

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

2013



KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea was created in 1965. Kensington, the area we watch over on your behalf, is north of Fulham Road and Walton Street, the frontier with Chelsea being marked with a red line on the map



Front cover: painting by
Anthony Whishaw RA,
copyright the artist – for more about
him see page 30

Editor: Michael Becket
becket@becketsbest.co.uk

Designer: Ian Hughes
www.mousematdesign.com

Printed by Carrera Litho Ltd

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

23 St James's Gardens, London W11 4RE

www.kensingtonsociety.org

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 development, and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic interest.

Registered charity 267778

PATRON

His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO

PRESIDENT

Nick Ross

VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Rt Hon. The Earl of Snowdon, GCVO

General The Lord Ramsbotham of Kensington GCB, CBE

Sir Ronald Arculus, KCMG, KCVO

COUNCIL

Barnabus Brunner

Peter De Vere Hunt

Susan Lockhart

George Pole

The Hon. Laura Ponsonby

Sir Angus Stirling

TRUSTEES

CHAIRMAN: Amanda Frame

SECRETARY: Traci Weaver

TREASURER and MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Martin Frame

ANNUAL REPORT EDITOR: Michael Becket

Charles Lutyens

Holly Smith

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT: Michael Bach: Chair

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Hilary Bell

Henry Peterson OBE

Anthony Walker

CONTENTS

President's note	4
Chairman's report	6
Annual general meeting 2013	8
Richard Fortey	12
Planning reports	14
Kensington in parliament By Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG QC MP	26
Anthony Whishaw By Michael Becket	30
The Kensingtons put Saki in khaki By Richard Northedge	34
Artists of Kensington By Michael Becket	37
Princess Alice By Robert Golden	42
Trees in Kensington By Thomas Packenham	44
Street Art	50
The Holland House Ball By Donald Rice	58
Reports from local societies	61
Statement of Financial Activities	74
Membership form	77

President's note

They say that foreigners are coming over here
and taking all our houses ... but is it true?

*Nick Ross explains these are his personal views rather than his
official position as president of the society.*

If you believe the headlines, nearly three-quarters of new-build homes in central London have been snapped up by non-UK buyers. The world wants to own property here. Demand is so strong that developers often launch sales campaigns in Singapore or Hong Kong months before Londoners can get a look in. Little wonder prices in the centre of the city are up 11% in just one year. It is not just the rich who want a slice of London. Worried families from fragile economies like Argentina, Brazil, India, South Africa, Turkey and Ukraine are looking here as a safe haven.

Perhaps we should be flattered. Perhaps we should be worried too. The Guardian stoked outrage by revealing that a third of homes in Bishop's Avenue in Hampstead are standing vacant. The implication is that throughout the capital a huge proportion of foreign-owned properties are left unoccupied. Labour's shadow London minister has called for reforms against these colonising foreigners, and this is not just a preoccupation of the Left. Civitas the right of centre think-tank has also called for more controls.

At first, like many others, I felt a sense of indignation when I read the headlines. But the danger with good stories, as most journalist will know, is that if you research them too much you often find they crumble. Could it be, heaven forbid, that sub-editors have

encouraged us to get things out of proportion?

I did some checking.

As far as empty housing is concerned, last year the number of unused homes in England fell at an unprecedented pace to the lowest rate on record¹. And the capital is no exception.

According to the Empty Homes campaign, of 3,411,821 dwellings in London only 24,226 are long term empty². Just under 50,000 more are unoccupied short-term but

according to the charity, "Often they are rented homes that have fallen into disrepair; sometimes the owner has inherited the property."

As for foreign investors, the report that triggered so many headlines is not quite as stark as it has sometimes been made to seem. Its authors, the estate agents Knight Frank, disclose that while half of top-end properties in central London went to overseas buyers, only 28% were non-resident in the UK. And most of them have bought to let, not to leave homes empty. The rest actually live here. And as the researchers ask: is an Indian software worker or a French banker who now decides to buy instead of rent a 'foreigner' or a Londoner?³

In any case the less dramatic reality is that some 80% of central London homes were bought by UK citizens, and 93% of homes in outer boroughs. For a great international city



maybe that proportion is not particularly surprising.

And foreigners are not just buying but building. Over £16bn was pumped into London's economy last year by overseas investors⁴. Property analysts have pointed out that if wealthy buyers chose New York instead (voted second as the world's best investment destination after London⁵) fewer new homes would be built here in the first place. What is more, even foreigners who only visit their properties in London a few months in the year spend a lot of money here. A survey by Ramidus Consulting totted up the cost of domestic staff, lifestyle managers, lawyers, school fees, medical expenses, maintenance, decoration and insurance and reckoned foreign owners of £5m+ homes each spend a stunning £2m a year in the UK, while those with £15m+ homes spend twice that.

Next year the chancellor will close a loophole so visitors who buy will have to pay capital gains tax just as we Britons do on second homes. That should help to cool things off. And according to the FT, the surge of foreign purchasers may already be over. The value of sterling has swollen and London prices are so high that their attractiveness has paled. In any case prices in Kensington have already cooled more than in many other areas.

It is always tempting to blame our woes on foreigners but the lack of affordable homes has only a slight relationship with what happens in Millionaire's Row. Even a mansion tax will not make much difference to 98.5% of Londoners (which, of course, is what makes it so politically attractive). The grand residences in Kensington Palace Gardens are unlikely to be turned into flats, let alone into social housing. If we really want to slow price rises there are many ways to do it. A form of CGT on first homes as well as second ones is one idea. But while politicians and pundits denounce house price inflation they are unlikely to grasp the nettle. Our city's sky-high cost of housing is not the fault of foreigners so much that the great majority of home-grown homeowners – a quarter of London's voters – benefit too much from rising prices to want to see things change.

And while we Londoners may welcome the idea of creating more housing, we are sometimes less than welcoming in practice. Boris Johnson is proposing a level of home-building not seen since the 1930s with £1 billion to create 45,000 new low cost dwellings, over 7,300 of which are planned for Kensington & Chelsea. Before we complain about the housing shortage we in the Kensington Society will have to think twice before we seek to block developments.

It won't be easy. The real challenge is not from overseas. It is very close to home.

The society's planning committee has concerns about 'buy to leave' in the Royal Borough. The submission by Kensington & Chelsea council to the government last year also raised this issue when seeking exemption from relaxation of government policies on change of use from office to housing. The council also produced rather different statistics: "The housing market Kensington and Chelsea contains much of London's prime housing market. There is a strong and seemingly insatiable demand for housing in the borough. This is driven in part by overseas investment in what is perceived as a safe haven. It is impossible to meet this demand in full. Other than the two strategic sites of Earl's Court and Kensal, the borough is fully and densely developed. However, the council is meeting both its London Plan housing targets and the NPPF 20% buffer. When new build market housing is provided, 70% of all purchases are to overseas buyers. 37% are used as a second home and 27% for investment purposes. If this trend continues only 40% of new homes will be occupied on a full time basis."

¹ HM Government report, 17 December 2013

² Empty Homes charity:

<http://www.emptyhomes.com/statistics-2/empty-homes-statistic-201112/>

³ Knight Frank, 'International Buyers in London', October 2013

⁴ Jones Lang LaSalle, 2 January 2014

⁵ Association of Foreign Investors in Real Estate (Afire), 6 January 2014

Chairman's Report

Amanda Frame

SIXTY YEARS AGO, IN 1953, of the many planning applications submitted there were two planning proposals which concerned a few people, one by the Russians and another by the council itself. These two applications sent shock-waves through the small community of Kensington. The Russian proposal was for the redevelopment of the Royal Barracks on Kensington Church Street and the other was a proposal for the demolition of several houses on Young Street just off Kensington Square.

The two proposals galvanised one resident of Kensington Square, Mrs Gay Christiansen. She banded together her friends including our first patron, Princess Alice, and formed The Kensington Society.

England in the 1950s, including Kensington, was still suffering from the effects of the war with many buildings in poor condition and peoples' attention was focused elsewhere. However, opportunities abounded for developers with cash. Unfortunately not all these developers understood Kensington. Most lacked the vision of what made this area of London so wonderful. They had little or no knowledge our special architectural heritage.

On 21 January 2014 the barrack's site received approval for the new Malaysian owners to demolish the existing buildings, known to us as Lancer Square and to replace them with three buildings twice the volume of the existing. Lost will be the open, paved public area used by many of us for a quiet coffee on sunny mornings and a safe place for mothers to meet while their children run about freely. The open space will be replaced with a road for the exclusive use of the new 37 luxury flats and a small space for the public that has a narrow path and one bench. The Young Street houses long lost to a parking garage will now be replaced with an even larger housing development.

What concerns us most is the process these two applications went through to reach the major planning committee. Michael Bach, in his planning committee reports, comments on this process. However, what must be emphasised is that both benefitted from the pre-application service which includes private negotiations with the planning department to the exclusion of the public. At no time were we granted an opportunity to state our concerns to the officers during this process.

The one and only presentation to the councillors for the Lancer Square

proposal was attended by only three councillors. One councillor was the ward councillor and not on the major planning committee. There are twelve members of the committee and on the night of the decision only one councillor had seen the previous presentation. The Kensington Society was granted two and a half minutes to present the society's objection to the loss of the public space and the exclusive road. Our objection was ignored and the application was granted.

Currently, the planning department is going through the process of producing a Supplementary Planning Document for Notting Hill Gate (see my planning comments within this report). However, concurrent with writing the SPD, the same planning department has been providing paid-for pre-application advice to the developers, and not paying enough attention to residents' views. It is perhaps unfair on council officers to expect them to wear two hats in this way.

Though we can and have met one of the developers; we have no means of reporting our opinions, concerns or objections to the developing designs to the planning department. What is obvious is that part of the planning department works for the developers and not paying enough attention to residents. This year, 2014, we shall address these issues with the cabinet member for Planning Policy, Transport and Arts and hope that a balance can be agreed between public service and development.

I spent some time recently looking back over old annual reports – all 60 of them. We hope this year to scan the reports in word searchable format and have them available to all of you. They are fascinating reading. In the 1970 annual report the president, the Right Hon Lord Hurcomb, said “each year seems to consist of one controversy after another”. Nothing has changed. It is still one controversy after another and what is certain is the Kensington Society will be there for another 60 years.

We have had some challenges in 2013 and we, the trustees, have worked hard to carry on in Mrs Christensen's steps. Thankfully she had the vision and her spirit lives on. Thank you for your continual support.

REMEMBER THE DATE

The annual general meeting of the Kensington Society will be on Monday 28 April 2014 in the Great Hall of Kensington Town Hall, at 6.30 pm for 7 pm.

The speaker will be the distinguished scientist Richard Fortey (see page 12), for nearly forty years at the Natural History Museum and the author of many books, ranging from rigorous academic studies through ones aimed at arousing his degree of enthusiasm for geology, to wonderful collections of anecdotes in his recollections of his time at the museum. The mayor and his wife, Charles Williams, has invited members to join him after the meeting in the mayor's parlour for a glass of wine.

The 60th annual general meeting of The Kensington Society was on 29 April 2013

Amanda Frame, chairman of the trustees, welcomed the honoured guests, including Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP who thanked the society and other residents' associations for their hard work on behalf of the borough. He highlighted his support for the society's strong arguments in favour of the exemption from the General Permitted Development Order allowing offices to change to residential without planning permission. He has pressed the case in meetings with Nick Boles, planning minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Nick Ross, society president, paid tribute to Sir Simon's Jenkins's work as chair of the National Trust as well as his refreshing approach to journalism. Sir

Simon, keynote speaker at the meeting, congratulated resident associations and amenity societies for their cantankerous newsletters which highlight the real news in the borough and emphasised the need for conservation. He said in the 1960s and 1970s, modernism was king and tearing down anything pre-war was in vogue. Many lovely structures such as Euston Station and the Imperial Institute were lost and new structures such as the Westway and the Barbican were created. By the late 70s and early 1980s, planners realised people find old buildings desirable and feel they give London a unique character. This resulted in the sensitive redevelopment of Covent Garden and the restoration of Albert Bridge. The 1990s left a confusing legacy of

Martin and Amanda Frame, Sir Malcolm Rifkind in the foyer before the meeting



Nick Ross, president, Amanda Frame, chairman, Sir Simon Jenkins, keynote speaker



haphazard and uncoordinated planning and an incoherent London skyline. He believes localism is crucial to preserve the character of our neighbourhoods.

The minutes of the 2012 AGM and the financial statement for the year to 31 December 2012, both as set out in the annual report were confirmed and approved nem con. Michael Bach, Michael Becket, Hillary Bell, Amanda Frame, Charles Lutyens, Henry Peterson, Holly Smith and Anthony Walker put their names forward to serve as trustees in 2013/14 and were proposed and approved nem con. New trustee Traci Weaver was proposed and approved nem con. The trustees proposed the election of Martin Frame as treasurer and Traci Weaver as secretary. The proposal was seconded from the floor and approved nem con.

In his president's report, Nick Ross emphasised the Kensington Society must ensure it is not out of step with the times. Whilst planning policies sometimes force opposition from civic societies, it may not always be justified. For example, the closure of hospital departments and reallocation of specialities may not be undesirable.

Amanda Frame warned that what is good about London (and Kensington) may soon be lost. Kensington is under threat from the government's proposals, and from Kensington's town hall's cost saving and target-setting reducing services. The government's relaxation of planning controls to fuel economic growth is ill-conceived as is the proposal to allow extensions to property without planning consent. The government is going back on its promise not to expand Heathrow airport with its scheme to add a runaway over the most densely populated areas in this country. It has also stopped the promised revision of environmental controls in new construction. The Kensington Society has discussed this with Sir Malcom Rifkind who understands our position.

The recently adopted procedure changing the statutory minimum public consultation of 21 days for planning consultation into the maximum time has been used to ignore objections received after the 21 day period and avoid contentious application going to the Planning Applications Committee. The loss of the planning desk has been a disaster for local

Kensington Society members in the Town Hall for the agm





Sir Simon Jenkins giving his speech



Amanda frame, chairman giving her summary of the year

residents with no planning experience and a benefit to developers. Pre-application advice is increasing, whilst help for ordinary residents is non-existent.

The council is overhauling many key policies, but The Planning Department said it lacks the resources to address the out-of-date Conservation Area Proposal Statements so the society will develop a template for local groups to rewrite their own. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages local authorities to produce a list of heritage assets, and the society will help with that as well.

Amazingly, our Planning Department agreed not to have a public hearing for the appeal against a refusal by the Planning Applications Committee of 25 enormous JC Decaux/BT advertisement structures with a payphone on the back, which means that the appeals are handled by written

submission, putting the public at a severe disadvantage. So the Planning Department is not working for residents, and everyone is urged to write supporting refusal.

There is, however, a lot to celebrate. The society's finances have never been better and our membership has increased and we have established quarterly meetings with local societies. Our new lecture series is up and running with the help of Georgina Lewis. We do hope you will attend.

Thanks to our trustees and members who have worked hard to protect Kensington. Personal thanks to the Planning Committee headed by Michael Bach with Anthony Walker, Henry Peterson and Hilary Bell as members. Holly Smith continues to be a rock and her guidance is much appreciated. The society's finances, our email alert system, Gift Aid recovery and membership data are in excellent form



Michael Bach summing up the planning problems

thanks to Martin Frame. Thanks as well to our retiring trustees: Anthony Lee for his nine years of service, Richard Chaplin for his sage advice and vigilance and Lady Brenda Maddox for her secretarial role.

Michael Bach said we are challenged by the government's changing planning policies, by the mayor's advocacy of large-scale, high-density, high-rise developments along our western border, by the massive pressures of market forces particularly those of the housing market, as well as by pressures to cut back on residents' rights in the borough.

Government proposals to allow large extensions to houses, and telecoms companies being able to install broadband cabinets, phone masts and telephone poles without consultation, threaten the amenity and quality of life in Kensington. The policy to allow conversion of offices and,

perhaps, shops into housing could reduce Kensington to a dormitory suburb with a few shopping areas. This is not why most of us choose to live here – it is the mixture, range and diversity of activities that enriches our lives. The council has applied for an exemption, and we will know the outcome in May.

Planning applications have been granted by Hammersmith & Fulham for both White City and Earl's Court/West Kensington. These high-density and high-rise developments will be built over the next 20 years, but it is not clear how an additional 10,500 households are going to be serviced.

Kensington & Chelsea is reviewing policies for pubs, basements and mix of new housing and employment. We are pleased the council has sought to engage local residents in this process. There has been growing pressure to tighten policies affecting basements. The need is to ensure large sites provide homes for full-time residents rather than for occasional use or investment.

Despite all these pressures, we have a few significant successes: the refusal of all the large advertisement structures proposed by JC Decaux and BT Payphones stopping; the Global Equestrian Event in Kensington Gardens in front of Kensington Palace; and the listing of the K6 Gilbert Scott red telephone boxes outside the V & A. The challenges are not going to go away, but we are at last getting some support from councillors and our MP to combat them.

Members joined the committee for a drink in the mayor's parlour. Drinks were donated by Jeroboams of Holland Park Avenue.

All photographs: **photoBECKET**

Feature

Richard Fortey

Museums seem to get more than their fair share of quirky people. Richard Fortey FRS FRSL should know, as during his nearly 40 years at the Natural History Museum he has observed scholars and visitors and has shone his torch with amusement on the eccentrics, oddities and even their sexual trysting places, behind the monumental forbidding front of the museum.

There was the Keeper of Botany Robert Ross, known as Octopus Ross by the female staff. One of them thought she was safe in a lift with him as he had two heavy books in each hand, and still cannot understand how one of those hands managed to stray between the first and second floors.

