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CHELSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Pubs to houses: Chelsea 1, Developers 0

MICHAEL BACH

This is the score at the time of going to press. We won the planning appeal on the Cross Keys – the results for the public inquiry into the refusal of the change of use of the Phene Arms, which lasted a gruelling six days finishing on 5 November and the public hearing on the Queen's Head, will not be available until Christmas. (See report on the two other appeals on page 6)



Cross Keys in better days

Community support

These planning appeals have really galvanised their local communities to come out in force. A chance meeting at the Society's Exhibition in May helped us set up a campaign group to mobilise the residents who live near the Cross Keys. John Bodenham offered to fund the setting up of a special website with a petition www.savethecrosskeys.co.uk which generated some 2,200 signatures, and to support a team who collected a further 1,700+ signature paper petition and put posters in windows.

At the public hearing on 24 July we had a fantastic team of local residents from Lawrence Street – Penny Pocock, Paul Miller, Tonya Hoffman and Oscar – who produced extremely moving testimony of the importance of the pub to the local community. We also had help from Dale Ingram from the Campaign for Real Ale and Michael Johnson, manager of the Duke of Wellington to provide expert evidence. The strength of our evidence and the strong commitment of local residents clearly influenced the outcome of this case. Thanks to everyone who turned up to support us on the day.

The result came through on 17 September – which was followed by a celebration at the Pig's Ear in Old Church Street on 5 October. Later that month some squatters moved in – they are looking after the pub. The Cross Keys was on the market for £4.5 million until recently – there may be a buyer.

What a Summer

We knew it was going to be an eventful summer – for the Society, for Chelsea and for London:

- Chelsea Society Exhibition: Chelsea - At the Heart of Gardening
- Diamond Jubilee and the Thames Pageant
- Summer Drinks Event: Brompton Cemetery
- Doggett's Coat and Badge Race
- Olympic Games: Olympic Torch Relay, cycle races

All of these are covered inside...



Chelsea Pensioners waiting for the Torch

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MICHAEL BACH

Chelsea Society’s
Exhibition: Chelsea -
At the Heart of Gardening:
22 May – 2 June

Another highly successful exhibition held in a marquee on Dovehouse Green. The exhibition charted the rise of plant growing in Chelsea, from the Apothecaries Company’s Physic Garden gathering plants from all round the world for medicinal purposes, through the gardens of the “palaces” along the Thames, to the nursery

gardens of the late 18th and early 19th centuries which propagated exotic plants and, finally, to the Chelsea Flower Show – a phenomenon of the last century – next year is the centenary.

The exhibition, which was opened by Felicity Kendall, was a great success thank to the dedicated team led by Carrie Starren and the generosity of our sponsors and the skill of our fundraiser, Leonard Holdsworth. It was a major opportunity to show Chelsea residents who we are and what we do.

Surprises at Jubilee Celebrations

LEONARD HOLDSWORTH



Prince Andrew and Vicki Jacobson

Picture: Neslie Hollinshead

There were lots of street parties for the Diamond Jubilee, but perhaps the one with most surprises was the one organised by the Christ Church Residents’ Association, which embraced residents not only of Christchurch Street but many neighbouring streets. A special effort was made to ensure elderly and infirm residents came and enjoyed free eats and drinks.

When the chairman of the Residents’ Association, Vicky Jacobsen (pictured here in the trilby hat), wrote to Buckingham Palace inviting Her Majesty The Queen to drop by for a cup of tea en route to her Thames embarkation point a few yards away at Cadogan Pier, she didn’t really expect it to be taken seriously.

However a few days before the big day, Buckingham Palace advised her the

Queen couldn’t make it, but her son, the Duke of York, would, together with his famous daughters.

Security considerations meant his visit had to be kept confidential until the day, but when he arrived with the flotilla of police motorbikes, everyone present was thrilled and suddenly people flocked to the party from surrounding streets and the Chelsea Embankment.

