorded in its March, 1819 edition.

'Lately at his house in Hart Street, Bloomsbury, in his 84th year, Daniel Sutton Esq, formerly of Sutton House, Kensington Gore, and since of the Maisonnette, Ingatestone Essex,

'The benefits which the world has derived from Mr Sutton's practice have been duly appreciated, and will cause his name and memory ever to be recollected with respect and honourable distinction.'

The Pick of 2002

Robert Meadows, architect, member of the Society's Executive Committee, and one of the judges of the annual competition to find the best building work in the Royal Borough during last year, reports on the outcome of the latest contest.

The Council's **Environment Awards Scheme** marked 25 years of existence in 2002 with a crop of entries well distributed across the Borough. A preface to the report on this year's event declared: 'The Royal Borough possesses some of the finest buildings, groups of buildings, and townscapes in the country. The Council is proud of this heritage and is concerned to ensure that new developemnt is of appropriate quality. To this end, since 1977, the Council has made annual awards to schemes which it considers set an example in their inherent quality and respect for, or contribution to, their setting. The awards are grouped into categories and aim to encourage design excellence at a small scale.'

Winner of the **award for the best new building** was a residential property at **the corner of Kensington High Street and Russell Road**, close to Olympia. This is an important corner site at one of the entry points to the Borough, and the building, with its associated



Best new building. 388 Kensington High Street/Russell Road, W14.
Picture Courtesy: RBKC.

public garden, was thought to be an appropriate addition to the townscape. In the opinion of the judges, the block, designed by the architects Acanthus Lawrence & Wrightson, was 'a dignified landmark building.'

A **commendation** in the same category went to a new office building in the north of the Borough at **125-135 Freston Road, W 10**, the judges commented that it 'does a lot to raise an area which was very unsightly.'

In the **commercial building** category two contrasting schemes were notable. The new building at **Chelsea College** was **commended**, although it might be considered by some to be out of scale with its setting in the Kings Road. The other scheme was a development in **Symonds Street, Chelsea**, the architects being Paul Davis and Partners. This was part re-building, part restoration and has been done to a very high standard, well deserving the **award** it received. 'Beautiful to look at,' said the judges.

The conservation/restoration category is perhaps the hardest to judge, many schemes reach a passable standard but few reach the higher level needed for an award. **St John's Church, Ladbroke Grove** is, with its distinctive spire, a landmark building in the townscape. The recent restoration and cleaning work done there was **commended**. By contrast the imaginative **new approach steps and ramps to the main entrance to the Victoria and Albert Museum** were considered worthy of an **award**. 'Spacious and dignified' was the judges' comment. Architects: Pringle Richards Sharratt.

Some works are judged in the category of **general environmental improvement** and here **awards** were made for the **new railings at St Mary Abbots garden**, designer: McCoy Associates; and for the **new wall and railings to housing in West Row, W10**, designer Reginald Kerr-Bell. The latter project emphasises the importance of boundary treatment in the townscape. A **new mosaic** on the walls of the **alleyway at the north end of Kensington Church Street**, near Notting Hill Gate, was **commended**.

A special **award** was given to the **memorial garden** to the **victims of the Ladbroke Grove train disaster**. This has turned a left-over piece of land off Canal Way into a suitable place for contemplation overlooking the railway, with paving, planting and a memorial obelisk on which are carved the names of those who died. Architects: The Project Centre Ltd.



Canal Way, W10: Memorial to Ladbroke Grove train crash. Courtesy RBKC.

Looking to next year's awards scheme the Council is inviting nominations for work done during 2003. Nomination forms can be obtained from the Planning Information Office at the Town Hall. Tel: 020 7361 2079/2080.

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.

School-70 Years Ago

In 1932 Sydney Creamer became a pupil at St Mary Abbots school, Kensington, today he runs a successful Jaguar car dealership barely three hundred yards from the school. In this article he recalls aspects of life at St Mary Abbots in the 1930s, and tells of the successful adult careers of some of his fellow pupils.



Any different today? St Mary Abbots School, June, 1924.

Courtesy: Kensington Public Library

VICE-CHANCELLOR: Mrs. Cecil Ross-Jenkins O.B.E.

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. Ethne Rudd

When I was about seven years old I transferred from a school in Chiswick to St Mary Abbots. The headmaster of the boys section there was Ernest Wade, who was unofficially known as 'Boozer'

because of his florid complexion. His staff consisted of four other masters. One of these was Mr Brawn, who was very popular and who gave 'swimming lessons' during the lunch period, with boys lying on their stomachs on piles of coats placed on milk crates, trying to do the breast stroke and the crawl under his instruction! Then there was Mr Gauld, who had his class recite arithmetic tables every morning. You couldn't hear yourself think while that ritual went on. Mr Hughes, a younger man, I did not like, for one reason. With the initial of my first name being S he took to calling me 'Screamer'. I hated it. Years later, while looking through a dictionary, I found the word 'screamer' described as 'a fine example of anything'. If only I had known that at school.

Mr Brooks was the master who taught me to write, by copying his beautiful script from the blackboard, but if my attention wandered during his lessons I was liable to find a piece of chalk flying in my direction—and he had a very good aim. Mr Brooks was, in fact, an absolute tyrant, but always very fair. He taught chess in the lunch break, and some of us went quite a way in various competitions. In summer at lunch time he would organise games of rounders, often calling for the ball and throwing it as hard as he could at someone running between the bases. That hurt—but he always aimed low.