A museum expert on herbaceous climbers was forced to hand over his wages to two mysterious women who appeared at the back of the museum every Friday. He also kept a detailed card index of his sexual conquests, very much the way the museum recorded its samples. Once a curator, always a curator, observes Mr Fortey.



Another staff member filed every single piece of string he encountered in boxes labelled with length, including one called “pieces of string too small to be of use”. Then there was the trusted amateur who appeared in a wheelchair and hid rare birds’ eggs in women’s tights which he then tucked into his trousers.

Colourful personalities have been there from the start – Sir Richard Owen, Darwin’s arch-enemy, who was the museum’s first superintendent; to the eels expert who was a great believer in the Loch Ness Monster.

Mr Fortey has shared his amusement, anecdotes and fascination with science in broadcasts and his delightful book, *Dry Store Room No.1*, and he will be revealing even more about the museum when he addresses the Kensington Society as its AGM keynote speaker on 28 April.

In his book Mr Fortey describes his first day at work as the equivalent of being told, “Amuse yourself – for money”. He evidently has.

He found his first fossil when he was 14 years old and since then has been recreating, from the fossils, the habits and lifestyles of some of the world’s first inhabitants. He is perhaps best known for his research into trilobites and other arthropods – research that added to the broader understanding of evolution and the way in which the earth itself was formed.

Despite his distinction as a palaeozoology and geology scholar, Mr Fortey was never

content to restrict his communication to scientists – he wanted to share the delights of his work and geological sciences with the general public, and make the insights easy to grasp.

His first popular book, *Fossils: the key to the past*, was published in 1982 and is now in its fourth edition. Ten years later, with the publication of *The Hidden Landscape*, Mr Fortey was making geology understandable to lay people.

Having retired several years ago from the Natural History Museum has not stopped or even slowed him. He has been a reviewer and regular contributor to *The London Review of Books*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *New York Review of Books* and the *London Evening Standard*, and contributed to *The Guardian*, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, *New Scientist*, and others.

He has served on the Museums Committee of the Arts and Humanities Research Board and has been a judge on science for Aventis and Samuel Johnson writing prizes, as well as the *Daily Telegraph* young science writers' competition.

He has spoken at Public Understanding of Science meetings alongside Richard Dawkins and Susan Greenfield, and has been invited by the British Council to Japan. He was also the Millennial President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science – Geology section.

Now he is about to talk to the Kensington Society – about the scientific research and the extraordinary people who have worked at the museum.

His books include

- *Life: an unauthorized biography*,
- *Trilobite*
- *Survivors*, a study of “living fossils”.

His research won him honours, including

- Frink Medal of the Zoological Society of London
- Linnean Medal for Zoology of the Linnean Society of London
- Neville George Medal of the Glasgow Geological Society
- Moore Medal of the SEPM.

His books earned him

- election to the Royal Society of Literature in 2010.
- Lewis Thomas Prize of Rockefeller University, New York
- Michael Faraday Prize of the Royal Society for public engagement with science for 2006.

Television appearances

- *Putting Flesh on Bone*, the second episode of David Attenborough's *Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives*
- Another Attenborough series, *First Life*, with the presenter in the Atlas Mountains to film trilobite fossils.
- University Challenge – The Professionals, as a member of the Paleontological Association team that in 2004 beat the team from the Eden Project.
- BBC 2012 series *Survivors: nature's indestructible creatures; modern species whose ancestors survived mass extinction*.
- BBC's programme, *The Secret Life of Rock Pools*,
- Contributor to the Discovery Channel's series, *The Future is Wild*.



Planning Report

This year's challenges have come from the government, the council and the extreme market pressures, especially rising housing values. The government has stressed the need, as it sees it, for deregulation (aka relaxation) of planning controls. The council has delayed the proposed changes to the Local Plan which might have brought some of these pressures under control. The housing market is at an all-time high and developers still want to dig basements and convert everything to super-prime housing for investment or "second" homes. It sometimes seems as if we are running just to stand still.

Government Changes

One of the highlights of 2013 was the success of the council in persuading the government to exempt the whole of the borough from the proposed freedom for offices to turn into housing without the need for planning consent. The council produced a very strong case for exemption; Sir Merrick Cockell used a lot of his goodwill to persuade the government, and the society lobbied our MP, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, to take up the issue with the planning minister, Nick Boles. In the end, the whole of Kensington and Chelsea was exempted from this scheme. This will enable the borough to resist any further loss of offices. We lost many small offices between 2000 and 2010, and as a small-firm economy the borough desperately needs these offices as premises for small firms and bring employment and vitality, and avoids Kensington becoming just another suburban residential area.



Further changes have been floated, including turning shops to housing and also shops to restaurants, gyms and schools. The big test is whether the government does what it says it will – to back up-to-date local plans, which means enabling the council to manage the mix of shops and services in our town centres, including neighbourhood centres; promote healthy neighbourhoods, which means resisting the loss of shops in neighbourhood centres. The council will need to take a robust approach in defending our centres against the insatiable pressures for more housing. We will be backing the council in resisting the loss of shops, especially where it undermines our local centres.

Local Changes

Since the Local Plan was adopted in December 2010 it has become evident that some of the policies were just not working as a result of the growing financial pressures in the housing market. The first challenge was the pressure to convert pubs to housing. It took more than 18 months, including an examination of the new policy, to get the new policy in place. Our pubs are now protected.

2013 started well with greatly improved consultation workshops on both basements and conservation and development. The society was very pleased with proposals for a greatly strengthened basements policy, which would limit the scale by reducing their size and limiting them to one level, and not allowing basements under the gardens as well as not under the house for listed buildings.

Basements

The main problem over the last five years has been the growing number of applications for basements. The 2010 Local Plan policy on basements has proved ineffective – it failed to set any limits on the extent of site coverage or the number of floors. Responding to the demand for more control over the scale and number of basement developments, the council decided to produce a new policy and consulted widely until a new, much more effective policy was developed. This raised considerable objections from contractors, who also employed scare tactics to encourage residents to get their applications in quickly. The council decided to strengthen its evidence base for the policy and to reconsult in February and submit the result to the inspectorate in the summer. This means the policy, if it passes its examination, will not be approved before the end of 2014. We will have lost a whole year and meanwhile the basement applications have flooded in. We have seen proposals for two or even three levels of basements, coal cellars under the pavements being turned into so-called “staff quarters” and even a proposal for building a basement out under the street. We are very concerned that it is taking so long to apply limits to this type of development.

Housing

The society was also concerned about the proposed mix of housing units in new housing applications, with many having very large units. But our main concern has been that the mix of units have played straight into the international investment market, resulting in a high proportion of new flats and houses being marketed abroad as “investments”, at best occupied for a few weeks a year, but empty for the rest of the year – these are not “buy-to-let” properties but part of the growing trend of “buy-to-leave”. This has meant that a high proportion of new flats, especially those on large sites, have barely produced any additional housing for people



who want to live in London. The new buildings replacing Charles House on Kensington High Street, for example, will have little affordable housing and almost all of the 530 flats will have been sold in Singapore and Hong Kong. If these sites do not meet the needs of people who need to live in London, we have no chance of meeting our annual target of 535 net additional units a year, let alone the proposed revised target of 733 units a year.

We need new housing that meets London's housing needs – we are still waiting for new housing policy for the Local Plan – it is also delayed.

Conservation and Development

The new conservation policies would have consolidated the Local Plan and the “saved” policies from the 2002 plan, which we strongly welcomed. This will bring it all into one document. As with the basement policy, these policies have also been delayed and will go to the same Examination-in-Public.

Our main task here was to ensure that nothing valuable was lost and to strengthen those aspects – such as shopfronts and streetscape – which need to be improved to meet new challenges and new aspirations.

A major success has been to convince the council to put resources into updating the extremely valuable Conservation Proposals Statements (CAPS) for each of the conservation areas. Most are over 25 years old and need refreshing. The council has decided to pilot a new survey approach for updating the appraisal of each conservation area and then in April to start a three-year exercise improving the evidence base. This will improve the relevance of these documents for informing planning decisions. Meanwhile we will need to rely on the existing CAPS.

Involving People in Planning

The council has been producing a new Statement of Community Involvement which is meant to inform citizens – you and me – of the council’s duties and its own rights when it comes to planning. The new document is a good description of the process and opportunities for residents to be engaged, but still does not set out these “duties” and “rights” very clearly.

These include the council’s duty to consult residents, such as for a minimum of 21 days in the case of planning application and the right to address the Planning Committee. Both of these issues have proved very controversial recently, where the council has reinterpreted the minimum consultation period as now being the maximum. This means that any objections received after 21 days will not affect whether the case is decided by the Planning Committee and, indeed, may not even be counted at all.

The council has also adopted new rules for people addressing the committee. Objections presented to the Planning Committee will now be limited to three minutes and if there is more than one speaker, the time is shared between them. This new rule is being applied regardless of the scale, complexity or controversy of the case. We consider there needs to be more flexibility and the time given needs to be proportionate to the nature of the application. These are issues we are taking up with the new Planning Scrutiny.

Major Issues

Notting Hill Gate

Notting Hill Gate has been seen as a suitable case for major improvement for a long time. It is an under-performing area which needs to maintain and improve its offer to local residents, is an unattractive pedestrian environment, a place that large numbers of people pass through and get out of as quickly as possible rather than a place to spend time there. The recent changes of ownership have made redevelopment of certain major sites a possibility. The council is currently producing a supplementary planning document (an SPD). The society did not consider the draft document had identified the right priorities. The society, with support from the Cherry Trees Residents’ Association and the Campden Hill Residents’ Association, and working together with local residents’ associations and amenity groups, has produced an alternative vision, strategy and guidelines as contribution to the public debate about the future of the centre. [see article on Notting Hill Gate. page 22]

South Kensington

Local residents have felt marginalised by the extent to which the Local Plan has prioritised the needs of tourists and museum visitors at the expense of residents. The society has worked closely with local groups to try to manage the changing balance, which is most noticeable by the changing mix of uses and the huge increase in the amount of tables and chairs outside premises, especially at the southern end of Exhibition Road. These changes have caused huge tension between landowners and residents and between residents and the council. A better balance of local and visitor needs is required.

Social and Community Uses – health, education, voluntary sector

With such a strong housing market, protecting our remaining “social and community uses” is

absolutely essential – once lost to housing they are gone forever. The borough lost many buildings formerly in education and health uses between 1985 and 2010. The critical cases were the loss of Princess Louise Hospital and Vicarage Gate nursing home to housing. In response, the 2010 Local Plan introduced greater protection by requiring the reuse by the same or a similar use before any other change of use would be allowed.

The council is now challenged by the loss of a former educational building in Wetherby Gardens, the possible conversion of the London Lighthouse that currently houses a number of voluntary organisations and the South Block of the Brompton Hospital which the hospital wants to sell off for housing when the Royal Marsden Hospital needs additional space as a hospital. These cases will test whether the council is serious in its support for social and community uses.

Driving up quality in our streetscape

Much of planning focuses on how buildings look and in shopping streets the quality of shopfronts. We have managed to get the Local Plan changed to make clear that we want new shopfronts to drive up the quality of the area. We now want to put the same message into the council policy for improving our streetscape.

Advertisements

Following our success last year in persuading the Planning Committee, against its officer's advice, to refuse all 41 applications for large advertisement panels on the street with a coin-operated payphone on the back, the applicants J C Decaux and BT, appealed on the 25 cases which the officer had recommended be allowed. Without reference to the cabinet member for planning or the public, the planning department agreed to the appellants' request to handle these appeals in writing rather than a hearing, where we might have persuaded the Inspector on the issue of the council's long-term strategy of clearing the clutter. Unfortunately the inspector allowed 20 of the 25 appeals.

We are very concerned that J C Decaux and BT were ever encouraged to find sites in the borough, rather than be shown the door. We are pressing the council not to agree to these advertisement panels being erected and to toughen its policies. These should make clear we want to drive up the quality of the borough's streetscape through clearing the clutter, resisting the addition of advertising which would harm our streetscape and retain our historic street furniture. Westminster has policies to protect their streetscape – why don't we?

We also pressed the council not to grant an application for an advertisement tower on the West Cromwell Road bridge. Again we had support from the Planning Committee which refused the application and, again, the Planning Inspector allowed this tower. The council needs more specific policies for these towers, and will be whether the council refuses to renew permission for the tower next to Westway. The big test will be whether the council issues a discontinuance notice on the J C Decaux advertising towers at the Westway Sport Centre, as it promised in 2009.

Telephone Kiosks

The iconic red telephone boxes, designed 80 years ago, were once widespread – but, unlike other central London boroughs, especially Westminster, there are very few left in Kensington & Chelsea. When BT applied to remove one of the two either side of the main entrance of the

V&A Museum (Grade I listed building) and replace it with a pastiche telephone “box” containing a cash machine, the Council was proposing to allow the original K6 phone box to be removed. We managed to persuade BT not to remove it. We then managed to get English Heritage to list both the V&A boxes and investigated what had happened to the rest in the borough. Very few were left. There were two at the south-west corner of Kensington Gardens which we also sought to get listed. Before we could achieve that BT removed one of the boxes with the council’s agreement. We were amazed at the lack of coordination between the highways and planning departments, the Highways Department agreed its removal despite having identified these very boxes as an example of the historic street furniture the borough is committed to retaining. The remaining, lonely telephone box is now listed.



Case work:

Kensington Gardens – equestrian event

After our experience with the theatre in Kensington Gardens in front of Kensington Palace, which meant the area, the most intensively used part of the park, was out of bounds for a whole year, the proposal for an international equestrian event in June 2013 was most unwelcome. It would have put that part of the park out of action for a second summer. An intensive campaign by residents led to its refusal. We hope the Royal Parks got the message.



Pre-application participation on major schemes:

Developers are encouraged to engage with the society and with local residents whilst their scheme is in preparation. This year we had contrasting experience on two major schemes:

Young Street Car Park:

Grainger proposed the demolition of the car park and offices and their replacement by a block of flats. Its programme of meetings with the society and surrounding local residents was exemplary and as a result almost all the issues were resolved before a greatly improved scheme was put forward for planning consent. The society’s remaining issue was the loss of offices, because having refused consent for converting offices to housing involving private property owners appeared to be failing to operate the policy with regard to their own property.

Lancer Square, Kensington Church Street

This major scheme involves the redevelopment of the buildings which replaced Kensington Palace Barracks in the late 1980s. The new owner, a Malaysian developer, proposed complete demolition and replacement buildings that are considerably larger and contain twice as much floorspace as the current buildings, replacing the shops and offices (the latter largely underground), with all the additional floorspace being housing – largely expensive market housing, and 14 units of affordable housing for elderly people in Old Court Place. The society objected to the loss of much of the pedestrian areas in the current scheme, the need to share this with cars, and the new “park” – a landscaped raised garden with only one bench – which was not a usable open space.

Our main concern was that these developers, although they held an exhibition, did not really engage with local residents with any real intent to adjust their scheme.

In both cases, however, the council refused our offer of receiving our comments at a stage where the council could have helped resolve these issues, whilst it was negotiating and agreeing matters that we disagree with. The council needs to listen to residents before coming to an agreement with developers that for which they may feel they need to recommend approval.

We are very concerned about the lack of transparency of the results of these private discussions and the council’s unwillingness to make the guidance they give to developers available to the public once the application has been made.



Major Housing sites Warwick Road

There are three major housing schemes along Warwick Road on which the council is relying to meet the borough's needs for housing, especially affordable housing. In February, the council is proposing to allow a significant reduction in the affordable housing previously agreed. Since this may be the only housing that will meet the needs of local people, because the rest has been marketed abroad as investment property, the result is that despite their size – a total of 920 flats – only 110 (12%) will be social rented or intermediate housing – whilst 810 units will be “investments” which are likely to be empty for most of the year – a feature of these types of schemes.

Looking ahead:

We expect 2014 to be just as busy – the Examination-in-public of the council's revised policies, especially on basements; the continuing flow of basement schemes; the London Plan; more deregulation proposals from the government; pressure on social and community uses; and continuing pressure from the high residential values to build or convert houses for the super-prime investment housing market.

Michael Bach, chairman of Planning Committee

NORTH KENSINGTON

The northern part of the Borough is surrounded by a series of London's Opportunity Areas. These are areas defined by the mayor of London, for which planning frameworks are drawn up in liaison with borough councils, and where an intensive level of development is encouraged in the interests of London as a whole.

Hence many of the planning issues faced by residents in the north of the borough arise on sites in neighbouring boroughs, and involve developments due to take place over a 10–20 year timescale. Yet it is the early decisions on these sites which are often crucial to the long-term outcome and the fabric of our city. Hence the society has to get involved in these long-term planning proposals as well as more immediate concerns.

The Mayor's 'vision' for Old Oak is tied in with plans for a new High Speed 2 and Crossrail station on the northern border of Wormwood Scrubs, proposed for completion in 2026. This project remains subject the current Bill in parliament, but local residents in Hammersmith, Brent, Ealing and North Kensington are all now looking at the implications of the illustrative master-plan put together by the GLA and the affected borough councils. Up to 19,000 new homes are envisaged, together with office and retail development.

The GLA and boroughs will be preparing an Opportunity Area Planning Framework for Old Oak. RBKC is not directly involved in this exercise, which is a concern to North Kensington residents who feel that cross-borough transport and traffic issues may not be looked at comprehensively.

Plans for the Kensal Canalside site have not moved beyond the initial Issues and Options paper published by RBKC in 2012. Of the three options floated at that stage, the most intensive involves a mixed-use development providing some 3,500 homes.