The Duke of York spent nearly an hour at the Party and talked to nearly everybody there (as did his daughters before they joined their grandmother on the Thames), including the carvers on the hog roast (kindly supplied by the nearby Surprise pub), the members of the brilliant jazz band and Governors of Christ Church Primary School.

Thames Pageant:
5 June

This was the biggest event of its kind on the Thames – a procession of 1,000 boats. The story of the event was told by Lord Salisbury in his lecture on 29 October (see page 5).

Chelsea Society Walk:
20 June

David Le Lay led another of his Chelsea Walks, starting, very topically, at The Phene Arms, describing the development of the Phene Estate, focusing on Dr Phene’s innovations, especially the introduction of street trees and the Phene Arms pub which was an integral part of his estate. David described the history of the surrounding streets, including Margarett Terrace, named after Dr Phene’s wife, Phene Street and Oakley Street, before crossing to Upper Cheyne Row. From there David gave a running commentary about the development of Glebe Place, pointing out one of the few houses in London designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh at 49 Glebe Place, before returning to Oakley Street.



Gathering at the Phene – Martin Andrews

Summer Drinks Reception:
Brompton Cemetery: 5 July

PATRICIA BURR



Brompton Cemetery Chapel

A cemetery seems an unusual venue for a summer party: more suitable for a wake, one would think. Yet 90 of our members were adventurous enough to sign up for

the outing. Perhaps it was not courage but knowledge that inspired them. For at the Brompton Cemetery one does not feel the Addams family breathing down ones neck: on the contrary the overwhelming feeling is one of serenity. This was the aim of the Victorian designers who created the garden cemetery in 1840 and it still holds true today. And if you are lucky enough to have a beautiful summer evening, as we were, the setting has so much to offer: grand architecture, formal ceremonial drives, overarching lime trees, wooded parkland, small meadows of wild flowers and, of course, the mausoleums, catacombs and gravestones.

Our party was held in the domed Anglican Chapel, a beautiful Grade-II* listed building of honey-coloured Bath stone near the 300 feet diameter Great Circle, which was inspired by the Piazza at St. Peter’s in Rome. It adapts perfectly as the venue for a social gathering. Informed by a short history of the place, fortified by a large selection of cocktail nibbles, and carrying our wine (in plastic glasses I hasten to add), we were escorted by The Friends of Brompton Cemetery (who lived up to their name) on short tours through the graveyards near the Chapel.



Monument in Brompton Cemetery

There are 35,000 memorials in the cemetery. We saw perhaps a few hundred. There are graves of the famous, the heroic (13 holders of the Victoria Cross) and the ordinary citizens of West London. We were inspired and moved and bonded by the experience. We left soon after 8pm leaving the ground to the wildlife including the foxes who emerge from their dens to play once the visitors have left.

Editor’s footnote:
Brompton Cemetery, developed as a private cemetery in response to the appalling state of London’s churchyards, was consecrated in 1840 by the Bishop of London. However, as Parliament did not approve of private cemeteries, an Act of Parliament was passed that resulted in its nationalisation, although it was the only one that was nationalised. As a result it has been administered by various Government Departments - currently by the Royal Parks Agency who are responsible for its maintenance and policing. The Royal Borough has made a bid to take over responsibility for its future. The Cemetery is Grade-I listed on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Doggett's Coat and Badge Race: 20 July

DAVID LE LAY

Probably the biggest crowd ever gathered at Cadogan Pier on 20 July to see the finish of the 298th Doggett's Coat and Badge Race. It was a warm day but with the threat of showers, which thankfully stayed away. The race is between two pubs, both called the Swan Inn, both of which, in the way of pubs today, no longer exist – one at London Bridge and the other at Chelsea – a distance of 4 miles 7 furlongs. This year's winner, who completed the distance in 24mins. 28secs, was Merlin Dwan. It was a close-run race, with the last of the 5 contestants coming in only 5 minutes behind Merlin. Mr. Dwan came second last year and comes from a family that has produced several winners of the race, in 1971, 1977, 2002 and 2004.