Physical punishment was not uncommon in those days at St Mary Abbots. A rap on the knuckles was the usual result of a minor offence, although a slap around the face was the favoured treatment of one nameless teacher. More serious incidents could result in caning, usually on the hand—and did it sting! I remember I had it once and came home and told my father—that earned me another good hiding for misbehaving at school. The real punishment of having the cane was the shame and dishonour involved, most boys found it difficult to face their fellow classmates afterwards.

Thanks to 'Boozer' Wade, who took a serious interest in music, St Mary Abbots was a member of the London Schools Choir, which he led. One exciting time with the choir was when we accompanied the cast of Hiawatha at the Albert Hall. We were all packed away in 'the gods', hundreds of us, and you should have heard the noise. I recall the open coffin of Minihaha, Hiawatha's wife, being hauled up the side of the Albert Hall with drapes giving the impression of a massive butterfly, and at the same time we were singing like mad, with 'Boozer' doing his best to conduct us.

The routine at St Mary Abbots saw us leaving the school premises three times a week for outside activities. On Tuesday mornings we had woodwork classes at The Fox School, Notting Hill Gate, where the master, whose name just happened to be Wood, had fashioned a device looking like a banjo to wack us on our bottoms for misbehaviour. It didn't hurt much though, it was too wide and flat to do that, but again there was the sense of shame. On Wednesday afternoons there was cricket or football, depending on the time of year, at the Coalbrookdalegate Field, just past the Albert Memorial. Before games, however, there was the weekly spelling test, conducted by Mr Brooks, who would write 50 words on the blackboard to be learnt by the following Wednesday. Get three words wrong and instead of sport you spent the afternoon in the classroom writing out the misspelt words on a sheet of paper again and again. I didn't care much if I failed because I was never very excited about football or cricket. I would write the words out in large handwriting and then spend the rest of the afternoon reading, while the others were probably having to play in the rain. The next day, Thursday, after morning prayers there was the trek up through Holland Walk to the Lancaster Road swimming baths. I remember 'Boozer', on one of his rare appearances there, cheering me when I managed to swim a width of the baths. If you had a good voice, or were fond of music, he would take an extra interest in you.

The annual school sports day, at Perks Field above Kensington Palace, was an event I did enjoy. Going there in those days we simply marched right through the Palace without the slightest interruption by police or anyone else. It was an exciting day and somehow the sun always shone. I managed to win the sack race once, and did so again at the London Schools Sports at the White City. My father was very unimpressed by my victories in such a humble event.

In those days class sizes were around 20 boys, [not the 30-40 common today] with every subject taught by the same master during the course of the school year—religion, arithmetic, geography, English, history, science and, of course, physical training and swimming. It said something for the masters' abilities and standards, especially since they also often gave lunch time tuition as well.

The period 1935-37 was particularly memorable for us St Mary Abbots pupils because there was a series of royal events to

which we were given seats in the stands lining the procession routes. First there was the silver jubilee of King George the Fifth and Queen Mary, then the funeral of the King the following year, then in 1937 the coronation of King George the Sixth. The monarchy was held in very high esteem in those days, and there was a great sense of loyalty to the country as well.

Closely associated with the school was Church Walk, where there were two sweetshops, Stebbings, where papers were also sold and where I had a job as a paper boy, and The Tuck Shop. It was a tradition that the more senior pupils would meet regularly in the Tuck Shop after school and drink lemonade. This was a cherished activity, not to be taken lightly.

At the age of 11 my time at the school ended, I had passed the exam later known as the 11-plus, and moved on to the Regent Street Polytechnic Craft School. Those who failed the exam stayed on at St Mary Abbots until they got jobs at 14. Some of these were encouraged to take up seven-year apprenticeships and several of my co-pupils were apprenticed as dental mechanics.

The outbreak of war put an end to my studies and I got a job in a drawing office. It also saw most St Mary Abbots pupils evacuated to the village of Box, in Wiltshire. Everybody seemingly had nice memories of Box when they returned.

Several of my fellow pupils went on to very successful professional careers. Ron Stebbings, for example, went to America, took a Ph D in physics, and eventually became chairman of the Space Science Department at Rice University, Houston, and a Vice President of the University. Geoff Nicholls also went to America, where he became Special Deputy Insurance Commissioner for the state of California. His two brothers did well in America too. At home, Roy Parkinson worked as a lecturer at the Imperial College, while William Smith [Smut] joined the army as a boy soldier, rose to the rank of colonel, and later commanded Regent's Park barracks.

It's very satisfying nowadays to walk past St Mary Abbots school and see the old building, with its two figures on the north side, looking just the same as in 1932—except that the wrought iron railings have long gone, taken away in the war to make armaments. I am very proud to have been a pupil there.

Kensington High Street--The Home Straight

Michael Bach was the Society's representative on the High Street Working Party which deliberated for some five years on improvements to the street. But he has followed the ups and downs of the planning process for rather longer than that.

Looking through past Annual Reports I realise that I have been chronicling the progress of the scheme to improve Kensington High Street for the last eight years. The good news is that we are now in the home straight. It is time to take stock.

The project was a long time in gestation. We first started looking at what could be done in the **mid-1970s**, when the planners came up with the hair-brained scheme of making the High Street into a covered shopping mall. It never progressed beyond the drawing board--thank goodness.

The 1980s.

The next stage was a Working Party, which ran from 1985 to 1990. This at least did achieved something.

[1] It produced the first straight-across pedestrian crossing from outside Boots to Hornton Street--getting rid, in the process, of the two-stage crossing with a 'cage' in the middle of the road.

[2] It pioneered raised surfaces at the junctions of Wright's Lane and Campden Hill Road, which reduced intimidation of pedestrians by cars turning in and out of the High Street.