Proposed developments in the White City Opportunity Area have continued to progress through the planning system at Hammersmith & Fulham. A 1,200-unit housing scheme

drawn up by Helical Bar/Aviva, with a 32-storey tower, received planning approval only for the site to be sold on to the Imperial College. The college is now developing a new master-plan for its combined 22 acre holding on Wood Lane, north and south of the Westway. Planning consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle remains involved, and there is no sign of any significant reduction in the building heights and density levels of previously approved schemes on these sites (including the 35-storey proposed tower at Imperial West).

All the sites referred to above rely on Wood Lane as their road access and egress. Congestion levels on this key north/south route are already high. No new road routes are planned by any of the developers or councils involved. Local people fear that the cumulative impact of these developments (coupled with the Stanhope/BBC scheme for a 1,000 housing units at the former TV Centre and the second phase of Westfield) will place impossible demands on the road network.

The Overground rail system (the West London Line) offers a potential alternative to road use. At present there are no stations between Willesden Junction and Shepherds Bush, a much longer gap than average for the line. A new Overground connection at Old Oak forms part of the mayor's vision.

The St Helens Residents' Association, supported by the society, and local ward councillors continue to make the case for a further station to replace the former St Quintin & Wormwood Scrubs station, never re-opened after bomb damage in 1942. The West London Line Group has endorsed the suggestion that this new station should be sited beneath the elevated Westway roundabout, to service the new catchment area being created at White City East. Initial reaction from Transport for London has not been encouraging.

Within the royal borough, building work on the new Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre proceeds apace, in Notting Barns ward. The council approved in December 2012 an SPD for land beneath the Westway, facilitating the next phase of regeneration projects by the Westway Development Trust.

During the past year the society supported the work of local residents in achieving conservation area status for the new Avondale Conservation Area, approved by the council in April 2013. The area is a good example of a group of Victorian terraces, laid out and built between 1870 and 1895, with the original late Victorian community infrastructure including a church and a school.

Henry Petersen
Trustee and Member of the Planning Committee

NOTTING HILL GATE

In reviewing some the annual reports over the last 60 years there was one area mentioned almost every year – Notting Hill Gate. From the road widening and comprehensive redevelopment, transport and road system controversy starting in the late 1950's to the 1960 through the construction of Newcombe House in 1965, to the changes we have all witnessed following the success of the movie, *Notting Hill* in 1999, Notting Hill Gate seems to have always been a mishmash of bad 1960's architecture, remnants of Victorian grandeur and a dual carriageway given over to the cars. Notting Hill Gate as it is today is an underperforming district centre, a major public transport interchange and a place that needs to be transformed without losing what is unusual/special about it.

At last, under the looming pressure from the new owners of Newcombe House and The

Book Warehouse building, the council has taken the initiative to produce a supplementary planning document (SPD). SPDs are designed to give further guidance and information on how planning policies are to be implemented, to “supplement” the Local Development Framework and to create a structure in which future planning applications will be assessed. Starting in September 2013 the council’s planning department held workshops and consulted widely with the public. The draft SPD was sent out for further public comments in late November 2013 with comments required to be received by 23 January 2014.

Having reviewed the draft document, the Kensington Society trustees decided to commission a review of the document with contributions from Cherry Trees Association and Campden Hill Residents’ Association. We commissioned Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) which in the past had produced an alternative scheme for South Kensington Station, ran the architectural competition for alterations to the Victoria & Albert Museum and is now working for the Natural History Museum on the use of its surrounding grounds. We sought input from our members, all the main community interests including the local residents’ associations and amenity societies, the Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group and the six ward councillors. We did meet two of the councillors but were prevented by the planning director from meeting the others four for fear of a “challenge”.

We reviewed the vision, the themes and the priorities proposed in the SPD and concluded that not all the aspirations matched the residents’ objectives. We have used the draft SPD as a starting point for discussion, reviewed the ingredients and priorities and produced a strategy that we feel better meets the needs of the residents of the area.

Our Vision for Notting Hill Gate

The vision that we have put together is Notting Hill Gate as a more friendly, better-performing town centre with a stronger sense of place and which retains its special character and builds on its strengths in its retail, entertainment and cultural facilities.

Notting Hill Gate could benefit greatly from a new focus for community activity – something that will develop the attraction for local people to come back. The Coronet cinema has recently come on the market and there are interesting discussions about capturing it as a cultural hub, however, this is too late for this stage of the SPD. In addition the public realm needs to change from being an unfriendly thoroughfare through to central London to a friendly and attractive place where people would choose to spend time.

A phased comprehensive approach

The society recognises there is a need for a comprehensive approach, but the reality is that in practice only a part of the area has any realistic expectation of redevelopment in the near future and that the strategy will need to have a phased approach, backed up by the transformation of the public realm/streetscape to make it a more attractive place to visit and spend time. We proposed a phased approach with the first phase to be produced quickly to meet the demanding schedule set by the developer.

The first phase should consist of the Newcombe House site extending down to Kensington Place and west along Notting Hill Gate to include Hobson House, David Game House and the LUL substation. Also in this phase would be The Book Warehouse site.

Phase two would include other properties on the north side and Astley House.

Phase 1: Redevelopment of Newcombe House:

- a new focus for Notting Hill Gate: a new public space

This new public open space would act as a focus for community and local activity with links to Notting Hill Gate, Kensington Place and, most importantly, open to Kensington Church Street, which could also accommodate the weekly farmers' market;

- community facilities including a new primary health care centre: GP surgery + pharmacy – and, perhaps, a small-scale cultural activity close to or in the new square;
- a new entrance to the Underground station, set far enough back from Notting Hill Gate to enable step-free access to the station concourse – paid for by Transport for London
- a replacement for Newcombe House with shops on the ground floor, six floors of offices to ensure replacement of office floorspace and housing above. This should be a permit-free and car-free development. A tall building, but not much more than current Newcombe House.

We opposed the draft SPD's proposal for major cultural hub (2,000sqm of space costing £8m of S106 money). Its omission or considerable scaling down would greatly reduce the pressure for an 81m high building.

Transforming the Public Realm

The society considers there is need for a more ambitious programme of public realm improvements paid for by Transport for London and RBKC (Parking Reserve Account), rather than any of the developers. It must include parts of Kensington Church Street and Pembridge Road.

The diagram below outlined the basic redevelopment form proposed by the Kensington Society and MRC:



Following discussions with the society, the council at a late stage, after these reports were written, withdrew its SPD on Notting Hill Gate and will issue a revised version.

SOUTH EDWARDES SQUARE

An application in 2011 for 59 South Edwardes Square included the reconstruction of much of the back of the building and the interior as well as the introduction of a new sub-basement. Despite many objections by amenity groups the planning department did not implement policies on construction methods, sustainability, and construction traffic in the SPD Subterranean Development adopted two years earlier. The officer's report to the planning committee noted these were missing, but still recommended approval.

South Edwardes Square is a very narrow one-way road and the building faces directly on to the narrow pavement. The applicant proposed a large gantry over the road beneath which lorries would stand. That meant the road would be closed every working day with traffic diverted away from the square. It is producing all the expected problems with the road and the pavement being frequently blocked.

The planning department still does not always insist on proper construction method statements. Construction traffic management is still frequently left to be dealt with by a planning condition but by that time it is too late to properly research as to whether the proposed application is in fact capable of implementation. Even if the new basement policies are adopted there will still be significant issues with the construction and traffic management impacts.



Feature

By
Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG QC MP

Kensington in parliament

The history of Kensington's parliamentary representation is complex. Before it flourished in the 19th century under Victorian patronage, Kensington was a more sedate, pastoral part of London than neighbouring Chelsea which, being closer to the river, can boast of greater significance during the Tudor period. Between 1265 and 1868, both areas constituted part of the county constituency of Middlesex, which stretched from Potters Bar down to the River Thames but did not include the City of London.

Middlesex returned two knights of the shire as members of parliament, elected by those who owned freehold property worth forty shillings. Over the centuries, the franchise was extended not by law, but by inflation.

Perhaps the most remarkable of these members was the radical polemicist John

Wilkes who, having served as MP for Aylesbury, represented Middlesex in numerous stints between 1768 and 1790. As hideous as he was lascivious, Wilkes ridiculed and excoriated the political establishment for their venality and contempt for common liberties.

Wilkes, having been charged with seditious libel, a general warrant was issued for his arrest. By asserting the unconstitutionality of the warrant, and standing up for parliamentary privilege and the freedom of the press in the face of arbitrary authority, Wilkes became a cause celebre. He was restored to parliament, but the establishment took its revenge when he was outlawed and fled to France in 1764 for an allegedly obscene parody of Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*, entitled *An Essay on Woman*.





Under severe pressure from his French creditors, Wilkes returned to London in 1768, to stand for parliament once again on an anti-government platform. Having stood and failed in London, he stood for Middlesex because as a county constituency seat he enjoyed strong support amongst its artisans, freeholders, small landowners and craftsman, who shared his contempt for the aristocratic political elite.

Wilkes's popularity, including in Kensington, allowed him to secure numerous positions of prestige even whilst in prison, becoming alderman of the City of London in 1769, sheriff in 1771, and lord mayor in 1774. Wilkes finally took his seat in Middlesex in 1774, pursuing a radical agenda of parliamentary reform and support for the American Revolution.

A self-confessed demagogue and a pest,

Wilkes was nevertheless the champion of the rights of the individual and parliament against the corrupt practices of the political elite. He was also fabulously rude to the aristocracy and his constituents alike. When the Earl of Sandwich observed that he was not sure if Wilkes would perish at the hands of the gallows or the pox, Wilkes responded it would depend on whether he embraced the earl's principles or his mistress. Upon being told by a constituent that he'd rather vote for the devil than for Wilkes, Wilkes replied, 'Naturally – and if your friend decides against standing, can I count on your vote?'

Kensington's destiny diverged from that of Middlesex upon the establishment of a new dual-member constituency of Chelsea. The seat was created by the Reform Act of 1867, comprising of the civil parishes of Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith, and Kensington.

But the establishment of the new constituency did not mean an end to representation by radical politicians with exotic nocturnal predilections. It was represented between 1868 and 1886 by the Liberal Sir Charles Dilke, who served as a junior minister for foreign affairs under Gladstone and was touted as a future prime minister before his career came to an abrupt end as the result of a sex scandal.

Having been the lover of fellow Liberal politician Thomas Eustace Smith's wife, Ellen, Dilke was accused in 1886 by another Liberal politician, Donald Crawford, of having an affair with his young wife Virginia.

Crawford sued for divorce on the grounds of Virginia's adultery with Dilke, but neither Virginia nor Dilke gave testimony in the trial. The sole evidence was Crawford's account of his wife's confession, and some unconvincing testimony by domestic staff. The High Court judge, Sir Charles Parker Butt, himself a former Liberal politician until just three years earlier, reached the



extraordinary conclusion that although he was satisfied that Virginia Crawford was guilty of adultery with Dilke, there was no admissible evidence that Dilke was guilty of adultery with Virginia Crawford. Dilke was ruined nonetheless.

The legacy of the 1885 Redistribution of Seats Act accelerated the late-19th century process of the rise of Conservative support in the suburbs of towns and cities: what Salisbury described appropriately as ‘Villa Toryism’. With the division of suburban areas from the inner cities envisaged by the Act, the Tory Party could target suburban areas with strong Conservative support. Salisbury’s calculation was that this would make up for the weakening of his party’s traditional aristocratic base.

The redistribution of seats and redrawing of boundaries resulting from the Act shaped the dynamics of Kensington’s local politics to this day. Kensington was no longer attached to Chelsea, Fulham, and Hammersmith, and was divided into two separate constituencies, Kensington North and Kensington South,

approximately north and south of Holland Park.

Kensington South was precisely the kind of Conservative safe seat Salisbury had calculated would be produced. In the 1886 General Election, Sir Algernon Borthwick won the seat with 80% of the vote. In 1892 and 1895 he stood unopposed. In its various guises, it has remained a Conservative seat for almost 130 years.

The succession of Tory MPs it returned included Earl Henry Percy, a former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs elected in 1895, and who died of pleurisy in Paris in 1909, at the age of 38 – although unfounded whispers on the aristocratic grapevine suggested he had been murdered at the behest of the Spencer-Churchills on account of his acquaintance with Clementine Hozier.

Kensington South also returned Richard Law, elected in 1945, the son of former Prime Minister Andrew Bonar Law. Law held a series of ministerial jobs during the Second World War, including Financial Secretary to the War Office, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs between 1943 and 1945. In 1950 he published *Return from Utopia*, in which he managed to condense magnificently the essence of conservative thought:

“To turn our backs on Utopia, to see it for the sham and the delusion that it is, is the beginning of hope. It is to hold out once again the prospect of a society in which man is free to be good because he is free to choose. Freedom is the first condition of human virtue and Utopia is incompatible with freedom. Come back from Utopia and hope is born again.”

As a swing seat, Kensington North’s electoral history was more eclectic in terms of its party representation. Passing between the Conservatives and Liberals between 1885 and 1929, in 1929 it elected a Labour MP for the first time. Whereas his predecessors had



Algernon Borthwick

generally been of worthy and distinguished establishment stock, Fielding Reginald West was born in Huddersfield and received only an elementary education before working as a coal miner and then a clerk in a Bradford textile factory.

After the Great War, West moved to London, attending Regent Street Polytechnic (the antecedent of the University of Westminster) and training as a schoolteacher. He served as MP for Kensington North for two years before the collapse of Ramsay MacDonald's minority government, losing his seat in the 1931 General Election to Sir James Duncan, a Conservative baronet.

Kensington North returned two more Labour MPs before 1974 – George Rogers between 1945 and 1970, and Bruce Douglas-

Mann between 1970 and 1974. Whereas Fielding Reginald West had been a Yorkshire coal miner, Douglas-Mann read PPE at Jesus College, Oxford. The professionalisation of politics has been going on longer than we think.

In 1974, Kensington North and South were merged so that for the first time, Kensington was represented as a united entity and not as part of a wider area of west or north-west London. It was represented by Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams between 1974 and 1988, and after Sir Brandon's death between 1988 and 1997 by Dudley Fishburn.

In 1997, Kensington was once more dismembered and its constituent parts divided between Kensington & Chelsea and Regents Park & Kensington North. Regent's Park & Kensington North was won by Labour MP Karen Buck, who is now serving her fourth parliamentary term as MP for Westminster North.

In Alan Clark, elected in 1997, the electors of Kensington & Chelsea continued the area's proud tradition of flamboyant representatives. Impeccably louche and an acerbic diarist, it is sometimes remarked by my constituents that I am 'no Alan Clark'. It is not clear whether this is meant to flatter or to offend, but it is certainly true.

Upon Alan's untimely death in 1999, the constituency was ably represented by Michael Portillo until 2005 when he, generously, decided it was time to make way for an older man. I had the pleasure of representing Kensington & Chelsea upon my return to Parliament in 2005, and a reunified Kensington from 2010 to the present day.



Alan Clark

Feature

By
Michael Becket

Anthony Whishaw

anthonywhishaw.com

A VERY DIFFICULT MAN TO CATEGORISE – Anthony Whishaw paints large pictures and really very small ones – from about 15 cm to 7 metres – some are abstract, some figurative, some cubist, and some tending towards abstraction while quite clearly being identifiable as swirling water, landscape, sea crashing on the shore, or inspired by his car catching fire in a Tesco car park.

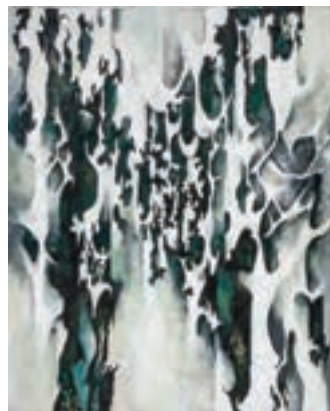
“I don’t like the idea of making a product – I am not trying to make something that is instantly recognisable as by me”. So he goes where the fancy and fertile imagination take him and produces a bewildering range of pictures. “I belong to no group or school” with each picture making “its own demands”.

And his studios are cluttered with scores of them. That is not because he cannot sell his extremely beguiling paintings but because he is working on a very large number in parallel. And they come in groups or series. There is for instance one set of pictures that are not exactly fully representational but unmistakably windows of various shapes, mostly with metal grills over them.

Those were inspired by a set of pictures he did some years ago as a set of variations on *Las Meninas* by Velazquez, sort of leapfrogging Picasso who was also inspired by the distinctly eccentric painting of the Spanish royal family. Though Mr Whishaw’s pictures may in turn have also been nudged into existence by his love of Spain and his love of Goya’s etchings and ‘black’ paintings.

But he takes his time. So his Kensington studio, which is part of his home, has a about eight or nine variants on that window theme. But there are also pictures which are very much more abstracted and are more landscapes, some with quite clear trees appearing in them. Some of those have a distinctly odd feel because they seem to have multiple viewpoints: one looking up and one down with correspondingly variant horizons.

A painting of a fragmented St Paul’s has a similar



Anthony Whishaw at work, looking like a Michelin man as he has “about nine layers of clothes on” in a wintery unheated studio in south London.





approach, with at the bottom a view from lying at the bottom of the front steps while another part shows the dome from above. This is part of another set of very different pictures in which he enjoys playing with point of view and the consequent optical illusions, to disorient the viewer. One set of pictures even has shaped canvases, some in plinked pairs, so one is never quite sure which is the forward one and which the back.

Even portraits, when one looks more closely, are in fact multiple images and sometimes multiple people.