Members of the Society, their friends and other passers-by enjoyed lively conversation and a welcome glass of beer kindly provided by Fuller's Brewery whilst they waited for the contestants to come up to Cadogan Pier where they were each presented with a bottle of champagne by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Christopher Buckmaster.

Among the first to congratulate the winner was Arnold Stevenson, whose idea it was that the contestants should come ashore at Chelsea to be received by the Mayor of the Royal Borough. Damian Greenish, Chairman of The Chelsea Society, also congratulated the winner and the other contestants. This Chelsea event was organised by the Society with all the arrangements being carried out by Paulette Craxford, the Society's ever-popular Events Secretary.

The Mayor was accompanied by the Mayoress, Mrs. Anne Hobson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Lady Borwick, was also present. Amongst those in the crowd was Rosie Doggett, who lives in Battersea and is a direct descendant of Thomas Doggett who instigated the race in 1715.



The Mayor presenting prize to the winner

Olympic Games: July-August

Chelsea's Olympics started with the Olympic Torch crossing Chelsea Bridge at 1.15pm on 26 July, carried by Tom Aitkens, the Chelsea-based restaurateur. Led by a small cavalcade of motorcycles and sponsors' vehicles, the flame processed up Chelsea Bridge Road, past lines of red-coated, flag-waving Chelsea Pensioners and nurses, to Sloane Square and then the length of the King's Road before disappearing into Fulham. It was all over in 40 minutes, emerging again at 3pm in Holland Park, before going off to Westminster.



Tom Aitkens

Although the main events were in the Olympic Park in East London, Chelsea was treated to the Olympic men's and women's cycle road races on the weekend of 28-29 July, when the cyclists went from Central London out to Box Hill in Surrey and back, passing along the length of Fulham Road – Chelsea's northern border. This was also the occasion of the Cultural Olympics event in Exhibition Road.

Otherwise the closest events were the Volleyball at Earl's Court and the men's and women's triathlon in Hyde Park.

This was London's summer!

Chelsea Festival: 13-21 October

LEONARD HOLDSWORTH

The original Chelsea Festival was last held several years ago, but last year Prebendary Brian Leathard (pictured here) revived it in a small way with well-attended musical concerts here and there in the Borough.

This year, 2012, it was revived and ran from 13 to 21 October.

Under Brian Leathard's Chairmanship, gala concerts (one at St Luke's Church and the other at Christ Church) featuring eminent performers were held to start and finish the week of memorable events. These included art exhibitions, guided Borough walks, visits to local artists' studios, children's entertainment involving local schools and colleges, both state and private, drama events (including live readings from Janet Suzman and other great actors) as well as jazz (on Dovehouse Green).

Other attractions included an evening with supper at the Physic Garden, architectural tours and recitals by world-famous organists (with bars and suppers at nearby inns). There was even a Chelsea Festival Pub of the Year competition! Here is the giant banner that was on display here and there in Chelsea showing just some of the Festival's highlights.

Diamond Jubilee Thames Pageant Lecture:

29 October

SIR MICHAEL CRAIG-COOPER

I was privileged to introduce our President on 29 October when he gave a lecture to the Society on the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

When Lord Salisbury became Chairman of the Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation he inherited a situation which was to my mind rather like the television series 'Twenty Twelve'. He immediately restructured the organisation, brought in outside expertise and held regular meetings of the Trustees and action groups including fund-raising. I can confidently say that, without his drive and leadership in bringing structure to the organisation, the Pageant could not have taken place.



Lord Salisbury surveys the Thames at Chelsea

Lord Salisbury gave us a facinating talk in which he mentioned many of difficulties that had to be overcome in organising such a huge event. The talk was illustrated by a number of interesting slides which brought back evocative memories to those who had witnessed the event. Millions not only watched the Pageant along the embankments but also formed what is

believed to have been the largest world-wide television audience of all time.