[3] It cleared the clutter of signs put up by the Borough and the GLC.

The project at last.

But it was the threat of the major shopping centre planned in 1995 for the White City which galvanised the Council into action--the High Street needed an overhaul to improve its attractiveness and competitiveness. After a succession of attempts to draw up a strategy, and getting consultants to draw up an urban design scheme, the Council decided to proceed with an in-house scheme. The main features of the scheme were:

[1] To continue to cater for the current levels of morning rush-hour traffic flows--this precluded any proposals for major pavement widening.

[2] To increase the number of pedestrian crossings and, wherever possible, to make them one-stage crossings, with no 'cages' in the middle of the road.

[3] To repave the High Street in a single material--York stone--so that with granite kerbs, a simple, elegant finish would be achieved.

[4] To introduce new modern lighting illuminating not only the road but also the pavement.

[5] To achieve a 50 per cent reduction in street furniture--reducing the amount of guard-railing, telephone boxes, signs and other clutter.

[6] And overall--to win prizes.

Getting there..

The last two years have seen a radical change in the High Street. It has been a very complex project, and realising this, the Council employed a project management consultant to programme it all. Some things have taken longer, a new source of York stone paving had to be found, for instance, but the real delay and extra cost has been created by the re-laying of gas mains at the eastern end of the High Street and Kensington Church Street. This work, by Transco, was apparently undertaken on the instructions of the Health and Safety Executive. It has extended the High Street project by more than six months and caused considerable traffic congestion. However, everything should be finished by June.

...and the result is..

We set out to win prizes. This meant the project needed a champion, someone with a vision for the High Street. Councillor Daniel Moylan has been the main driver over the past two years. He has been involved in the detailed design, using it as a prototype for transforming the quality of the Borough's streetscape over the next ten years. He has been prepared to experiment, getting rid, for example, of most of the guard-railing, especially the 'pig-pens' in the middle of the road.

The results, when finished, will be spectacular, although many people are already taking the new lighting and paving for granted. Awards are starting to be won for the lighting, and for the cycle parking in the central islands. When it is finished it will surely win several more awards, and is already regarded as a national demonstration project. We can again be proud of our High Street, one of the best in the country.

Being visually attractive may not be enough, however. People using the High Street have to feel comfortable and safe. We are in competition with car-free shopping centres such as White City. We still need to resolve the conflict between pedestrians and traffic, especially where pedestrians cross the side-road junctions.

It has been a long wait, but it has been worth it. This time next year we will know whether the rest of the world shares our view of a successful outcome.

New Dawn for Drinkers— New Trouble for the Rest?

As announced in the Queen's Speech last November, the government is committed to introducing 24-hour licensing for pubs, clubs and bars, and round-the-clock sales of alcohol by off-licences. Nigel Wilkins, who concerns himself with licensing matters on behalf of the Kensington Society, finds more minuses than pluses in the plans.

To the majority of the population, especially those in busy city centres where there is also a lively tourist trade, the government's initiative poses a major threat to their quality of life. In Kensington and Chelsea there are already considerably more licensed premises than can be supported solely by local residents, and quite a few of these currently have late-night licences—often granted in the face of strong objections by the Kensington Society and other local residents associations.

There are two particular issues of concern in the Royal Borough, one being the fact that neighbouring Westminster operates a stricter approach when granting late night licenses, the other is that Kensington and Chelsea fall outside the area covered by the new 'congestion' charge. This latter point means that bar owners are likely to consider these two areas more fruitful in terms of new ventures than the West End.

The government's widely publicised proposals for liberalisation of licensing laws are based on a number of misconceptions and are likely to face stiff opposition, not least from a number of backbench Labour MPs with seats in inner city areas. Freedom to buy a drink at any time of the day or night does not actually enjoy widespread support, as was shown by a National Opinion survey conducted in 2000 when the majority of people questioned said they would like to see opening hours left unchanged.

Nor is there any reason why a free-for-all in opening hours should lead to 'staggered' closing times, as is hoped by the police, because once one bar decides to lengthen its opening hours the rest are likely to follow suit. Thus the same level of noise, or even greater, will be generated when they all close, and it will occur at a later hour, causing more serious disturbance to local residents than at present.

The government promises to give residents a stronger voice in the decision to grant licences, but this will prove largely meaningless. Although local councils, rather than magistrates, will be responsible in future for granting licences, the circumstances in which councils are able to refuse 24-hour licences will be limited by legislation. The government also makes extravagant claims about the cost-saving that its streamlined approach to licensing will achieve. Unfortunately this is largely illusory since it fails to take into account the additional costs that will be borne by the police in monitoring licensed premises. While the police will be given extra powers to enable them to close bars that are causing nuisance, this work is hardly a welcome feature when set against the other more useful tasks they could be undertaking elsewhere.

Protracted legal battles between residents and licensees of troublesome premises are inevitable. Although local councils will take primary responsibility for granting licences, appeals against their decisions may be made to the magistrates courts. Thus, no doubt, the human rights of those who want a good night's sleep will be regularly tested in court against the rights of those who prefer downing pints in the early hours.

The government claims that substantial additional earnings will be generated from the tourist industry through license reform. This ignores the fact that most tourists also want a good night's sleep, and many hotels are located near the very bars that will be allowed to stay open all hours.

EVENTS 2003

Wednesday 19 March 2003 Lord Leighton and Leighton House

An opportunity for an in-depth visit to one of our Royal Borough museums. We will have a guided tour and a talk on Lord Leighton [1830-96] and on the treasures and pictures in this remarkable home, created by George Aitchison for the unusual living and working needs of this quintessentially Victorian artist.