Some of this work in progress is on the working wall because he has got stuck. He knows it is not quite right, or not quite finished, but is not quite sure how to improve it. It may take quite a long time before he spots the way out. "As I want to discover rather than copy or illustrate, the painting dictates its own future, in the sense that I cannot work on it unless it suggests the next step." That is the reason he has so many pictures in his studios – at any one time he may be working on a dozen or more and stands contemplating them, saying things like that picture seems to asking for something. "Often there are mental or emotional blocks and the work will remain dormant sometimes for weeks, months or even years."

On the other hand, for most of them completion will probably not be as long as the portrait he started painting of his landlord when as a young man he got a scholarship and worked in Spain for almost two years. That picture, of the batty proprietor of a sherry bodega and a crumbling chateau who spent his time driving nails into bits of wood and drinking prodigious quantities of fino, took fifty years to complete.

In fact Mr Whishaw had not one but three scholarships when he finished his training at the Royal College of Art. One was to go to Italy, one was a general help to work up a portfolio and one was from the Spanish government to work there. So he went to Italy, bought a Lambretta scooter, then in 1955 went to Spain with it and gravitated to the Cadiz area where he painted and started his portrait of the sherry-marinated landlord.

With his scholarship finished, he rode the scooter back to London and when he married his sculptor wife Jean Gibson, he took her on the scooter back to Spain for the honeymoon.

Inevitably he went into teaching – how is else a young artist to earn a living while he produces a portfolio, gets his name known and starts finding buyers? He taught variously in Watford, back at the Chelsea School of Art where he had been trained, and St Martin's. It was at first rather fun – "teaching is enjoyable because you meet other artists". But gradually it "got weighed down by bureaucracy and I did hardly any teaching".

For example, after he had seen, assessed and advised his allocation of around a dozen young artists, he had to write a

report on all the students' work. "That was enough to turn me right off." He is not too good at writing. He claims that is because although his mother rushed back to Britain to give birth so her son would not be obliged to do service in the Brazilian army, he was initially brought up back in Brazil and did not go to school until aged nine.

He does not come from an artistic family though his father doodled sketches of their Ascot hot water geyser. It was at school in England that his art master inspired him.

Fortunately by the time bureaucracy detached him from teaching, he was getting known. He had managed to get into an exhibition of Young Contemporaries which led to an offer to be represented by the Roland Browse & Delbanco gallery (now Browse and Darby) and some influential critics said nice things. "Terence Mullaly liked my work" and "John Berger wrote something". Mr Whishaw becomes wonderfully vague when asked how he managed to reach his current eminence.

He joined the Royal Academy in 1980 and has been a full RA since 1989. That very exclusive and limited membership puts him right at the top of his profession, as does his membership also of the London Group of distinguished artists. It is a long way from the early days.

His first studio in the 1960s was in a hall at the back of a church in Notting Hill. It was trifle hazardous as "people were firing air-gun pellets through the window and one learned to lie flat on the floor when that happened". But his wife worked with a potter who had a studio down a Kensington cul de sac.



All photographs: **photoBECKET**





It had originally been a studio for drawing horses, Mr Whishaw explains, which accounts for the huge doors.

When the potter retired she let the two young artists buy the premises “for what we could afford” because she wanted it to continue as an artists’ studio. Mr Whishaw’s wife died in 1991 but he has continued there ever since, though he also has an unheated studio in Bethnal Green for the really big pictures.

But his representation has been less constant. “I don’t stay long with galleries.” As he shifts his approach and his type of picture, Mr Whishaw moves out of the area of expected product that gallery’s customers have learned to expect and for which they go there to find the latest set of paintings. At 83 he is still changing and trying new approaches and does not expect to stop until physical incapacity prevents further work.

Left is Whishaw bundled against the elements, below in his heated Kensington studio.



Feature

By
Richard Northedge

The Kensingtons put Saki in khaki



In March 1914 – just five months before Britain entered the European War – the mayor of Kensington, William Davidson, addressed an army recruitment meeting in Iverna Gardens, headquarters of the Grey Brigade’s 13th battalion of reservists. The 13th – the Kensington Battalion – had 518 volunteers, barely half its 1,005 full strength, and Davidson stated: “I cannot help thinking that this is somewhat a slur on the youth of the Royal Borough”. There was no shortage of officers, he noted, but by May ranks had fallen to 460.

Some others were concerned at the coming conflict too. Author Hector Munro, under the pseudonym ‘Saki’, had the previous year warned of Kaiser William invading. His novel, *When Willie Comes*, describes how British reservists were slow to grasp fighting skills, giving Germany victory after a short war.

Declaration of war in August 1914 concentrated minds. The 13th soon had a full compliment and a second reservist battalion was formed. Davidson, an Ulster-born barrister, eyed the queues of volunteers stretching along Kensington High Street and obtained War Office consent to form a battalion of regulars. On 11 September the 22nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers – “The Kensingtons” – was raised and before long, Munro was on parade with them.

“Your King and Country Need You,” said posters signed by Davidson. But while pleased with the reservist recruits, he said: “I am sure, however, there are still a number of men resident or near the borough who want to help their country at this critical moment.” Standing on a flag-draped wagon in the playground of the new LCC school on Lancaster Road, Notting Hill, the mayor told a crowd: “I could not bear to think that any Kensington lad should not have his chance. Haste ye! Enroll!”

Many ‘pals battalions’ were being formed. The Fusiliers also had a Bankers’ Battalion, four Public Schools units (which proved long on officers and short on men), five Jewish groups (sent to Egypt) and a Sportsman’s Battalion. The Kensington’s recruits came from local shop staff and the council’s street-cleaners supplemented with London dockers. One of Davidson’s aldermen recommended a Boer War veteran, Major J A Innes, to command the 22nd and Captain Randle Barnett Barker, a relative of the mayor’s wife, was made second-in-command.

The soldiers joined colonial volunteers encamped at White City. They amalgamated, Davidson’s men in C and D Companies with the colonials comprising A and B. Innes gave the merged unit the choice of being called ‘Colonial,’ ‘Imperial’ or ‘Kensington.’ A and B Companies wanted ‘Colonial’. C and D preferred the local name but D’s officer said he cared

little so long as they got to France. Innes liked that attitude and, ignoring the vote, chose 'Kensington' – not least to gain the borough's backing.

It was a wise move. The men didn't even have broomsticks to use instead of guns when drilling on Wormwood Scrubs. There were no uniforms. Davidson personally snapped up the dwindling supplies of khaki from Harrods and bought other essentials, including 1,100 Kropp razors. "You will be glad to know that practically the whole of the clothing for men has been supplied by Kensington firms and, needless to say, is of good quality," he wrote.

His wife Beatrice organised a patriotic concert at White City for the new battalion with her husband acting as stage manager. Besides rousing British songs, the troops were entertained with the Marsellaise and the Russian national anthem in honour of Britain's brave allies.

Munro would have recognised that last song. He had been the Morning Post's Moscow correspondent before turning to short-story writing. Kensington residents were good fodder for Saki's social satires, however. In 'Fur', Suzanne takes a fancy to a Dresden figure in a Kensington shop. In 'the Music on the Hill' he says: "Sylvia, notwithstanding her name, was accustomed to nothing more sylvan than leafy Kensington". The opening words of 'Shock Tactics' are "On a late spring afternoon, Ella McCarthy sat on a green-painted chair in Kensington Gardens". And in Laura, Saki writes: "Her father lives in West Kensington – but I believe he's sane on other subjects".

Yet Munro did not initially join the Kensingtons. As a journalist he had been in parliament when the Foreign Secretary declared war. The writer immediately hired a horse and began exercising – even though he was aged 43, hadn't ridden for years and had suffered a bout of malaria. By the end of August he had enlisted with 2nd King Edward's Horse. "I hope to get out to the front. It is only fitting that the author of 'When William Came' should get to meet William half way," he declared.

However, the cavalry proved too arduous for Munro and he quickly joined the 22nd Battalion. Davidson's recruitment poster had sought men of 19 to 35 but accepted ex-soldiers up to 45. Munro scraped in as an existing soldier and became Trooper K/225 – K for Kensington. He joined A Company with the colonials however, giving an address in Dublin – where his brother was governor of Mountjoy jail. Professor Tim Connell has spotted that while British soldiers received a shilling a day, Canadians got 4/2d, New Zealanders 5/- and Australians 6/-. "It would be interesting to see the rate Hector Munro qualified for," said Connell.

On 27 October 1914 the Kensingtons marched to Addison Road station and went to Roffey Camp, near Horsham, for further training. A New Zealander wrote home: "Here I am trying to help a lot of decent London cockneys to train for the Front. We are recruited chiefly from South Kensington and the more savoury environs."

Davidson remained involved, checking the cookhouse on his visits and judging the sports day. The Horsham hospital gained a Davidson Ward. He sent every man a briar pipe for Christmas and one soldier's thank-you letter said: "I understand that thanks to your office we have been equipped far quicker and better than many battalions".

Munro helped produce a magazine, the Fortnightly Gazette, contributing as "Saki, 'A'



Company” – though usually on non-army subjects such as cinema habits. He taught German to fellow troopers four hours a week too. He became orderly to his platoon but still refused a commission, arguing that he would rather be a useful soldier than an indifferent officer – and that the training would delay him reaching the fighting in France.

But the unit’s move in June was to Clipstone in Nottinghamshire – and a month later, to Salisbury Plain. It was November 1915 before the 22nd sailed from Folkestone to Boulogne. The first fatality was a month later. Munro avoided spending Christmas Eve in a rain-soaked trench by being away training.

Saki’s novel had envisaged a short war. Once in Northern France Munro realised it would be a long one. A German shouted over the trench one day that it would be over soon. “In about three years,” replied the writer.

The Kensingtons moved from trench to trench before spending 10 weeks at Souchez, outside Arras, then progressing to Vimy Ridge and joining the Battle of the Somme in July. Two companies of the 22nd, including Munro’s, fought at Delville Wood, and were soon reduced to 400 men and 18 officers but he survived, coolly giving orders and was shortly afterward made Lance Sergeant.

He contributed to British magazines from the front. “Saki will give us the most wonderful of all books about the war,” wrote one reviewer. He didn’t. “Birds on the Western Front” – about skylarks, chaffinches and magpies – was his final article. His ‘Birdsong’. On 13 November 1916, a year after arriving in France, he was in a trench near Beaumont-Hamel during the Battle of Ancre. “Put that bloody cigarette out!” he yelled when someone lit up. Whether the shout or the glow attracted the German sniper, the single shot into his head killed Munro.

“He steadfastly refused a commission and loved his friends in A Company,” wrote a colleague. “From being a smart man he became the dirtiest looking old ruffian you ever saw.”

The 22nd had highlights. In February 1917, Hammersmith-born Frederick Palmer, a colleague in Munro’s company, assumed command of an operation when all the officers were shot, rushed an enemy machine gun and held the position against eight counter attacks. He lived to receive the VC. But there were many lowlights. Two months later at Oppy Wood the Kensingtons were almost wiped out. Barnet Barker told his relative, Davidson: “The regiment doesn’t exist now. Only 40 men returned with me. This murder of heroes is appalling.”

Conscripted recruits were sent to fill the dead men’s boots but the Kensington connection was quickly fading. The popular Barnet Barker was transferred to command an infantry brigade but he addressed the Kensingtons when the battalion, chosen by lot, was disbanded at Metz-en-Couture in February 1918. “The 22nd Battalion never lost a yard of trench or failed their comrades in the day of battle,” he said. “Though the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers has ceased to exist as a unit, you will not forget that we are all Englishman fighting Germans.” Barnet Barker was killed by a shell the following month.

Davidson began his sixth term as mayor in 1918 and was knighted. The following year he became MP for South Kensington, retiring after the next world war in 1945 to become Baron Broughshane of Kensington. However, links with northern France remain. The small town of Souchez, about 10 miles from where Munro is buried at Thiepval, had been the 22nd’s base for seven weeks and many Kensingtons still lie in its cemetery. The town was flattened by bombing but the Royal Borough adopted it and organised aid for displaced residents after the war, with dolls for the children. The market square was rebuilt – and is still called Place de Kensington.

Feature

By
Michael Becket

Artists of Kensington

Painters seem a clubbable lot who like to keep an eye on the competition. And they seem especially keen on Kensington as a place to congregate. The area round Melbury Road, close to Holland Park, has provided a home to clutches of Royal Academicians and a variety of other artists. So much so it became famous as the base for the Holland Park Circle.

It all started with a meeting in Italy in 1843 of the fourth Lord Holland and the painter and sculptor George Frederick Watts. Watts used the acquaintanceship to help his friends the Prinseps, who were looking for a

home after thirty years working for the East India Company. Lord Holland provided one of the gothic houses on the estate, near his own Cope's Castle, as Holland House was originally known. The house, on the site of what is now 14 Melbury Road, was then called Little Holland House and was big enough for Watts himself also to move in. The Prinseps were gregarious and with Watts created an artistic salon.

The salon extended its artistic coverage when Watts painted and shortly after married the actress Ellen Terry in 1864. But after only



Lord Leighton – self-portrait RBKC Leighton House



G F Watts – Ellen Terry National Portrait Gallery

ten months she left him. What went wrong is still unclear as nobody let on at the time and neither of them revealed anything even in their autobiographies. All Ellen Terry said was that it proved to be “an honest misunderstanding”. It could scarcely have been easy. Watts was frosty, restrained and ageing artist – he was 46 when they married, which was on the wrong side of middle age at the time – while Ellen Terry was just 16.

The Prinseps’ son Valentine also became a professional artist and a friend of Frederic Leighton. Prinsep got Philip Webb to design a house in restrained gothic, while Leighton went for a more austere half-classical style from George Aitchison. Leighton must have been a nightmare of a client as Aitchison commented “every stone, every brick – even the mortar and the cement – no less than all the wood and metalwork passed directly under his personal observation”.

Leighton and Watts were the focus and the heart of the Holland Park Circle. They were

close friends and would often call on each other using a gate that connected their gardens. Watts’ house contained four studios. He also built a large gallery extension to display his work designed by the architect of Leighton’s house, George Aitchison. Following a planning hearing at which few objections were raised, Watts’s house was demolished in 1964 to make way for a block of 30 flats. It is the only one of the Holland Park Circle houses to have been wilfully destroyed.

Leighton’s talent, good looks, engaging manners, and witty conversation helped him to great artistic success and presidency of the Royal Academy. His lavish entertaining and musical evenings with Val Prinsep, also a Royal Academician, gave the area an air of sophisticated bohemianism and many of the plots along Holland Park were bought by up-and-coming artists who created grand houses with studios as well as domestic accommodation. The lavishness was in part to impress customers with the success and



Leighton – music lesson Guildhall Gallery

elevated position of the occupants. And indeed many became Royal Academicians, with public honours, wealth and titles bestowed on them. All but two of their houses still remain. The circle included Sir Luke Fildes RA and another artist, Marcus Stone RA, who both commissioned Norman Shaw to create what are now 8 and 13 Melbury Road.

Despite the substantial size of the house commissioned by the fashionable sculptor Sir Hamo Thorneycroft RA, it was not large enough to accommodate six working artists and so soon after his marriage he built a studio annex next door. Among his most famous works are the statue of General Gordon in Horse Guards Parade, of Oliver Cromwell at Westminster, of Coleridge in Westminster Abbey and the frieze outside the Institute of Chartered Accountants. The painter Colin Hunter ARA lived in the same area and Holman Hunt, one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was at 18 Melbury Road. He remained faithful to the

original aims and actually went to Palestine to paint the *Scapegoat* in the baking heat and created one of the most reproduced paintings, *The Light of the World*.

On Leighton's death Prinsep objected strongly to the idea of Leighton's house becoming a museum and even more to the proposal that Holland Park Road might be re-named Leighton Road, launching a major campaign with several letters to *The Times* to air his distaste.

Phil May started drawing for *Punch* magazine in 1893 while living in 20 Holland Park Road. Along with several other Kensington residents such as Thackeray, Linley Sambourne and John Leech, his initials are carved on the famous *Punch* table. A funny and talented man, May was unreliable and living on a diet of whisky and cigars. He died in debt aged just 39. John Leech, 1817-1864, a little further along Kensington High Street near Wrights Lane, was another *Punch* stalwart – he produced over 3,000 pictures,



John Leech – The Thames *Punch* magazine

including 600 cartoons for the magazine. He also illustrated numerous books, including the hunting novels of R S Surtees, *The Ingoldsby Legends* by R H Barham and *The Christmas Books* of Charles Dickens. Dickens said they were “always the drawings of a gentleman”.

A little further along at 41 Kensington Square was the home of Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones 1833–1898. He was destined for the church but a fellow divinity student at Oxford, William Morris, got him enthused about art. As a result he apprenticed himself to Dante Gabriel Rossetti at the age of 23 and followed his master in the aesthetic approach – art has no function beyond itself. “I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream, of something that never was, never will be – in a light better than any that ever shone – a land no-one can define or remember, only desire – and the forms divinely beautiful.” He dismissed impressionists as painting “landscape and whores” and preferred medieval subjects, literary themes from Chaucer and Mallory, and Greek mythology. He was a founder member of the Morris design company, designing ceramic tiles, jewellery, tapestries, mosaics plus book illustration, most famously woodcuts for the Kelmscott Press’s *Chaucer* in 1896. He also rejuvenated stained glass and designed many church windows. In 1877, he was persuaded to show eight oil paintings at the Grosvenor Gallery (a new rival to the Royal Academy), which made him a star and hailed as a creator of the new Aesthetic Movement.