It has been a delight and an honour to serve as one his co-Trustees and, in that capacity, I would mention that the charity is still happy to receive donations which may be made out to Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation.

Please see details below.

The Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation

LORD SALISBURY

I so much enjoyed my evening with the Chelsea Society and having the chance to explain in some small measure, the work, the frustrations and the joys of staging the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. I was delighted by the warmth of your response and your interest in it all.

As I said, one of the purposes of the Pageant was always to provide a charitable legacy to mark The Queen's 60 years of extraordinary service to the country and the Commonwealth. The Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation is the charitable entity within which the Pageant was staged in order to serve that purpose.

The Foundation's charitable objectives are "To advance in life and relieve the needs of young people by distributing funds to youth charities". We have three partner charities: Flagship UK; Fields in Trust; and Plan, all of whom were involved on the day of the Pageant and to whom we will distribute our surplus. We are also in touch

with the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, chaired by John Major, and it is our earnest hope that we will be able to find efficient ways to link with them in their capacity as the principal legacy of the Diamond Jubilee.

We would be delighted if you wished to make a contribution to our Foundation. You can do so by sending a cheque, payable to the 'Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation' and send it c/o The Treasurer, The Chelsea Society, 36 Walpole Street, London SW3 4QS. If you are eligible for Gift Aid we would be very happy to send you the appropriate form as this increases your gift without any further cost to you.

Chelsea's First Subterraneum Ballroom?

TERENCE BENDIXSON

Walton Street residents are not happy at the prospect of the excavation of what could be Chelsea's biggest ever suite of underground rooms: it includes a ballroom.

The site is the one-time school, later a magistrate's court, not far from the junction with Pont Street. David Graham, 75, a Canadian cable TV millionaire, owns the Old Court House, and he is said to be contemplating excavation because, although he wants a bigger place, he cannot find one.

His application, PP/12/3854, includes a section showing an underground chamber containing three floors. At the bottom is a pool and a three car garage. Above that are lobbies giving onto galleries around the pool. And at the top are a silver store, more lobbies and a ballroom lit by a lantern, capped with a cupola, that pokes up into the garden.

The Council, which is in the course of revising its policies on excavation, is expected to rule out multi-storey

basements but this one may well get through the system before changes can be made. Bell Cornwall, Mr Graham's planning consultants, forecast that the dig will take four years and involve the excavation of 1,375 large skips of earth. Getting the necessary lorries in and out of Walton Street will be troublesome for many residents. The Society has lodged an objection.

Residents *are* Worried About Basements

TERENCE BENDIXSON

Questions about basements dominated the Society's Annual Meeting for Residents' Associations on 8 October. Questioners wanted to know what the Council was doing to control the menace. Councillor Tim Ahern, Cabinet Member for Planning Policy (supported by Mr Jonathan Bore, Executive Director for Planning), said the policies in the Local Plan, the so-called Core Strategy, and in supplementary planning guidance, would be changed. However, residents refused to be mollified and when Cllr. Ahern, having said that a basement had been excavated next to his house in Kensington, added that he went to the country to escape the nuisance, a gasp went round the room.

The Society has since then agreed on the need for a new, much more restrictive, approach. Amongst its proposals are: no excavation under listed buildings and their gardens; no more than a twenty percent excavation under the gardens of un-listed buildings; and the establishment of a list of streets and cul-de-sacs where lack of lorry space should lead to the refusal of applications.



Road constriction during an underground development

(Copies of the note can be had from the Hon. Sec. Planning at t.bendixson@pobox.com or 020 7352 3885.)

Residents will have an opportunity to comment on the Council's new basement

policies before the end of the year. The greatest danger for Chelsea is that, with the Coalition Government seeking to promote construction by any means possible, Councillors will refuse to do what residents want out of loyalty to the Conservative Party.