**Meet at 3pm in the hall of Leighton House, £7.50 per person
12 Holland Park Road W14.**

Wednesday 9 April 2003

The De Morgan Collection Wandsworth, SW18

A lecture and visit to the newly re-housed De Morgan Collection, formerly in Old Battersea House, comprising the pottery of the novelist, potter and painter, William De Morgan [1839-1917], and the evocative Symbolist paintings of his wife, Evelyn De Morgan [1855-1919] whom Queen Mary regarded as 'a beautiful spirit'. The collection is large, quite extraordinary, and hugely worth seeing in its new and appropriate setting. Part of the fee goes to the De Morgan Foundation.

Meet at the West Hill Library, West Hill.

Wandsworth SW18 at 2.30 pm.

£10 per person

[Bus, 28 and others: or East Putney

Underground {District} and 7 minutes walk.]

Wednesday 14 May 2003

Fo Guang Temple

All Saints Church

Two one-hour guided visits on the same day, allowing time for lunch in between. In the morning we see the Buddhist Temple at 84 Margaret Street and in the afternoon there will be a tour of All Saints Church at 7 Margaret Street. As it's W1 there is time for lunch where you please at midday, as well as some shopping.

Meet at 11 am Temple

£10 per person

2.30 pm Church

Thursday 12 June 2003

Buscot Park, Faringdon, Oxon

Following on from a visit to the London Faringdon Collection in 2002, we have arranged an afternoon visit to Buscot House--a late 18th century neo-classical house. It contains further fine paintings and pictures belonging to the Faringdon Trust. The grounds include an Italianate water garden. National Trust members should remember to bring their cards for free entry.

Meet at 12.30 pm outside

15 Kensington Square. £24 per person [covers transport only]

KENSINGTON SOCIETY BOOKING FORM

Date	No.	Name of Event	Fee payable
Total £			

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

YOUR NAME
(block letters please)

ADDRESS
.....
.....

Telephone number

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

Book Review

Before Bloomsbury; the 1890s diaries of three Kensington ladies. Edited by Anthony Curtis. Published by the Eighteen Nineties Society. Price, hardback £20; paperback £10. [Both prices include postage and packing.]

From this little-known society comes a short book reflecting everyday life in Kensington during the last decade of the 19th century—everyday life, that is, among the very-well-to-do. It was the time when the future Virginia Woolf and her sister, Vanessa, were still breathing the rarified air of Kensington as members of the Stephen family at 22 Hyde Park Gate. Before long they would transfer themselves to Bloomsbury, there to pour scorn on Kensington and all that it represented.



The Three Sisters. From right to left, The future Virginia Woolf, her half-sister Stella Duckworth and the future Vanessa Bell. Circa 1896

Virginia and Vanessa, whose father, Leslie, was the first editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, are regularly referred to in *Before Bloomsbury* as a consequence of the diaries kept by their half-sister, Stella Duckworth, and by two of her close Kensington friends, Margaret Lushington and Mildred Massingberd. These previously unpublished diaries, covering the years 1893-5, form the core of the book.

The most quoted of the three young diarists, all in their twenties, is Margaret Lushington, who had recently begun to run her widower Father's household at 36 Kensington Square following the marriage of her elder sister, Kitty, to Leo Maxse. Kitty Maxse would become a brilliant London hostess, upon whom Virginia Woolf based her novel *Mrs Dalloway*. Kitty, Margaret and their sister, Susan, had all been tutored at home, by, among others, the author George Gissing.

Mildred Massingberd, the third diarist, was the eldest of four siblings, two girls, two boys, who had pooled their financial resources to buy 42 Kensington Square. Their grandmother was a sister of Charles Darwin. Their mother, a fervent supporter of female emancipation, had transferred the care of her children to nannies at the earliest opportunity, and chose to live apart from them after her husband died in 1875.

In addition to their Kensington homes each of these families, like numerous other comfortably-off Kensingtonians of that time, had, or would acquire, substantial country properties. The Lushingtons could retreat to rural Cobham, the Stephens to Cornwall, and in 1897 the elder Massingberd boy, Stephen, inherited an estate in Lincolnshire.

Because of the widely varied subjects referred to in the diaries, Anthony Curtis, the book's editor, presents his selected material in episodic form, each episode reflecting a specific event—the death of Virginia Woolf's mother, for example; the marriage of Margaret Lushington to Stephen Massingberd; the perceptive observations of Mildred Massingberd following a visit to John Ruskin in his declining years.

The overall impression conveyed by the diarists is one of unceasing activity, cultural and social, especially social. Lunch parties, dinner parties, supper parties, birthday parties, dances, At Homes, all proliferate, alongside musical evenings, choral occasions, visits to art galleries, concerts, professional and amateur, theatre visits and sundry other engaging diversions. From time to time charitable works also find mention.

As might be expected the diary entries are frequently perfunctory, particularly those of Margaret Lushington, who vigorously eschewed punctuation, and often seemed to be writing in a state of total exhaustion at the end of yet another punishingly social

day. Names pour abundantly on to every page and although fully spelt out when first introduced, many of their bearers tend to re-appear as first-names only, or as nick-names, or merely initials, so that, lacking an index, the reader is hard pressed at times to keep track of the passing show. Some surnames stick firmly in the mind, however, emphasising the extent of the Kensington social network of that day. The author, Thomas Hardy, is a dinner guest, so too Arthur Balfour, who a few years later would succeed his uncle, Lord Salisbury, as Conservative Prime Minister. Mrs Patrick Campbell, the actress, is a near neighbour in Kensington Square, as are Sir John Simon, London's first Medical Officer of Health, Mrs Henrietta Litchfield, a daughter of Charles Darwin, and Hubert Parry, composer and Director of the Royal College of Music. Among other names within the network are the artists Holman Hunt and William De Morgan; Ralph Vaughan Williams, the composer; the du Maurier family of actors, playwrights and novelists; Sylvia Davies, a member of that family and mother of the boys who inspired J M Barrie's *Peter Pan*; the widow of Arthur Clough, the poet; members of the Burne-Jones family, and Henry James, the American author, who lived in Kensington and who on one occasion mystified his dinner party neighbour with the imponderable remark, 'I wish I had an aunt who lived in Clapham.'