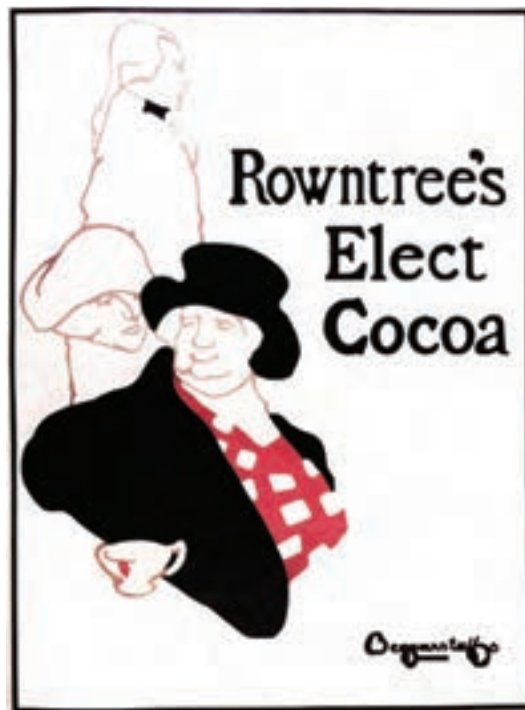
The studio/home for the fashionable portrait painter Sir James Jebusa Shannon RA, 1862–1923, was the last to be built along Melbury Road and Holland Park Road. Constructed on the site of what had been a farmhouse, it had two blocks to separate homes from studio – one containing the family home and the second the working studio.

That tight little area was not alone in attracting artists to parts of Kensington. But, like Shannon, not all the artists have fared well in public memory. For instance, inhabitants of the creative colony manufactured by Sir Edmund Davis. He had made a fortune in Australia and collected old masters at his house at 9 Lansdowne Road. He was also a patron of contemporary artists, including Rodin, and in 1904 built a block of flats/studios just down the road at number 80, rather strangely with communal bathrooms and a tennis court. It was popular with young artists and the house now has a blue plaque commemorating six of them, though the names ring few bells nowadays.

Charles Ricketts, 1866–1931, was a designer, sculptor and writer on art, but not enormously successful. However another struggling artist, lithographer and painter Charles Shannon, 1863–1937 was a fellow tenant from the start and had what the Oxford Dictionary of Art calls a “lifelong association” with Ricketts – the more explicit Kensington & Chelsea Council says they were lovers. So were the even less successful portrait painter Glyn Philpot, 1863–1937,



W P Frith – Paddington Station Royal Holloway College



Beggersstaff Brothers advertising

and painter and poster designer Vivian Forbes, 1891–1937. It was just as well they had the purpose-built quarters as homosexuality was a criminal offence at the time. Another on the plaque is James Pryde, 1866–1941, who produced such gloomy pictures he was called the Edgar Allen Poe of painting, but collaborated with his brother-in-law Sir William Nicholson as the successful Beggerstaff Brothers to design much-admired posters. And finally the plaque includes an even more obscure painter, F Cayley Robinson, 1862–1927.

Though those six may now seem pretty undistinguished, the house, now called Lansdowne House, attracted visitors of the calibre of Whistler, Carlyle, Augustus John, Shaw and Yeats.

In Pembridge Villas, not part of any colony or circle, lived William Powell Frith RA, 1819–1909, where a petrol station later occupied the site of his home, though that has since been replaced by a block of repro-design

flats. It was there he painted his two most famous pictures, *Derby Day* in 1858 (now in the Tate), and *Railway Station* 1862 (Royal Holloway College). He was illustrator of books such as *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but by the middle of the century started painting contemporary scenes which proved so enormously popular that the Royal Academy had to construct guard-railings to keep back the crush of spectators. Frith was less admired by the professional critics who complained he had compromised the overall effect of his pictures by detailing so many small incidents and creating so many lifelike people.

That seems a pretty impressive list but omits Walter Crane, Henry Moore, Samuel Palmer, Sir Edward Poynter, William Rothenstein and Sir David Wilkie, William Mulready and later the cartoonist Sir David Low plus phalanxes of Royal Academicians now known mainly to specialists. But more recent distinguished artists have included Augustus, Gwen John, Lucian Freud, and Bridget Riley.

Feature

By
Robert Golden

Princess Alice

KENSINGTON PALACE has been the London home of three members of the royal family, known as Princess Alice. For one it was a place to stay whilst visiting England, for the others it was their permanent London residence for many years.

Princess Alice of Greece (mother of the Duke of Edinburgh) – from 1922 to 1950 would stay with her mother, Victoria, Dowager Marchioness of Milford Haven, in Apartment 7, which is mainly on the first floor at the north west corner, overlooking the green.

Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, the last surviving granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who was almost 98 at the time of her death in 1981, and holds the record for being the longest-lived member of the royal family by birth, lived in Clock House, Clock Court from 1922 until she died there.

Perhaps the best remembered is Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, an aunt of The Queen, who is the longest-lived British royal by marriage; first patron of the Kensington Society and mother of the current patron. From 1970, until her death there, she occupied Apartment 1, which faces west and has a prominent port cochere. Alice died less than two months before her 103rd birthday, which would have been 25 December 2004.

Born in London at the now long demolished Montagu House, Whitehall, which was the home of her paternal grandparents, the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensbury, her second name, Christabel, marked the auspicious day on which she

arrived. The Ministry of Defence now occupies the site. With her typical dry humour, she once startled a group of RAF women when attending a function at the ministry, by telling them that she was born in a room downstairs.

Alice had seven siblings, three brothers and four sisters, who as children enjoyed the freedom of their Scotch estates especially during the school holidays. They revelled in the country pursuits which Eildon Hall, Drumlanrig Castle and Thornhill provided. In England they had the extremely grand pile, Boughton House, in Northamptonshire. A contemporary school friend once told me that Alice adored outdoor life and was hoydenish in her enthusiasm for climbing trees and other such pastimes.

Unusually for her sex and background she was sent off to boarding school; aged 12 she became a pupil at St James's, West Malvern, Worcestershire. The more independent side of her nature developed whilst at school where she began to think of travelling. In 1926 she went to Cape Town to stay with the Earl of Athlone (the Governor-General) and Princess Alice. The Athlones ensured that she saw as much of the country as was possible. She was especially enchanted with Zululand, sleeping under the stars, whilst big-game hunting. Later on she was bitten by a mosquito on her elbow which resulted in a bout of Cerebral Malaria.

Her love of Africa was cemented further when she went to Kenya to stay with her paternal uncle and aunt, Lord and Lady Francis Scott, who had settled at Deloraine, where they built a house and worked the land. Alice stayed

for over a year on her first visit. A woman of high moral principles, she steered clear of the so-called Happy Valley Set.

In all she paid three extended visits to Kenya, the later ones financed by the sale of watercolours she had painted whilst there.

She had known her future husband, Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, for many years before he asked her to marry him. In her memoirs she recalled that "There was no formal declaration on his part, I think he just muttered it as an aside during one of our walks." Due to the unexpected death of her Father, the grand marriage planned for Westminster Abbey on 6 November 1935, became a simple family occasion at the Private Chapel of Buckingham Palace. The present Queen, and the late Princess Margaret were among her retinue of bridesmaids.

From being a lively, outgoing person, Alice became a discreet, quiet, diligent member of the royal family, never putting a foot wrong. Towards the end of the war the duke was appointed Governor-General of Australia, the family sailing to Sydney in December 1944. By this time they had two sons, Prince William, who was three, and Prince Richard, a baby of three months. Alice was a great support to her husband during his tenure as GG, she was much admired by the Australians with whom she came into contact. During her widowhood she enjoyed visiting Australia incognito, revelling in the wide open spaces and visiting old friends.

When they returned to England they were very prominent, working members of the royal family, and were a great help to the ailing George VI, and then to Queen Elizabeth II.

Since their marriage they had lived at York House, St James's Palace, but were happiest at Barnwell Manor, their country home near Oundle. The duke suffered a series of strokes during the late 1960s and remained permanently at Barnwell. Alice spent as much time as she could with him, and it was decided that the large, rambling York House was inappropriate, so the princess and her sons moved to Kensington Palace occupying the rooms lived in by the late Princess Marina.

Soon after the wedding of Prince Richard

and Birgitte Van Deurs at Barnwell, Princess Alice suffered a devastating blow when her elder son was killed in a flying accident at the early age of 30. The duke died two years later at Barnwell leaving Alice free to carry out her public duties, and for her great passion, gardening. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, no mean gardener herself, always said that Alice was a great weeder. She slowly withdrew from public life, especially when Barnwell was let and she lived permanently in London. Having visited her at Barnwell, I occasionally saw her in her drawing room at Kensington, which was a re-creation of the one at Barnwell. She was content to potter in her small walled garden, and was often taken in her wheelchair to feed the ducks in the Round Pond. For her 100th birthday, her son and daughter-in-law hosted a gathering at KP, attended by The Queen and most of her royal and Buccleuch relations. Two months later, on a dark February night, she sat in her porch as the coffin of Princess Margaret was taken to the Queen's Chapel. As we followed the procession, led by a piper, I saw her give a wave in salute, as the hearse carrying her niece drove slowly by. Her coffin passed the same porch 20 months later.



Princess Alice with Robert Golden

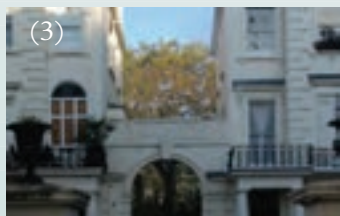
Feature

By
Thomas Pakenham

Trees in Kensington

“There are a few pretty remarkable trees in Kensington” said Thomas Pakenham. And if he says so, you had better believe him – he has written many books including *Remarkable Trees of the World* and *Meetings with Remarkable Trees*. Here he is pointing to a relatively uncared for tree in Mary Place (1), a Loquat from Japan, a tree that most people would walk by without even noticing.

Some of the finest trees in the Ladbroke Estate in north Kensington are hidden away in the communal gardens. These gardens are laid out *behind* the terraces – a daring innovation. You could call it the Ladbroke Experiment, this idea of turning the traditional London square inside out. Nobody driving through the area would have much idea of what lay behind those facades (2)(3). Even in these pictures from Stanley Crescent and Kensington Park Gardens where there is a gap, only a glimpse of greenery appears from the street. Nonetheless the streets and front gardens of this area are exceptionally rich in trees. At one end of Kensington Park Gardens is a large palm tree (4) put there by the council. It is

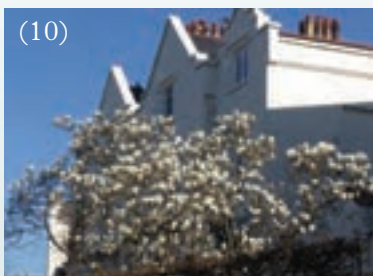
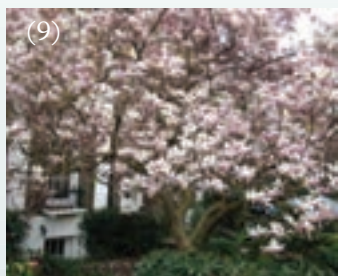
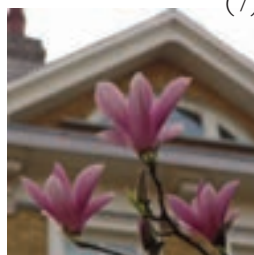


a Chusan palm, and it shows how our climate is now extraordinarily mild. A big palm tree like this would be considered amazing anywhere except in London or the coast. Front gardens of the area have an amazing variety (5).

There are some fine specimens of cherry in front gardens like the ones along Lansdowne Road (6).

The number of different magnolias in front gardens of Clarendon and Lansdowne Roads is impressive. I have not identified them all – There must be 10 or 12 species and varieties (7). They come in numerous shapes and colours: white, violet, violet-streaked. They probably include Magnolia ‘Star Wars’ (these hybrids are very difficult to tell apart) which takes its violet streaks and its goblet-shape from one of its two Chinese parents, *Magnolia liliiflora*. Another one in Clarendon Road: a rather wonderful bush. How well they complement the architecture. This one is *Magnolia x soulangeana* (8) probably 50 years old, in the front garden of one of these pilastered houses in Lansdowne Road. When the houses were built they would have been laid out with privet hedges, and perhaps thorn trees from the previous landscape.

And these are other Magnolias with a different range of colours and petal shapes. Some of the flowers are more rounded. This one must be a modern hybrid (9)(10)(11).



The name ‘Soulangeana’ comes from Capitaine Étienne Soulange-Bodin, an officer who fought in Napoleon’s army against the British. When the French were beaten at Waterloo he wrote a famous letter saying, we failed in war so let us succeed gardening. And he did succeed. He produced one of the most famous of all hybrids. It came from two Magnolias that spontaneously mated in his garden. (Botanists then spent years arguing about the spelling of the plant. It had originally

been mis-spelled 'soulangiana'. After years of agonised discussion they finally agreed it could be altered to 'soulangeana'. You can date a gardening book from the way it spells the name.)

This is Ladbroke Grove with one of my sister-in-law Linda Kelly's trees – quite out of scale with the front garden of course but what a wonderful tree (12). Fortunately she loves trees. It is a fully-grown forest tree, a copper beech. One trembles at the thought of some hedge-fund manager getting hold of the house and saying the roots threaten the house and the tree must go.

Here in Elgin Crescent the council, to its credit, have created a little extra pavement (13), and put in a Turkish hazel – an excellent choice. This conical tree (13) fits the site perfectly. The picture also shows a New Zealand cabbage tree which is less fortunate in its home. It is squeezed into the front area with hardly room for a dustbin.



This elegant Japanese maple in Clarendon Road (14) is never likely to get much larger. If you want to play safe and are terrified of tree roots, plant a Japanese maple. It is never going to be a giant, and goes an elegant pink in spring and a rich copper in autumn. In Japan they have bred more than 300 varieties of this maple. This is another, golden version (15).



There are some elegant cherry trees which have dazzling spring flowers and good autumn colour (16).



Newcomers to the area are big American evergreen magnolias which arrive on lorries from Italy. They are even planted by the council as street trees. I hope this is not too bold an idea. To plant an exotic in the pavement, with very little to protect it from damage, may be asking for trouble. But I hope the experiment succeeds (17).

If I had to choose





(18)

one single species of tree in the area it would be the ginkgo (18). It has absolutely everything. Scientists tell us that it evolved about 170 million years ago, long before the Alps popped up their heads. It predates the dinosaurs by millions of years. And it has hardly changed at all for all those years. Fossilised leaves of the ginkgo found in Battersea mud are exactly like those on the modern tree in China. It loves heat but tolerates the cooler climate of places like Ireland, and it has leaves shaped like a duck's foot. (Hence its Chinese name). This one is in a front garden on the corner of Lansdowne Road and Lansdowne Rise and it is going to be a very big tree indeed. It is the only tree in the area in whose life I played some part. I asked the owner why he had left a very large branch – across to the right – spoiling the shape. He cut it off, and now it looks like a goddess.

On the corner of Stanley Crescent and Kensington Park Gardens is this Gleditsia – an inspired choice. A tough American tree, it goes a delicate gold in autumn (19).

Clarendon Cross has become a miniature piazza. About 30 years ago Kensington & Chelsea council was anxious to stop commuters filtering through these terraced streets and to make them go down Ladbroke Grove. So they blocked off Clarendon Cross where five roads converge. Inadvertently, perhaps, they created a piazzetta, a charming pedestrian square with some delightful shops and a restaurant. About five years ago they planted this semi-mature Chinese tree, a Paulownia or foxglove tree, which fits the place perfectly.

I'm sure there are opportunities all over London for creating piazzettas like this (20)(21). Why does someone not tell the Mayor – and the councils of every London borough?

In Clarendon Road I spotted this exotic creature in a front garden. It's a Chinese plant called Clerodendron. It looks very happy here (22). The skilful gardener who looks after it has pruned it up as a tree, which is a brilliant idea. It has elegant white and purple flowers in September.

There are not many eucalyptus trees around. A friend of mine once said they look as if they have been sprayed with weedkiller. It is true that often the sickle-shaped evergreen leaves can look a bit tired and dusty. But I think this one in Ladbroke Square



(19)



(20)

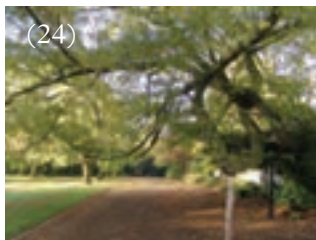
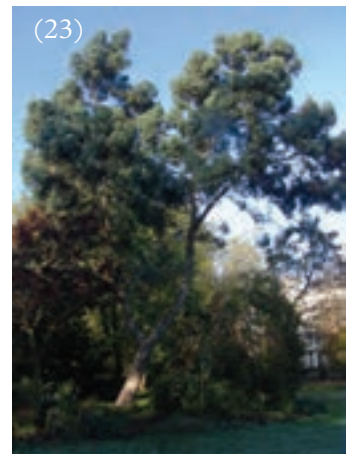
(21)



(22)

Garden looks perfect for its site. It is one of the advantages of such a large garden that you can have space for an Australian exotic which grows to be huge. There are hundreds of species of eucalyptus and about 15 will grow happily in London. (23)

Evergreen oaks, like this holm-oak in Ladbroke Square garden, can be treated as trees or they can be trimmed for hedging.



Another example of what wonderful things you can do in a large garden is provided by this ancient cut-leaf Turkey oak. It burst out of a front garden and was then allowed to arch right over the path, supported on crutches. (24)

The plane tree is one of the great trees of Ladbroke Square garden, and indeed of the whole of Kensington. It's perfectly sited, beautifully pruned and obviously loved. (25) It probably dates from the mid-19thC when this garden was laid out. If I had put any London trees in my first tree book, this would have been a candidate. It is at the top of my list with the ginkgo.