Although *Before Bloomsbury* is based firmly on the three diaries, the book would be difficult to comprehend fully without the extensive explanatory material provided by Anthony Curtis. From time to time, too, he reaches beyond diary confines to include relevant material from the pens of other Kensingtonians. He reproduces, for instance, an account of the wedding of 40 year old Anny Thackeray, daughter of the author, to her 23 year old cousin, Richmond Ritchie, as seen through the eyes of the groom's sister. There are also references to the corrosive rift which developed between Virginia Woolf and Kitty Maxse, to the latter's incomprehension, and to Virginia's subsequent remorse at the puzzling death of Kitty after a fall at her Cromwell Road home.

This wide-ranging view of the upper stratum of Kensington society more than a century ago appears remote in some ways today yet totally familiar in others. The golden lads and lasses of the diaries are seen, confident and secure, at that stage in life when everything seems possible—to live vicariously with them for a brief while is both

novel and entertaining. It is as well to know them at that hopeful moment, though, because the future had tragedy enough in store for some of them.

R M-T

Copies of *Before Bloomsbury* may be obtained from Steven Halliwell, Eighteen Nineties Society, PO BOX 97, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4GH.

Or by E-mail: steve@ft-1890s-society.demon.co.uk

The 1890s Society was founded in 1963 to bring together admirers of the work of Francis Thompson, but its scope was widened in 1972 to embrace the entire artistic and literary scene to be found in the last decade of the 19th century.

Partnership of Hope

*A new nation-wide, government initiative intended to involve local people more closely in the running and development of their own areas has led in the Royal Borough to the creation of the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership, a body involving the Council, police, health services, voluntary and community groups, and business and residents associations. The Kensington Society is represented on the Partnership's Steering Group by **Celia Rees-Jenkins**, who reports below on current progress, and outlines the overall aims of the project.*

Two North Kensington wards, Golborne and St Charles, are among the first beneficiaries of the Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Some £2.5 million has been earmarked for a three year programme to meet the concerns of local residents on matters such as housing, unemployment, inadequate public transport links, the poor condition of local parks and public spaces, street cleaning, and health and care services. The intention will be to tackle such issues partly by applying existing resources more effectively.

On the horizon is the renewal of Golborne's Wornington Green Estate, which will include provision of new homes, facilities for community use, and attention to public open spaces. This will provide the Partnership's Steering Group with the opportunity to be involved in the development of the project from its early stages. It is to be hoped that the right balance of facilities can be found to meet the needs of all the community, including the young, the old and the disabled. It is also hoped that due regard will be given to refurbishing buildings which deserve to be maintained. But there may be scope for high quality new buildings, which could enhance the character of the whole area.

The overall goal of the government is that within two decades people should not be seriously disadvantaged by where they live, and to that end each local authority has been required to produce a Community Strategy to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area. The Kensington and Chelsea strategy is set out in a booklet, 'The Future of our Community', which gives the results of a widespread consultation exercise in the Borough together with a programme of action.

A day-long Borough Conference in November helped the Partnership on its way, the agenda including workshops on Environment and Transport, Health, Housing, Safety, and Learning and Leisure. There was also a Question Time session chaired by the BBC presenter Nick Ross, and exhibitions by a wide range of voluntary groups, the Kensington and Chelsea Societies among them.

Through the work of the Partnership, hopefully a better future lies ahead for residents of the Royal Borough.

A Fragment of Local History

The letters K and V are not the easiest pair to combine into a monogram, and a now unknown artist exhibited considerable ingenuity in producing the design shown here. The initials stand for Kensington Vestry, the local government body which administered Kensington until the Borough was incorporated in 1900. The example



displayed can be seen on the gate pillars of Avondale Park in Notting Dale. This former wasteland, with its stagnant water, was drained and laid out as a park, opening to the public in June 1892. It owes its name to one of the titles of Prince Albert Victor of Wales, who in 1900 had been created Duke of Clarence and Avondale. He was the elder son of the future King Edward the Seventh, and was therefore in direct line of succession to the British crown. He died, however, five months before Avondale Park was opened, at the age of 28. He was at that time aide-de-camp to his grandmother, Queen Victoria. The Clarence Wing of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, is another rare memorial of this short-lived prince.

Prince Albert was engaged to Princess May of Teck when he died, she subsequently married his brother, the future King George the Fifth. The Prince's death was not much mourned, he was generally considered to be a weak and somewhat dissolute individual.

Robert Cook

Obituaries

The death occurred in February 2002, at the age of 74, of Mrs Susan Clifford, winner of the contest to find the member having the lengthiest family associations with Kensington, the result of which was announced in last year's Annual Report. Sadly, by the perversity of fate, Mrs Clifford never knew the outcome of the event since she died one week before the magazine appeared—it having been delayed some two weeks beyond its usual publication date owing to unavoidable circumstances.

Mrs Clifford's daughter, Mrs Emma Burns, also a



Kensington resident, has provided the following details of her mother's life: Susan Clifford was the elder of two girls and lived with her parents in Kensington Court Place. She was educated at Kensington High School but during the war was evacuated with the school to Oxford, where she developed a great love for the city and the county of Oxfordshire. In 1956 she married David Clifford, a solicitor, who became Company Secretary of Reckitt & Colman. They started married life in Kensington Mall, where I was born in 1958, but moved in 1961 to Gordon

Place where they were to live for the rest of their lives.

My parents were both involved with St Mary Abbots Church, where my father was church warden for many years. My mother worked as a part-time secretary at Dr Calman's surgery, first at Palace Gardens Terrace, then Holland Park. She was also involved with the Distressed Gentlefolk Aid Association [now the Elizabeth Finn Trust], for whom she raised money by helping to organise numerous events, including the extremely popular Pavilion Opera. Passionate about history, my mother was a member of the Samuel Pepys Club, she was also extremely interested in Kensington's local history and its preservation.

She leaves myself and my two children, Amelia and Bobby. She will be sadly missed.

The months of December 2002 and January 2003 brought bad news concerning members of the Society's Council, no fewer than three of whom died during that period. They were Philip English, Dr Peter Nathan and Sir Duncan Oppenheim. Their obituaries follow.

Philip English, a member of the Society's Executive Committee for 16 years before being appointed to the Council in 1996, died early in December at the age of 83. He was raised in Herefordshire but lived all of his adult life in London after six years of wartime service in the Army. He was a solicitor by profession, a member of a City firm which he joined upon demobilisation in 1946. Having received a commission in the Somerset Yeomanry in 1939 his war service took him first to Palestine then to Italy, where his regiment was involved in heavy fighting against the Germans. His final posting was to Berlin,

In 1948 he married Patricia Napier, moving into Milborne Grove, SW10, soon afterwards and residing there until his death, 54 years later. The marriage produced two daughters. In later life he developed a keen interest in planning matters, becoming a member of the Boltons Association in the mid-1970s, and serving as its chairman for more than ten years. His retirement from the Kensington Society's Executive Committee in 1996 was prompted by increasing deafness.

Dr Peter Nathan, MD, FRCP, one of Britain's leading neurologists, also died in December, at the age of 88. His grandfather was founder of the pharmaceutical company, Glaxo, and his father Managing Director for a number of years. Peter Nathan himself was a specialist in the control of pain, much of his research in the subject being funded from his own resources. His association with the Kensington Society resulted from his admiration for the resolve and tenacity shown by Mrs Gay Christiansen in her battle to safeguard the environment of the borough. Dr Nathan was a very private person, shunning both publicity and honours; he was also a generous benefactor to a wide range of charities, including the Kensington Society, to whom he bequeathed £2,000.

Sir Duncan Oppenheim, who died in January, was Chairman of the British American Tobacco company between 1953--1966, and President for a further six years. He had joined BAT in 1934 after qualifying as a solicitor. Sir Duncan was also a talented painter, his work being regularly exhibited at Royal Academy summer exhibitions.

From 1956-72 he was Chairman of the Council of the Royal College of Arts, and for 12 years was a member of the advisory committee of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Reports from Local Societies

Campden Hill Residents Association

CHRA has been concerned this year, as in the recent past, by the raft of substantial developments in the area bounded by Duchess of Bedford Walk, Aubrey Walk, Campden Hill Road and Holland Walk. Two major schemes dominate current development activity. These are the refurbishment of the old Queen Elizabeth College to provide flats, and the creation of Wycombe Square, the mixed flats, houses and tennis club development on the old Thames Water reservoir site. The effect on residential amenity, parking and traffic flows are as bad as predicted. The temporary marketing suite in Aubrey Walk--a stark yellowish structure--gives local residents a discouraging foretaste of the aesthetic quality to be expected of the development when it is completed.

Next in line are the demolition and development of the unloved Sir John Atkins building in Campden Hill, and nearby Holland Park School. Sad to say, the likely sale of the school playground to finance the school redevelopment seems certain to diminish the charm of Holland Park for all visitors.

Successive mayors came to our AGM and garden party. We warmly welcomed their presence and generous words. Membership stands at 415. A promotional push is being undertaken. After eight years looking after planning issues for CHRA, George Law has retired from the Committee. His diligence, attention to detail, and powerful, well-marshalled arguments are very much missed. Malcolm Johnstone.

Campden Street Preservation Society

The saga continues of the lime tree that was destroyed last year by the owners of what was a small garden opening out on to Campden Street. The Council decided that instead of taking the owners to court it would oblige them to plant a tree to replace the ruined lime. Our Society was given the choice of a walnut or a robinia, the latter a tree introduced to this country by the Victorian horticulturalist William Cobb. Cobb brought seeds back from America and sold them all over England, to his great financial advantage. He also planted nurseries in Kensington. We chose the robinia, and, happily, it is flourishing.

As ever, the Churchill Arms pub has been a sight to gladden the eye with its wonderful boxes of flowers. And more young couples have moved into our street, so there is the gladsome sound of babies and small children.

Evelyn Ellison
Chairman

Cornwall Gardens Residents Association

It was a quiet year for our Association, with no significant planning applications to cause us concern. We formally supported the Grenville Place Residents Association, as did many individual members, in opposing plans, submitted by the Holiday Inn, Cromwell Road, for late night entertainment. The opposition was a success.

In June we had a fourth summer party, which was an enjoyable and well-supported event and made the Association a very good profit.