In Stanley Crescent they have some nice trees and good autumn colour but there's not much sense of design. This is a multiple-stem plane, a huge bush of a tree. (26) But they are



planting new things. This is an excellent tree for London: the American sweet gum, the liquidambar, a rainbow of colours in autumn. (27) This ash was once a champion. But somehow it got crudely pruned – not the way to treat an important tree. (28)



The Elgin/Blenheim Crescents garden needs some new ideas. At present it looks hardly better than a playing field. (29)



But this weeping willow suits it. The tree does very well in London. Ironically, the sulphur in car exhausts protects the leaves from disease.

This is an example of a fully grown ash tree which shows what these communal gardens can offer. They have the space for a tree which needs plenty of elbow room. (30)

If you plant a cherry tree – there are two of them in this picture – put it against an evergreen background. It gives you a wonderfully theatrical effect, These two cherries are planted against the background of an old yew which probably dates from the original farmland. In spring cherries have a moment of glory and there is nothing quite like it. (31)

In 1978 I was on the committee of the Ladbroke Association and we decided to celebrate the Queen's silver jubilee by giving each of the 15 communal gardens a mulberry tree. This is Lansdowne Crescent Garden and one of these mulberries was probably ours. (32) They look very happy here. In autumn they go a rich gold – perfect to celebrate the new Jubilee last year.



STREET ART



Samuel Beckett – Blenheim Crescent



Codrington Mews

Powis Gardens



Portobello Road



Our Diamond Queen – Golborne Road bridge



Portobello Road



Youth Centre – Wornington Green



Espana – Blenheim Crescent





Carnival time – Ladbrooke Grove



Kensington Church Walk

Portobello Green



Street Art

Victoria Gardens





Westbourne Grove



Westbourne Grove



Joe Strummer – Blenheim Crescent



Carnival time – Ladbrooke Grove



Nu-Line
– Kensington
Park Road



Youth Centre – Worlington Green

Amy Winehouse
– Golborne Road Bridge



Feature

By
Donald Rice

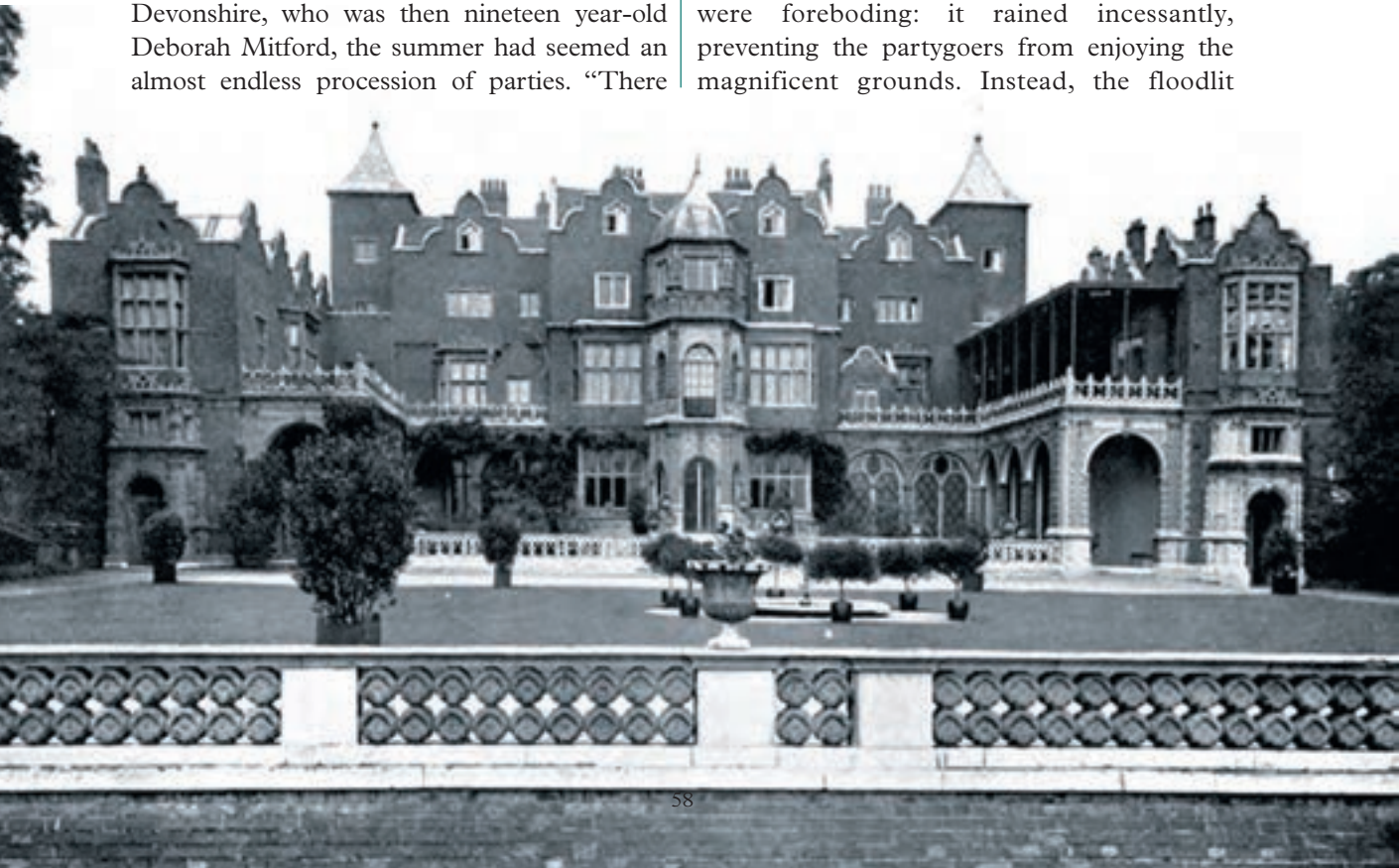
The Holland House Ball

The Lagondas and Rolls-Royces shuffling up the elm-lined drive from Kensington made a fairytale traffic jam.

“It took an hour just to reach the house. The roads through the park were so narrow, and there were so many cars,” recalled the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire. In July 1939 she was one of many hundreds of guests to attend the last great society event in London before the outbreak of World War Two. The Holland House Ball was to celebrate the ‘coming out’ of the Hon. Rosalind Cubitt, the present Duchess of Cornwall’s mother, and was attended by the King and Queen. For Deborah Devonshire, who was then nineteen year-old Deborah Mitford, the summer had seemed an almost endless procession of parties. “There

were so many balls, each more wild and exciting than the last, but the Holland House Ball was especially super because we knew it was all about to end.”

The evening began with dinner for thirty-six guests, including the King and Queen, in the Long Library. Having had dinner parties of their own all over west London, the rest of the guests then piled into their limousines and headed for Kensington. The famous mansion – the greatest surviving Jacobean house in London – had seen many such parties, but never one conducted under the gathering clouds of world war. Outside, too, the skies were foreboding: it rained incessantly, preventing the partygoers from enjoying the magnificent grounds. Instead, the floodlit



terraces and Dutch formal gardens – the workplace of eighteen full-time gardeners – had to be enjoyed from the ballroom windows.

But there was plenty to see inside: Queen Ena of Spain's pearl necklaces were so numerous and of such length they swung to her waist; the American ambassador, Joe Kennedy, chatted to Noel Coward; Mrs. Ronnie Greville, recovering from a bout of pneumonia but nonetheless still adorned with immense diamonds, had to be carried up the 17th century staircase in her wheelchair by two of her footmen; the queen herself glittered in a white crinoline dress, and the whole event was witnessed and recorded by two of the great diarists of the twentieth century – Sir Henry 'Chips' Channon and the young James Lees-Milne.

And then there was the house itself. Most guests gathered in the Victorian white & gold ballroom where Ambrose and his Orchestra were playing, but there were other, smaller rooms to admire: the painted panelled room created for Charles I, and the walls of the Joshua Room were lined with Reynoldses. However, many of the evening's guests had other things on their minds. "I never looked at a single picture," Deborah Devonshire confesses, "only at the young men". Her friend Sally Baring (nee Norton) admits that she, too, paid little attention to her surroundings: "it sounds dreadful, but we went to so many wonderful balls – sometimes two or three a night – and saw so many wonderful houses that we didn't really notice where we were. But I do remember the house being beautifully lit up and looking marvellous." Deborah Devonshire recalls the Queen as an enthusiastic dancer. "She was always the first onto the dance-floor and would lead a conga like a racehorse." Two new dances were especially popular: 'The Big Apple' and 'Booms-a-Daisy', though since there were real candles in the chandeliers, guests soon got stiflingly hot. "Lord Salisbury, a particularly wild dancer, got so hot he removed his coat to dance – unimaginable in those days".

The survival of Holland House into the twentieth century was remarkable enough. That it was in private hands and still used in the manner for which it was built was all the more

astonishing. The site was bought in the late sixteenth century by Sir Walter Cope, Chamberlain of the Exchequer and Keeper of Hyde Park. He patiently built up his estate to over 200 acres and by 1605 had begun to build a new house, Cope Castle, on the rising ground west of St. Mary Abbots church. The house was expanded by his son-in-law, Sir Henry Rich, and was re-named when he became first Earl of Holland (in Lincolnshire) in 1629. Timing was not his strong suit. Fighting for parliament at the start of the Civil War, he switched allegiance to the king at the end, and was beheaded for treason in 1649. His ghost was said to walk the gallery at Holland House, carrying its head on a plate.

In 1768 the house was acquired by Henry Fox, Paymaster General under Walpole, and so began its reputation as a centre of political intrigue that was to last over a century. Fox had amassed a fortune so vast he was accused by the City of London of being 'the public defaulter of unaccounted millions', though this did not stop him being raised to the peerage as Baron Holland. His second son was the famous politician Charles James Fox, who made Holland House the unrivalled centre of Whig politics. The third Lord Holland's wife, Elizabeth, was the greatest hostess of her day, her visitors managing to inspire envy even in the young Victoria: "Lord Melbourne dines with Lady Holland tonight", the Queen once said, "I wish he dined with me". A passionate admirer of Napoleon, Lady Holland had a bust of him by Canova installed in the Portuguese Garden at Holland House, and when he was finally exiled in St Helena she sent him over four hundred books and a steady supply of plum jam. Even in the garden she was in the avant-garde: she is credited with introducing the dahlia to England.

Throughout the nineteenth century, a mix of politics, gambling and brilliant women ensured a constant stream of great men headed for Holland House, including Byron, Sheridan, Thackeray, Scott, Dickens, Brunel, Talleysand, Macaulay, Dumas and Disraeli. Royalty frequently came too: in 1848 Victoria and Albert held a Scottish fête in the grounds that was so successful it was repeated the next year.

When the fourth Lord Holland died

childless in 1859, his wife made over the house to a distant relative, the Earl of Ilchester, in return for an annuity. Although frequently remodelled or added-to over the years, the innovative E-shaped plan of Cope's original mansion remained intact, saved by the perpetual money troubles of its owners. The park, however, had not been so fortunate. By the turn of the century, it had been reduced to sixty acres, but it remained sufficiently large and wild to maintain the illusion of being in the country. Pheasants were still shot, and cuckoos still heard, in the 1930s. The sixth Lord Ilchester, desperate to prevent any further deterioration of house or park, entered into negotiations with the National Trust. Then a tiny organisation more concerned with landscape than buildings, the trust had been alerted to the plight of historic houses by its forward-thinking chairman, Lord Lothian. In response, a list was drawn up of 230 country houses of national importance that were considered vital to preserve. Because of its still rural setting, Holland House was the only mansion in London to make the list. But it was not London that would destroy the old house.

The war, so feared by the guests of that wet night in July, broke out the following month. Initially, it seemed as if events might pass Holland House by; the maze-like interior of small Tudor rooms, as well as the house's central location, was an effective deterrent to army requisition. Nonetheless, Lord Ilchester, with admirable foresight, decided to move most of the priceless chattels from Kensington to his estate in Dorset. But on the night of 27 September 1940, at the height of the Blitz, a canister containing twenty-two incendiary bombs landed on the house. Fire took hold almost immediately, but so extensive was the bombing across London that night that the whole of Kensington ran out of water. Lord Ilchester's steward and the A.R.P wardens strove valiantly but vainly to contain the flames. As they stood watching the conflagration, their attention was momentarily distracted by a creature on the lawn: a fox had come out of the park to witness the appalling sight.

Chips Channon wrote in his diary: "Holland

House... has gone, and I am really sorry. It seems that it is beyond repair. I have been thinking of that last great ball there in July 1939, with the crush, the queen, and 'the world' still aglitter." James Lees-Milne surveyed the ruins a few months later for the National Trust: "The only part remaining, though badly damaged, is oddly enough the Jacobean Staircase... I am glad I once visited this house, and danced in it, in its heyday... The grass was long and unmown, but the trees were fresh and re-budding, quite indifferent to the terrible indignities of last year. The tranquillity made it difficult for us to realise we were in the centre of London."

The ruins stood as a melancholy shell for nearly seventeen years. The National Trust concluded that there was little left to save, and Lord Ilchester's priority became saving the fifty acre park from development. In 1952 he finally secured a sale to London County Council for £250,000, but a questionmark remained over the still substantial remains of the house. Total demolition was only prevented thanks to a public outcry and the vociferous campaigning of the newly formed Kensington Society, and eventually the East Wing was restored as a youth hostel.

Today the house ruins have been sensitively restored, and the park is the largest in Kensington & Chelsea. There are substantial areas of wild, unmanaged woodland, while the gardens near the house retain their formality. In the evening, local residents can hear the calls of peacocks and tawny owls, the bells of St Mary Abbots chiming from Kensington High Street, and the strains of classical music from Holland Park Opera performances in the summer. The principal terrace has been opened to the public, allowing grand remains of the old house to regain its place as the beating heart of the park.



The interviews for this were in 2009, and it is now included to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Holland House ball.

Reports

From
LOCAL SOCIETIES, 2013

ASHBURN GARDENS COURTFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

During the past year we have been dealing with several projects resulting from property developers trying to disregard the conservation area status of our neighbourhood. In one particularly blatant case we succeeded in having an illegal roof-top extension removed. There seems to be a tendency currently of developers wanting to grab as much extra square footage as possible by extending every which way, without any regard for their neighbours. Under particular threat from such inconsiderate projects are the mews streets, and a lot of our efforts at this time go towards protecting their integrity.

Other problem areas for our association are: intrusive advertising (illuminated pseudo phone-kiosks, large scale panels on buildings or free-standing); proposals for large-scale basement extensions under mews houses; excessive cases of retrospective planning applications; noise from air-conditioning units (new plants, and poorly maintained older machines).

Also, we have recently stepped up our campaign (liaising with police and neighbouring residents associations) to find a solution to the intolerable problem of prostitute carding in traditional phone boxes, which has taken a turn for the sinister, the carding now being carried out by organised gangs. This problem has been with us for a long time, with various initiatives having little success. So if any of our fellow associations have fared better, we should love to hear from them.

Our residents are also concerned about rogue behaviour by coaches and taxis, causing noise, air-pollution and traffic chaos at certain times of day. We are surrounded by several large hotels, so this is a serious problem for us.

All these problem areas require constant vigilance, so a big thank you to all our members and residents. We also are very grateful, and consider ourselves very fortunate to have the constant advice and support of the Kensington Society.

AGCRA is in Courtfield Ward and comprises Ashburn Gardens, Courtfield Road, Ashburn Place, Astwood Mews and Courtfield Mews, although our activities sometimes also involve neighbouring areas.

Friederike Maeda



THE BOLTONS ASSOCIATION

The Boltons Association devotes much of its time to 'quality of life' issues as well as planning ones. Otherwise, there is the danger that in focusing over-much on applications for large-scale development (subterranean or otherwise) one fails to take the time to 'sit back and smell the roses'.

The streets comprising The Boltons Conservation Area and The Beach on the Fulham Road are generally safe, clean and quiet (we do our best with night club and restaurant owners, plus the police and RBKC to keep it that way) and our association has an active programme of social events, such as twice-yearly lectures and a summer garden party.

Having said this, planning issues continue to take up a lot of our time. After several years of applications and two appeals, a revised application was approved by the council of an 'iceberg' house at 30 The Boltons.

There have also been numerous 'double basement' and under-garden swimming pool applications approved in Tregunter Road plus smaller, but still extensive, applications for basements below existing ground floor level in The Little Boltons, Cathcart Road, Redcliffe Road and Milborne Grove etc.

The number of applications has greatly increased, as property owners seek to get approvals in place before RBKC tightens up its present policy. However, in places such as Gilston Road, Tregunter Road and Cathcart Road any change in council policy will have come far too late to prevent massive disruption to residents. One of our members in Cathcart Road has eight large planned/under way developments adjoining/very near to her.

Still, one needs to be grateful for good news - an example of which is that the new detached villa at 18 Tregunter Road (to replace the one demolished in unfortunate circumstances) is well on the way to completion - ending a 15-odd year saga.

Calvin Jackson

BROMPTON ASSOCIATION

Transport for London is at last showing signs of adopting a more appropriate response to development at South Kensington tube station. Sketch plans showing a single storey addition to the 'bullnose', new low-rise residential development along Pelham Street and a focus on providing high quality retail, have been shared over the past year. Concerns remain, but what now seems to be being considered by TfL is a long way from the dark days of 2004 when TfL and Stanhope envisaged a twelve-storey tower with the lines buried under a Broadgate style mega development.