Dr Theodora Bond
Chair

Earls Court Gardens & Morton Mews Residents Association

The last few months have been relatively busy for us. Our first concern has been a major planning application for the refurbishment of the Albany Hotel in Barkston Gardens. This took the form of a dual application to not only re-do the hotel, which we would welcome, but also to build a block of apartments consisting of either 33 long-term flats, or 80 short-term lets. We objected in the strongest possible terms to both proposals. The Council rejected outright the proposal for short-term lets, but last June granted planning permission for the 33 flats. The developers subsequently appealed against the Council's rejection of the plan for short-term lets, and a hearing took place in January, where one of our residents represented us. Whatever the outcome we are likely to lose privacy, amenity and at least one, if not more, trees. We are also battling on another front. An application has been placed with the Council to set up a nursery in Morton Mews, a small area with only 11 houses. We have made our concerns clear. The property involved has no outside play area and does not have proper facilities to look after 16 children safely. On a lighter note, our pavement is about to be redone—which is something we have looked forward to for some years now. So all in all it has not been a bad year.

Carolyn Butler
Hon Secretary.

Earls Court Square Residents Association

This has been a year of interest and a time of change. The Matière Place scheme, the biggest redevelopment we are likely to see in our lifetime, was completed. Later the developers made an ex gratia payment to us of £5,000 in compensation for all the disturbance caused during building works.

We have monitored all planning applications, approved two, giving a net gain of ten flats, and endeavoured to forestall another, which is liable to lead to an unsatisfactory use. We were also able to get unsatisfactory signage of a number of shops in Earls Court Road altered to ones giving less offence.

We had a very successful barbecue in the summer, held in the Garden, where we also enthusiastically celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The Garden Committee had a successful Open Day and we thank them for having made the Garden available to us for the many functions during the year, including the Christmas Tree and Carol-singing events. We also congratulate them for coming first, against tough opposition, in the Garden Square category of the Brighter Kensington & Chelsea Awards competition.

But it is on the personal level that most of the changes have occurred. Rodney Brangwyn, our Chairman for the past twelve years, decided to retire, his tour of duty having been extremely successful. This was acknowledged at a special meeting at which a presentation was made and a well-supported vote of thanks expressed. Elected to replace him was Richard Rollefson, a member of the Association for the last ten years, and a successful businessman before retirement. His appointment has to be confirmed at the next AGM, as required by the rules.

Mr Rollefson subsequently hosted a joint social evening with the Garden Committee, an occasion greatly enjoyed by all members. Douglas Eaton

Kensington Court Residents Association

The past year has been more notable for general than for specific problems, though we have battled against plans for penthouses atop two fine mansion blocks in our small area. One won, one lost—so far. The UDP is firmly against these but some get through despite strong local objections.

The one-way system in Thackeray Street is being abused more, by motorists [and cyclists]. We have continued to object to

night cafe licences on the High Street. We approved, subject to certain safeguards for adjoining buildings, a major redevelopment of 37-53 Kensington High Street. Demolition finished, building not begun, so far. So we shall have to look carefully at any new plans. We note [enviously] some progress on controlling street drinking in Earls Court. We have a strong candidate for similar restrictions, but it is not clear if a single [rowdy] pub would qualify--as opposed to a whole area. The disruption to the High Street has been worse than expected, and for longer. And it is dirtier than usual too.

Good news is scarce.

Sir Ronald Arculus,
Chairman

Norland Conservation Society

Some seventy planning applications were considered during the year, demonstrating the considerable activity in our small area. Two important planning initiatives were reviewed, one from the government, the other inspired by the government, both of which could impact on us in the future. The first was entitled 'Delivering Fundamental Change', the second dealt with the newly created Kensington and Chelsea Partnership.

In February five members of the Committee met with Mr Mark Raisbeck, the Council's Chief Traffic Engineer, to discuss our traffic problems and present our case for measures to minimize traffic volumes and speeds in the vicinity. The group walked around parts of the Conservation Area for over an hour demonstrating to Mr Raisbeck matters of major concern. The next step will be to choose, with the Council, monitoring positions on selected roads and then with this data decide how best to deal with the issues.

The Annual Lecture was a great success, the subject being 'The Restoration of Historic Gardens'. It was an interesting and well illustrated talk, delivered with much enthusiasm by Letta Jones MA. We thank her for her efforts.

We wish finally to draw attention to our website at: www.norlandsociety.org.uk Please log on and review the content. We should also be pleased to include relevant picture material from viewers.

Anthony Perry
Chairman

Onslow Neighbourhood Association

Sadly Lord Brightman, our President for thirteen years, has retired. We are most grateful for his staunch and wise support. However, Mr Julian Lloyd Webber, a lifelong local resident, has kindly agreed to take over the reins.

It has been a quiet year with no large-scale planning applications, but the rash of those for internal alterations to flats in the Wellcome Estates continues. The Association has expressed concern at the resulting loss of much architectural detail in these fine Grade 11 listed houses. An application has been made for the provision of large-scale rooflights to the nave of St Paul's Church, and we understand that substantial internal alterations are also proposed. The application is the subject of a planning appeal and the association is in discussion with the church authorities.

Our A.G.M was notable for a most interesting talk by Gwyn Miles of the Victoria & Albert Museum about the new British Galleries, and plans for future displays covering the remainder of Europe. The Garden Party, blessed by good weather, attracted a record attendance and was a chance for our members to meet our new president.

Traffic and parking remain constant issues. The trial parking/loading bay layout in the Old Brompton Road is being closely monitored. The latest revised proposals for the South Kensington Station area traffic layout are awaited, especially since we understand there to be renewed movement on the development proposals for the station itself. These are all closely linked and we are in constant liaison with our neighbouring associations regarding their opinions. As ever, there are too few residents parking spaces for those with permits. We believe this problem is worsened by non-eligible applicants. The Council recognise this and are trying to make application requirements more stringent.