Also encouraging has been the Natural History Museum's recent willingness to engage with local groups. It is early days given recent history, but the museum now seems to see the need for a master-plan. The Victoria & Albert Museum began some 25 years ago and the Amanda Leveté scheme for the Boiler House Yard site is the culmination of years of careful thought and



planning: so much more appropriate for the V&A than Liberskind's Spiral. The Science Museum is embarked on its own master-plan which will see museum interiors restored to former glories. The Natural History Museum has some way to go to catch up. The temptation to focus on small scale income generating projects – like paving over the East Lawn – that damage the environment for all without addressing the fundamental challenges the museum faces, needs to be resisted. Waterhouse's great building is far too important to be treated in such a manner.

Pressure for A3 uses (café, fast food) in South Kensington and Knightsbridge continue unabated and tables and chairs licenses continue to be flouted. Both areas are under great pressure for change. The big question is whether the council is genuinely interested in protecting the amenity of local residents.

Lastly, we succeeded in persuading the Boundary Commission to retain the historic parish name of Brompton in the recent ward boundary changes and the commission agreed with our members who feel they belong with Knightsbridge and South Kensington rather than with Queensgate as RBKC had advocated.

Sophie Andreae DSG, FSA, IHBC, Chairman

CAMPDEN HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Holland Park School organised a residents' tour of the building and all were impressed with the space, light and quality of the construction. However, opinions differed on the overall architectural design and particularly its massing and effect on Holland Park. It will be interesting to see how, with the winter lack of tree leaves, the mass of the school impacts the park.

Everyone present hoped soon they would be doing lengths in the new swimming pool. However, this is currently not possible since the pool is out of action, having sprung a leak. They have yet to find the cause of the problem. I hesitate to suggest that there could be lessons from this problem for all those basement developments, particularly those with swimming pools.

Since the school opened there has been considerable light and noise pollution. Finding the cause and implementing remedies has been a long process, though progress has been made.

Progress on implementing community access, a condition of the planning approval, is very slow and the council has still not put it into operation. The council promises the plan will be executed, but there is still no agreed date for it. So, we have a school costing taxpayers upwards of £80 million, a swimming pool out of action and no community access and use.

Our summer party was held as usual in Campden Hill Square garden. We were lucky with a fine evening and so enjoyed the garden, music from the Portobello Stompers and food and wine ably served by students from Holland Park School.

We were very pleased to have Cllr. Victoria Borwick as our guest of honour and to have Shaun Bailey as a guest. He stood as a Conservative parliamentary candidate for Hammersmith and spoke about his work in the borough as well as explaining to students from Holland Park School what it takes to succeed in politics.



The re-development of Notting Hill Gate will be a major preoccupation in the weeks and months ahead. We intend to work closely with the Kensington Society which we believe should take a lead role in gathering residents' societies' views and ideas.

Finally members continue to suffer from the proliferation of basement developments. It is over three years since the Ladbroke Association produced its report and still there is no basement policy from the council. Not surprisingly basement contractors are vigorously fighting any policy proposals that inhibits their ability to create yet more and more bigger 'icebergs'.

David White, Chairman

CHERRY TREES RESIDENTS' AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

For the CTRAA which covers the area between Kensington Church Street and Kensington Gardens, 2013 was dominated by buildings works; mainly basement constructions and the huge project at the site of the former nursing home in Vicarage Gate, where an apartment block with 15 luxury flats is being erected.

Throughout the year, there has been building work along the three major streets in the area (Palace Gardens Terrace, Brunswick Gardens and Vicarage Gate); often on as many as 10–12 sites at the same time. Beside the noise, dust and lorry traffic, this has meant some 20–30 resident parking bays constantly being unavailable.

During 2013, the RBKC planning department received 19 basement applications for ten different properties in the CTRAA area, and approved eight, with two not yet decided by mid-January 2014, i.e. all basement applicants have eventually been successful after submitting revised applications. Several of these projects have yet to start and the apartment block in Vicarage Gate is far from finished, so 2014 looks to be not much different.

The CTRAA held its usual midsummer party in the St Mary Abbots' Vicarage's garden on 27 June, its autumn party in Inverness Gardens on 22 September, and its AGM in St Mary Abbots Church Hall on 25 November.

EARLS COURT SQUARE

There are some on-going planning applications which should with luck be resolved this year. There has been an improvement in rubbish not being dumped on the pavements, thanks to the noble work by one of our committee members and Andy Almond, the RBK&C Street Line officer allocated to the Earl's Court Ward. On a lighter note, there were two occasions of filming in the square.

This year is the ECSRA's 40th anniversary for which we are making plans to celebrate

Christine Powell, Chairman



EDWARDES SQUARE SCARSDALE AND ABINGDON ASSOCIATION

Planning issues continue to dominate the ESSA agenda, in particular about the number of applications for basements, most of which are stretched to the limits which are defined under current policies. Some have been refused and we have managed to get amendments to a number of others; the speaker at our AGM in May will focus on the topic of Making Basements Neighbourly.

We have for several years recognised the particular significance of mansion blocks in the borough and our Mansion Block Group continues to grow. It deals with matters of particular concern to ESSA, such as the high level views of new developments but also provides a forum for an exchange of views on issues particularly relevant to the management of mansion blocks. We have fifteen mansion block members and the group is open to members from outside the ESSA area.

Recognising the importance of local traders to the character and amenity of our area we have also started a Local Business Group which is steadily developing. We are concerned that, notwithstanding the RBKC's recently adopted policies to provide more protection for these uses, there continues to be considerable pressure for change of use to residential, either completely or partially.

Anthony Walker

FRIENDS OF HOLLAND PARK

There are so many issues, large and small, a park the size of Holland Park generates that The Friends must focus on things that make a positive difference, in line with our charitable objectives. Our work generally falls into three categories: monitoring building developments that affect the park, funding activities or enhancements to the park and staging events that generate funds while offering enjoyment to participants.

The unsightly visual impact the opera's temporary buildings have on the park and the length of time the terrace is closed continue to be a major concern. Constructive dialogue with the council has explored mutually acceptable solutions, but these require capital budget and it is disappointing that this has not been forthcoming for 2014. We will continue to press for improvements in keeping with the environment of Grade 1 listed Holland House. We have also been working with the developers of the old Commonwealth Institute site, and with the Design Museum who will take it over, to retain the informal character of the adjoining part of the park.

Once again, we have sponsored a programme of walks run by the park's ecology team and we have donated money for innovative learning aids in the new Ecology Centre. The Friends contributed to the return of The Walking Man statue and have commissioned a sculpture for the Sun Trap Garden. Our annual art exhibition returns to the Orangery in April and we are producing a new, and much-needed, guide to Holland Park.

Jennie Kettlewell, Chairman



THE GOLBORNE FORUM

A major focus of the forum's work is on planning and development issues affecting Golborne, including:

- the Wornington Green redevelopment;
- the Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre;
- the Golborne Road and Ladbroke Grove bridges;
- the Portobello Wall art installations;
- retention of pubs and keeping chain coffee bars etc out of Golborne;
- celebrating and protecting Golborne's vibrant and eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, parks and the wonderful street market and canalside.

The forum is grateful for the Kensington Society's support during 2013, particularly in relation to the successful campaign against Papa John's, part of a large chain of pizza delivery operations which had replaced a popular Moroccan restaurant in Golborne Road. The Golborne Forum consistently opposed the siting of Papa John's in Golborne Road on the grounds that it was actually a take-away place rather than a restaurant, chain restaurants or take-aways are not wanted in Golborne, nuisance to local residents from pizza delivery bikes, and that it did not have planning permission. Papa John's final appeal to the High Court has now failed – a great victory for local action.

The Golborne Forum, which is open to everyone living or working in Golborne, aims to give local people a voice on the big issues affecting the community; make the case for Golborne to help bring funding into the area; and consult and communicate with Golborne people about what's going on. More information is available from www.golbornelife.co.uk.

KENSINGTON COURT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Same old, same old. It has been the usual battle trying to prevent greedy landlords from turning shops and offices into flats and houses. We rally the residents and occasionally we manage to stop them. But landlords of course have a million-pound incentive to keep coming back. They marginally revise their plans, re-apply and if all that fails, call in their high-priced barristers and obliging experts to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. We are beginning to feel like King Canute, trying to hold back an overwhelming tide that will finally wash away the heart of our neighbourhood. To make matters worse, all too often the final results are luxury second homes for very rich foreign owners who barely visit their ever-appreciating investments. Already one in five of the properties in our ward are second homes, the highest proportion in the Royal Borough, perhaps even in the UK. Will the last full-time residents of this corner of Kensington please turn out the lights when they sell up and leave.

John Gau CBE, Chair



THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

We have continued to fight the good fight on all fronts. Like many in the central postcodes, our main and increasing concern has been the near obsession with basement excavations in residential properties. The arguments are by now well established: the seemingly 'easy money' that can be made by adding new square footage against the nuisance and damage, both physical and financial to properties nearby. More and more, there are instances of damage being caused not just to the house next door to the incessant pneumatic drilling but to properties further away that are still affected by the vibrations. Adjacent properties do have some consolation in that party wall agreements can provide for compensation for collateral damage, though this in no way compensates for the blight caused by noise, dust and heavy construction traffic over a period extending to two years and beyond. But houses further afield have little or no redress; indeed a claim on their own insurance may well result in their premiums rising.

The councils have not been entirely oblivious to these problems, however. Early last year, Kensington & Chelsea published its new basement policy, closely followed by Westminster with its own version a few months later. While there are still legal hurdles to their full adoption, and unsurprisingly the proposals are being vigorously contested by (well-funded) basement developers, there is a feeling that we may have finally reached a tipping point, and that some relief for long-suffering neighbourhoods may be in sight.

Meanwhile the café 'monoculture' of Brompton Road shows no sign of abating. We recently conducted a survey of the main commercial zone, the 700 or so metres from Scotch House corner to the Victoria & Albert Museum, and were somewhat amazed that there were 59 separate licensed premises offering food of one sort or another. Whereas in the past, the class use order gave some protection from change of use from A1 (retail) to A3 (food), recent changes in government policy have removed this protection. Shop after shop has closed and re-opened almost immediately as a café. Surely there is a point at which enough really is enough?

But here too there is some light at the end of the tunnel. At our instigation, Westminster and K&C have been convening about once a quarter for what has come to be called The Knightsbridge Summits. Here, councillors, officers, the police and residents can freely exchange views and try to come up with best practice solutions to common problems. Progress is being made.

NEED FOR MORE PEOPLE TO TAKE PART

The district societies and amenity groups need more people – especially younger ones – to get involved with running the organisations. They need help in reviewing and commenting on planning applications, which is a constant and important activity. Anyone interested, or anyone who can suggest people who might be interested, please get in touch with the local group or the Kensington Society.



LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The Ladbroke Association has been following with admiration and interest the work by our neighbouring sister organisation, the Norland Conservation Society, in preparing a neighbourhood plan. It was a great achievement on their part, but we have concluded that for our larger and more complex area we will just not be able to find the volunteers to undertake the massive amount of work that would be involved. However, we are planning to look at each of our streets in turn to consider whether we should be seeking to have any further buildings listed or subjected to Article 4 Directions. We are also planning to set out for each street the features that we see as important or as in need of restoration or replacement.

In this context, we are very encouraged by the number of people buying houses in the area who are replacing lost stucco detailing and other lost features. The photographs [below] show a house in Clarendon Road that was damaged in the Blitz and lost not only its detailing but its entire porch. The new owner has completely restored the front, a most welcome development.

We continue to be concerned at the continuing stream of applications for basement developments in our area, some massive, and the effect they have on the amenity of the area during the lengthy construction period. The council's proposed new policy should help, but we still consider that more drastic action is needed by central government to make these developments more tolerable to the unfortunate neighbours.



No. 72 Clarendon Road in 2006



No. 72 Clarendon Road in 2013

LEXHAM GARDENS

Another great year for Lexham Gardens. We came third in the Brighter Kensington & Chelsea Garden Square competition and received a certificate of excellence from the London Garden Society. We would like to thank Oliver Dickinson, our gardener, for all his hard work. This last year he has built substantial compost containers to increase our sustainability by recycling as much garden waste as possible.

We continue to work with the council through our supportive



local councillors to maintain good services. Currently we are working through the proposals by Transport for London for an east-west cycle path through Lexham Gardens and Lexham Walk.

Our garden continues to be a wonderful amenity for residents including many children.

Our residents association flourishes with 236 member households. We have become a close knit supportive community since our garden was refurbished in 1990.

Sir Cyril Taylor, chairman

NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

In 2013, after five years of working with the council's planning policy and conservation officers, public consultation and a referendum the society, had its Neighbourhood Plan accepted by a majority of 74% – the first in London, and the first in the country to have conservation at its heart.

It all began when we realised the need to update our CAPS, which was 35 years old and inadequate to cope with the combination of development pressures and relaxed permitted development legislation – a problem faced by all conservation areas. We had completed our CAPS update by July 2010, but no further progress until a year later, when Penelope Tollitt (of the council) suggested the way to give it real force would be to turn it into a quite new concept – a Neighbourhood Plan. Had we known how much work and hassle was involved we might have thought twice before accepting this suggestion. Just before the referendum, Stephen Williams, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, visited Norland, so we could show him what we had achieved, on-going concerns and future plans.

We have also coped with an increasing tide of planning applications – mostly perfectly sensible, but some outrageous; assisted extensively in RBKC planning consultations, and planted hundreds of bulbs for spring in Transport for London's plant beds at the end of Holland Park Avenue, as part of our campaign to improve the approach to Norland Conservation Area from the west.

NCS will now work with the council's planning and transport, and other departments to ensure that its Neighbourhood Plan is implemented, and not only on the planning front. Our future focus will be looking at traffic management - particularly rat-run and speeding traffic, while the ongoing business of continued vigilance to prevent undesirable development, safeguarding and improving open spaces and trees and campaigning for retention of local shops, amenities and business, will continue unabated.

ON SLOW

As usual, we have had a year of mixed results, with more failures than achievements. With this disappointing record, the lot of our residents in this neighbourhood has worsened. This coming year is a year of



local elections, and the residents might ask their prospective candidates what they have done or would do to maintain or improve our deteriorating environment.

The year started with the failure to prevent the planning permission for the redevelopment of Park House. Typically, now planning permission had been granted, the house has been put up for sale. Thus the original owner who gets the planning permission which will disrupt the lives of those residents unlucky enough to live near the development, will not share in this disruption, but will profit from it.

Despite our representation, and that of The Brompton Association, we were unable to prevent the redrawing of the local ward boundaries, promoted by the RBKC, so that the well-established Brompton Ward was divided up amongst the three neighbouring wards. We have further been unable to prevent, despite repeated representation, RBKC planning department approving the continued change of use from A1 (retail) to A3 (restaurant, café, fast food). Thus the number of shops available to the residents disappear in favour of amenities to the visitors.

Finally, we were disappointed that despite our support of the council's attempt to impose some more protective measures for the residents, on basement development, the matter has been shelved to early in 2014. This delay has resulted in a mass of applications, as developers get their plans in before the possible new measures come into force.

Nonetheless we have had some success in protecting the residents, by persuading the RBKC licensing committees not to allow alcohol sales after 10.30pm in many establishments. Further, RBKC has agreed with our request to provide more free standing litter bins and a few smaller bins attached to lamp posts.

Eva Skinner

PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

The Imperial College Endowment Fund first submitted a planning application to develop the land to the rear of 28-32 Pembridge Gardens in April 2009. Since then three further applications have been made and refused, the last one in August 2013. A new application is now being made which is radically different from previous ones.

The proposed building would be a terrace of six separate houses each with its own entrance. It would be considerably lower than those previously proposed because it would have only three floors instead of five, there being no basement and no mansard. The architectural style is very much in the same as that of the surrounding buildings.

The company appointed by Imperial College to oversee the new development discussed the revised proposals with members of the Pembridge Association committee in November 2013. Several suggestions made by PA members have been incorporated in the revised plans to be discussed at a second pre-application with the council early in 2014.

As before, the purpose of the development is to provide income through letting for the Imperial College trust fund.

The permitted conversion of 25 and 26 Pembridge Square



granted in 2008 from a hotel to a private residence has at last begun.

The approved conversion of the former Post Office at 220a-224 Westbourne Grove to a shop and residential accommodation is expected to begin sometime in 2014.

There was a marked increase in applications (20) for subterranean developments in the first half of the year and an equally marked drop (7) in the second half.

Roy Griffiths, Planning Secretary

ROYAL CRESCENT GARDEN COMMITTEE

We have made significant progress with upgrading the garden this year as well as having a busy year for residents' activities and winning more awards than ever for our work on planting and improvements.

Restoration project – work began in 2002. In 2013 we completed Phase 4 – a major re-planting of the Holland Park Avenue bed, putting in hundreds of plants which are now settling in well. So far this project has been completed within estimated costs for each section. The final parts of the project involve continued upgrading of the planting, installing security lighting and improving the watering systems. Our big project for the coming year is the railings repainting which we hope to complete in late Spring

Parties/Events/Filming – several residents held large parties as well as the usual (resident owner's) nursery school sports day. We also held a well-attended 'Meet your neighbours' event. Also, the committee gave permission for two films – a student's short film which won an award, and a scene in the film 'Gemma Boverly' made by a French film crew. Both filmmakers made contributions to garden upkeep.

Next year we will need to do quite a bit of tree surgery to keep our mature trees safe from storm damage and disease.

London Garden Squares Open Weekend 8/9 June – attracted over 200 visitors. As usual, we had many compliments about how wonderful the garden now looks. Next 14/15 June the garden will again be open.

Nuisances – our main challenges come from:

- damage to the railings – lost finials where intruders climb over and chipped paint from bicycles padlocked to them although it is forbidden under the garden rules
- broken glass and litter left by users who fail to take their rubbish out of the garden when they leave
- occasional anti-social/drunken behaviour/ unacceptably high levels of noise at parties and a few night intruders who typically move on before we can caution them.
- people bringing in dogs despite the fact that this is specifically forbidden in the garden rules

Three Awards – won second place for the fourth time in the Brighter Kensington and Chelsea Scheme for Community Gardens in North Kensington. We also won two awards in the London Garden Squares Competition.

Helen Murlis – Chairman



ST HELENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

As in recent years, much of our activity on planning issues has related to developments across the borough boundary, in Hammersmith & Fulham. While the two boroughs are neighbours (and part of the Triborough arrangements, with Westminster) their planning policies are often in sharp contrast.

Hammersmith & Fulham sees itself as a “borough of opportunity”. For many this has led to a series of major planning decisions that have conceded too much to developers wanting to maximise floorspace through building heights and densities.

The association has continued to work with the Hammersmith Society, as well as the Kensington Society, in trying to mitigate the worst aspects of over-development of the White City Opportunity Area. Often we have found our comments on planning applications to be mirrored by the views of the Royal Borough, which strongly opposes proposals for tall towers along its western boundary. But sadly Hammersmith & Fulham Council has proved to pay no more heed to the views of its neighbour council than to local amenity bodies and residents groups.

A major step for the association in the past year has been the establishment of a new neighbourhood forum in North Kensington. The St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum was designated by RB Kensington and Chelsea last July, and is in the early stages of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the area. This will be the second neighbourhood plan in the borough (following on from Norland). While the process is demanding in terms of volunteer input, we believe that it will prove worthwhile in giving local people a greater say in the future of a fast-changing part of London.

The association had its fifth anniversary last autumn, and continues to be well supported by residents in the part of North Kensington bounded by Dalgarno Gardens to the north, St Marks Road to the east, and Westway to the south.

THURLOE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

TRA continues to provide a much-needed voice for local residents and small owner-run businesses which have silently suffered from the excessive impact of special interests and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Traffic, noise, nuisance, vermin, street drinking and crime persist, and our elected representatives either remain powerless or refuse to acknowledge the severity of the problem. This may sound familiar and it is. We have made little progress in getting past the curtilage of Hornton Street.

Over the year, we have witnessed RBKC ignore parts of its own strategic plan in favour of others to justify their goals. Whilst planning and licensing applications are available for all to see, decisions are often made and conditions written behind closed doors without any public oversight. Democratically elected councillors seem to be happy or powerless, and exclude their constituents from the dialogue until it is too late, whilst business interests are part of the



decision-making process. It is, therefore, patently obvious that residents are not important at all.

The opportunity to capture millions of pounds from the dramatic increase in visitors following the abolition of museum admission fees in 2001 has proved irresistible, and the area has exploded with a raft of businesses to cater for their needs whilst residential amenity has been destroyed.

TRA has reignited a sense of community in the area between residents and some of the smaller local businesses. We have reached out to nearby residents' groups, and we are trying to come up with a way to reclaim our neighbourhood. We all recognise the importance of a vibrant business sector but we must, and we will, regain the balance and capture a portion of the castle. With a few notable exceptions, RBKC would rather not hear from residents but we will not be silenced. After all, they are supposed to be working for everyone, not just business interests.

VICTORIA ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

VRARA celebrated its 40th anniversary – we were founded in 1983 in response to the threat of an additional storey on the two major hotels spanning the street block between Victoria Road and De Vere Gardens. The irony is that these buildings have been demolished to make way for the huge De Vere Gardens development, which has now been under way for three and half years.

Taking stock over the 40 years, we have achieved a lot – reinstated Victorian lighting throughout most of our area, removed almost all parking signs from separate poles, redrawn the parking zone; drew up proposals for revitalising our local centre Gloucester Road North, securing a school travel plan for Thomas' School, maintaining the De Vere Conservation Area, opposing unsympathetic developments, including basements, and insisting on stronger controls over construction traffic and parking suspensions – we aim to be a "skip-free zone".

2013 has seen increasing development pressures for basements – we have tried to minimise the damage, such as the extent of gardens covered, the loss of trees and the impact on neighbours.

We successfully opposed the international equestrian event proposed for the area in front of Kensington Palace, which would have taken this popular area out of use for yet another summer due to damage to the surface.

The enhancement project for Gloucester Road North has at last come to fruition – the clutter has been cleared, the existing pedestrian crossing improved and a brand new one installed.

Our aspirations for the future, in line with the City Living, Local Life survey, include slowing down the traffic in the area. Our worries include the increasing amount of vacant housing (Census 2011 showed 11% vacancy).

Michael Bach, Chairman



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

Incoming resources	2013	2012
Voluntary income	£	£
Subscriptions	9,005.00	7,830.00
Donations	1,462.00	2,615.90
Gift Aid	2,211.69	6,697.76
Total voluntary income	12,678.69	17,143.66
Activities for generating funds		
Events	1,825.00	0.00
Annual report advertising	4,140.00	3,450.00
Total activities for generating funds	5,965.00	3,450.00
Investment income		
Gift Aid interest	0.00	28.29
Bank interest	525.21	1,089.21
Total incoming resources	19,168.90	21,711.16
Resources expended		
Charitable activities		
Newsletter	1,127.75	1,310.19
Events	1,887.83	542.26
Annual report	5,187.00	7,375.91
Professional fees	1,980.00	2,500.00
Subscriptions paid	80.00	100.00
Total charitable activities costs	10,262.58	11,828.36
Governance costs		
Insurance	346.81	320.28
Professional fees	1,647.00	689.50
Office expenses	355.41	180.00
Total governance costs	2,349.22	1,189.78
Total resources expended	12,611.80	13,018.14
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	6,557.10	8,693.02
Total unrestricted funds brought forward	67,829.28	59,136.26
Total unrestricted funds carried forward	74,386.38	67,829.28

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013

	2013 £	2012 £
Current assets		
Debtors		
Prepayments and accrued income		
Subscriptions and donations	0.00	30.00
Interest	62.42	287.13
Events	4,595.18	0.00
Insurance	216.81	58.00
Total prepayments and accrued income	4,874.41	375.13
Cash at bank and in hand		
Scottish Widows Bank	62,000.00	62,000.00
Barclays Bank	9,102.97	5,454.15
Total cash at bank and in hand	71,102.97	67,454.15
Total current assets	75,977.38	67,829.28
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Accruals and deferred income		
Subscriptions and donations	31.00	0.00
Events	160.00	0.00
Professional fees	1,400.00	0.00
Total accruals and deferred income	1,591.00	0.00
Net assets	74,386.38	67,829.28
Funds of The Kensington Society		
Unrestricted funds	74,386.38	67,829.28

Approved by the Trustees on 16 January 2014

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The net incoming resources for the year were £6,557.10 which is a decrease of £2,135.92 from last year. Subscriptions increased by £1,175.00. Adjusting for a generous donation of £1,000.00 last year, the donations of £1,462.00 were similar to 2012. The Gift Aid in 2013 is £2,211.69. In 2012 the Gift Aid received was for the four years to 31/12/2012 of £6,697.76. Bank interest is £525.21 as a consequence of lower interest rates during the year.

The events and lectures during the year resulted in a small surplus of £87.46.

The Annual Report cost (net of advertising income) is £1,047.00 compared with £3,925.91 in 2012.

Charitable activities professional fees were incurred for advice on planning issues.

Professional governance invoices were received in 2014 for 2008 and 2009 accountancy fees. These have now been agreed and paid.

The balance sheet remains strong with funds of the Society improving to £74,386.38. £62,000.00 is on deposit with the Scottish Widows Bank.

The Society wishes to thank all the members who have generously subscribed £9,005.00 and donated £1,462.00 and participated in the Society events during the year.

Accounting policies

- **Accruals basis**

The financial statements are prepared on accruals basis to match incoming resources and expended resources within the same activity within the same year.

Incoming resources

- **Recognition of incoming resources**

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

The charity becomes entitled to the resources;

The trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and

The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- **Donations**

Donations are only included in the SoFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

- **Tax reclaims on gifts and donations**

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SoFA to the extent that claims have been made.

- **Volunteer help**

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the financial activities.

- **Investment income**

This is included in the financial activities when receivable.

Expenditure and liabilities

- **Liability recognition**

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

- **Governance costs**

Include costs of the preparation and examination of financial statements, the costs of trustee meetings and cost of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.



THE NEW F-TYPE COUPÉ. NOW AT R A CREAMER.

FROM £51,235 ON THE ROAD

The F-TYPE Coupé delivers a uniquely connected driving experience – ultra precise, powerful, sensual and, most of all, alive. It looks fast. And it is fast. Be amongst the first to drive the F-TYPE Coupé, contact us today to book an appointment.

R A CREAMER, KENSINGTON

DRAYSON MEWS, HOLLAND STREET, KENSINGTON W8 4LY

WWW.CREAMER.KENSINGTON.JAGUAR.CO.UK 0207 937 1275

HOW ALIVE ARE YOU?



Official fuel economy figures for the Jaguar F-TYPE range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 17.8-22.4 (15.9-12.6); Extra Urban 34.0- 40.9 (8.3-6.9); Combined 25.5-31.4 (11.1-9.0). CO₂ emissions 259 to 205 (g/km). The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation. A vehicle's actual fuel consumption may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only.

On the road price is the manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price, plus First Registration Fee and Delivery Pack.



JEROBOAMS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCE OF WALES
CHEESBONOGERS
JEROBOAMS, LONDON

Visit your local
Jeroboams shop
for a fine selection of wine
from around the world.




JEROBOAMS

Belgravia
Notting Hill
Holland Park
and other
villages
across London

Find your
nearest shop at

Jeroboams.co.uk

Are you missing out on the dramas going on in those
evermore-popular K&C communal squares?

For the inside story, subscribe to

Garden Square News

Garden Committee subscription: £55

Individual subscription: £20

Send your cheque, made out to *Garden Square News*, to:
Garden Square News, c/o Dhawan News, 155 Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0LJ

www.gardensquarenews.com

London House Histories

www.londonhousehistories.co.uk
36 Great Smith Street SW1P 3BU

Angela Lowrie

E: info@londonhousehistories.co.uk

T: 020 7222 7565

Have you ever wondered:

- when your house was built
- who lived there and what they did
- if anyone famous lived nearby
- what used to be there before

A House History will provide a full chronological history of your property. It will include copies of old maps, census returns, photographs, newspaper cuttings and other archive material, presented in a hardback book.

A House History makes a perfect gift; or if you are selling, a history of your house would help in the marketing of the property.



HURVIN ANDERSON, GEORG BASELITZ, LEDA
CATUNDA, GILLIAN CARNEGIE, JAKE & DINOS
CHAPMAN, ALAN DAVIE, TERRY FROST,
EBERHARD HAVEKOST, DAMIEN HIRST, GARY
HUME, ANISH KAPOOR, MICHAEL LANDY,
CHRISTOPHER LEBRUN, ELIZABETH MAGILL,
SARAH MORRIS, PAUL MORRISON, GRAYSON
PERRY, GED QUINN, MARC QUINN, GEORGE
SHAW, CORINNE WASMUHT, BILL
WOODROW, THOMAS ZIPP ET AL

CONTEMPORARY ART IN PRINT

PARAGON WISHES THE KENSINGTON
SOCIETY EVERY SUCCESS FOR 2014

PARAGON | CONTEMPORARY EDITIONS LTD
CHARLES BOOTH-CLIBBORN
WWW.PARAGONPRESS.CO.UK
INFO@PARAGONPRESS.CO.UK
T 020 7370 1200



+44 (0)20 3137 6005

info@wildpeacockevents.com

Innovative, Beautiful & Delicious Catering for Parties, Weddings & Corporate Events

At Wild Peacock, we are passionate about helping our clients celebrate any professional or personal occasion: a corporate function, a wedding, an intimate dinner, an opulent buffet, a BBQ or a large private party, in London and throughout the UK and overseas. Wild Peacock brings effortless style, wonderful food and a magic ambience to every event. Looking for something new, then try our delicious bowl food or enjoy a delightful afternoon tea party. Our experienced catering team works closely with each client and no request is too much trouble. We are proud that many of our catered events are by word of mouth or repeat business.



We have recently catered for the 60th Anniversary of the Kensington Society at the Royal Kensington Town Hall.

N NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

BRITAIN

**ONE MILLION YEARS
OF THE HUMAN STORY**

Until 28 September

Book now at www.nhm.ac.uk/britainmillionyears

Free for Members



Make your leap with confidence



Moving house is always a leap into the unknown – new home, new surroundings, new life...

Amid all this uncertainty, it pays to be sure that the people moving you are the best in the business.

Which may explain why over 90% of Cadogan Tate customers turn to us again when planning their latest big leap.

Call us direct on 0208 963 4000
or go to www.cadogantate.com

Cadogan Tate®
Everything, handled with care®
Moving Storage Shipping

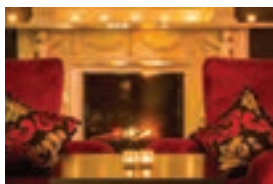
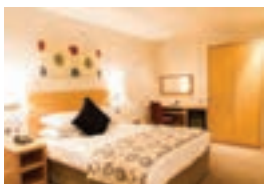


THE PARK INTERNATIONAL HOTEL – LONDON



Our unique New-York style Checkmate Bar offers a large variety of beers and spirits, as well as an extensive wine list and exciting cocktail menu, all of which are shaken especially for you. We have a Happy Hour, daily, between 5.00pm and 7.30pm with live piano music on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings between 7.00pm and 11.00pm

Our flexible menu selection, served between 1.30pm and 9.30pm, including a delicious and traditional afternoon Tea, combines a taste of Asia with traditional British cuisine.



PARK INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

117–129 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4DS

Tel: 020 7370 5711 • www.parkinternationalhotel.com

Email: reservations@parkinternationalhotel.com

📍 Queensway
High Street Kensington

FASHION ROUTES

EXHIBITION
NOW OPEN

DRESS FROM THE COLLECTIONS
OF HM THE QUEEN,
PRINCESS MARGARET AND
DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES

Exhibition sponsor

ESTÉE
LAUDER
COMPANIES

Members go free

hrp.org.uk/fashion

Photograph Snowden & Armstrong Jones
with thanks to Camera Press

Historic Royal Palaces
Kensington Palace



www.lucyelliottphotography.com



Why wait until you sell your house and garden tomorrow?
When you can have beautiful images of both today?

C. LIDGATE

BUTCHER • CHARCUTIER



We are pleased to announce,
we can now offer **FREE**
delivery to W11 and
neighbouring postcodes.



www.lidgates.com

110 Holland Park Avenue London W11 4UA

Tel: 020 7727 8243

"An absolutely fabulous holiday... our whole experience exceeded our expectations beyond all hope! The only downfall is, how on earth are we going to go anywhere on a normal holiday ever again?"



Discover a holiday with a difference in Thailand, Sri Lanka or Brazil with Kensington-based specialist tour operator, Tell Tale Travel.

Nature and Wildlife, Gardens and Horticulture, Markets and Cooking, Culture, History and much more. Gain insider experiences and tales to tell for years to come.

Find out more at www.telltaletravel.co.uk



GALLERY 19 IS...

- Bespoke picture framing
- Architectural views of Kensington, London and Italy
- Original paintings, Limited Edition prints and photographs
- Reproduction Maps
- Architectural models and bookends
- Hand-crafted Italian objects including calf-leather journals, ceramics and wrought-iron work
- House portraits by private commission

GALLERY 19

19 KENSINGTON COURT PLACE
LONDON W8 5RJ
TELEPHONE: 020 7937 7222
EMAIL: info@gallery19.com
WEB: gallery19.com

BROMPTON *Quarterly* –

NOW ONLINE –
BROMPTONDESIGNDISTRICT.COM



DESIGN – CULTURE – FASHION – FOOD

IMAGE: BACK ISSUE (2006) © ABAKE AND MARTINO GAMPER FROM MARTINO GAMPER: DESIGN IS A STATE OF MIND AT THE SERPENTINE SACKLER GALLERY, 2014. GAMPER'S RENOWNED EXHIBITION /100 CHAIRS IN /100 DAYS SHOWCASED A COLLECTION OF CHAIRS OVER TWO FLOORS OF A LARGE MID-VICTORIAN HOUSE IN THE BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT, 2007



MAIL BOXES ETC.

Royal Mail UPS FedEx Express DHL

A REAL STREET ADDRESS, NOT A P O BOX

PACKAGE ACCEPTANCE

MAIL HOLDING AND FORWARDING

WORLDWIDE PARCEL DELIVERY

COPY, PRINT, FINISHING, INTERNET

MON-FRI: 8.30-19.00
SAT: 10.00-17.00

**CENTRES ALSO IN MARYLEBONE,
NOTTING HILL GATE AND
PADDINGTON**

272 Kensington High Street London W8 6ND 020 7603 9999
mbe0128@gmail.com www.mbe.co.uk

Karen S. White
BIID, ASID

Source Interiors Ltd.
13 Airlie Gardens, London W8 7AL

Designer with 30 years experience of creating interesting spaces for
personal requirements of private residential and corporate clients.

www.biid.org.uk/member/source-interiors-limited
karen@sourceinteriors.co.uk

020 7243 1488

The photographs of the annual general meeting, the anniversary dinner, Antony Whishaw, and the street art displays were by **photoBECKET**, a wedding and social portrait photography business in Kensington.

Contact: Michael Becket, 9 Kensington Park Gardens, London W11 3HB,
Telephone: 020 7727 6941 • email: becket@photobecket.co.uk