Hugh Brady
Chairman

Victoria Road Area Residents Association

What we will most remember from the last 12 months are two significant social events. Last winter we held a superb dinner in the house of our Hon.Secretary, Maggie Lersten, for Oliver Lebus, President and founder of our Association, and Kenneth Woodward-Fisher, Vice President and the Association's second Chairman. They

and their wives were our honoured guests as we expressed our appreciation for all they had done over the years for Kensington, and our particular neighbourhood.

Secondly there was the street party held on June 4 to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. [See front cover of this Annual Report] It took place in the environs of Christ Church, and was considered a great success, with over 700 tickets sold for the event. We were privileged to have T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in attendance, hot-foot from the balcony at Buckingham Palace, also with us were the Mayor, Professor Sir Anthony Coates and his family.

But the year was not all beer and skittles, since the amount of development in our area seems to have reached an all-time high. Most of Victoria Road, and a lot of Eldon Road, Cottesmore Gardens and Victoria Grove have resembled building sites for much of the year. It is good to see both new and existing owners spending lots of money on their properties, but we have had to be more vigilant than ever to seek to stop inappropriate development.

One other feature of the year has been the battle waged by Ann Purchas, with the support of her husband, Robin Purchas, QC, against the proliferation of mobile phone antennae on the roofs of hotels in De Vere Gardens. The outcome is at present uncertain, but at least the Council's Planning Committee appreciate there are real concerns on this subject, and are no longer letting new applications go through on the nod.

Descending from roofs to pavements, we still find that dog fouling is the subject that raises more passion than any other—except, perhaps, for the months-long traffic queues we have endured in Kensington High and Church Streets owing to road works. We would like it to be an offence for dogs to foul our streets, and not just our pavements, but our normally supportive Council will not agree to this. Perhaps others may join us in a battle to secure receptacles for dog waste to be placed at intervals of, say, one hundred yards, on all streets in the Royal Borough. Pie in the sky?

Peter Dixon
Chairman

Constitution of The Kensington Society

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

The function of the Council shall be to support the Executive Committee in any matters relevant to the objects of the Society.

9. GENERAL MEETINGS.

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

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

- (a) The election of Officers of the Society (other than the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee) and of members of the Executive Committee shall be effected by resolution of the Members of the Society at the Annual General Meeting, and the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be effected by resolution of the Executive Committee at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) Subject to paragraphs (c) and (d) below, any Ordinary Member shall be eligible for election as an Officer of the Society or as a member of the Executive Committee.
- (c) Candidates for such election, other than those standing for re-election under paragraph (e) below, must be supported by nominations signed by two other Members, which nominations must

reach the Hon. Secretary not less than fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting.

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

MEMBERSHIP

I wish to become a member of The Kensington Society

I enclose the sum of £ for my annual subscription

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Title)

Address

Signature Date

Corporate Membership: £25

Annual Subscription: £10

Affiliated Societies: £10

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

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

BANKERS ORDERS

TO BANK

..... ADDRESS OF BANK

..... ACCOUNT NUMBER

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

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Title)

Address

Signature Date

Please Return to:

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

The Kensington Society

Receipts and payments account for the year ended 31 December 2002.

GENERAL CORE FUND

Receipts

	2002 £	2001 £
Subscriptions	4,546.20	4,483.20
Donations	1,013.26	1,000.00
Receipts from Visits	1,682.50	2,748.37
Annual Report Adverts	660.00	860.00
Interest	435.75	732.65
Total receipts	8,337.71	9,824.22

Payments

Charitable activities	4,421.43	0.00
Visits	1,263.00	999.50
	5,684.43	999.50

Other expenditure

Annual Report	2,940.81	3,822.80
Stationary/Printing	1,499.24	951.28
Postage/phone	614.46	326.42
Typing	203.00	306.00
Meeting room hire	430.20	0.00
Subscriptions	55.00	40.00
Catering	241.00	358.94
Accounts	350.00	407.58
Advertising	85.00	85.00
	6,418.71	6,298.02

Total payments 12,103.14 7,297.52

Net receipts/[payments]	[3,765.43]	2,526.70
Bank balance b/f	26,988.74	24,462.04
Bank balance c/f	23,223.31	26,988.74

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 December, 2002.

	Princess Alice Fund	General Core Fund	2002 total	2001 total
	£	£	£	£
High Interest Deposit A/C	2,370.41	14,408.62	16,779.03	14,219.03
National Savings A/C	0.00	8,869.79	8,869.79	8,628.21
Current A/C General Core Fund	0.00	[55.10]	[55.10]	4,141.50
Current A/C Princess Alice Fund*	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,370.41
	2,370.41	23,223.31	25,593.72	29,359.15

* During 2002 the balance held in a separate account was transferred to the High Interest deposit account.



The Blue Cross rehomes thousands of animals each year and provides veterinary care for the pets of people who cannot afford private vets fees.

We rely entirely on donations to continue our vital work. We are grateful to the Kensington Society and especially the support and generosity of the late Mrs Gay Christiansen.



For more information on our work please contact:

**The Blue Cross Head Office, Shilton Road,
Burford, Oxon. OX18 4PF**

Tel: 01993 822651 Fax: 01993 823083

Website: www.bluecross.org.uk

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020 7937 0757

49 Marloes Road, Kensington

J.H. KENYON

020 7229 3810

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BEHALF OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE
THROUGHOUT THIS SPECIAL ROYAL BOROUGH.

Norman R Smith
President

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