The Phene Arms and the Queen's Head

TERENCE BRENDIXSON

Following the good news about the Cross Keys in Lawrence Street, which an appeal Inspector saved from conversion to a house, other inspectors heard cases being made for the conversion of the Phene Arms in Phene Street and the Queen's Head in Tryon Street. At both hearings teams of loyal Chelsea pub-lovers set up on-line petitions, distributed leaflets and gave evidence before the inspectors.

The Queen's Head

The case for the Queen's Head, which has three bars all with slightly different functions, and which has a loyal gay following, was impressive. The key issue was whether other pubs could take its place. Residents from the Sutton Estate made clear that, in an age of costly gastropubs, the Queen's Head is a rarity, a genuine working man's pub. Then the Manager spoke up for his gay customers. They, he said, would have to go to as far as Vauxhall or Ealing to find a comparable place.

A statement tabled by an assistant manager told a touching story of pub friendship. He had first come to London as a young gay man and knew no one. But staff and customers at the Queen's



Queen's Head

Head had taken him in and made to feel at home: they had even helped him through a mental breakdown.

The Phene Arms

The Phene Arms inquiry was a very different kettle of fish. Mr. Timothy Comyn, barrister for the appellants and his witness Simon Avery, took so long over everything,

that what was expected to take four days ended up spreading over six.

Three issues dominated the proceedings. Had the Council's new policy for protecting pubs got sufficiently far along its bureaucratic course to have power? Did the protection afforded by conservation areas extend only to buildings, or did it also protect their use? And was the Phene a 'local' supported by a loyal band of residents in nearby streets? It fell, of course, to the Chelsea Society to produce witnesses in support of the third point. The residents were wonderful.

The Council also put up a strong case, presented by their barrister Josef Cannon and the Council's planning officer, who appeared at all three of the appeals.

The two inspectors will, we hope, report before Christmas. Meanwhile squatters descended on the Cross Keys in October and achieved easily the residential status that had eluded Mr Robert Bourne, the owner and developer.



Phene Public Inquiry: Tim Nodder and Terence Bendixson

The Colbert

The Colbert restaurant has opened in Sloane Square in place of the old Oriel, happily still with tables out on the pavement where clients can gossip about Chelsea’s best. As the latest addition to Chris Corbin and Jeremy King’s empire, it is less of an architectural tour-de-force than, say, the Wolseley in Piccadilly, but its comfortable Paris 1880 atmosphere is nicely judged. A photo on the website sums it all up: Sloane Square in the days of horse-buses and straw boaters with Peter Jones still a Victorian emporium. You can book a table on 020 7730 2804. Will this event reopen discussion about the future of the square? Rumour says so.

Lord Cadogan Hands On The Baton

Viscount Chelsea, 46, has taken over from his father the direction of the Cadogan Estate. The former Royal Air Force officer and present day Territorial Army commander seems to be looking forward to the job. At a small celebration at Duke of York Square, to which the Society was invited, he looked back over the 300 years of the estate’s history and gave the impression he fully expects it to last for at least a comparable period in the future. He’s probably right.

Juggernauts In Glebe Place?

With the former Jamahiriya School in Glebe Place having changed hands yet again, the new owners have applied to make modest modifications to the plans for which their predecessors obtained permission. However, those who studied the documents carefully found one file containing details of the expected lorry traffic. This showed that the contractors planned to route up to sixty very large lorries per day down Glebe Place, fill them up with excavated earth, and exit them across Old Church Street and through Paultons Square.

The applications have now been withdrawn.



Le Colombier restaurant

Le Colombier, Dovehouse Street

The asset stripping of pubs has now turned to a restaurant – Le Colombier – where a developer has proposed converting the first and second floors to flats, forcing the kitchen into the basement, squeezing the scale of the restaurant and so reducing the viability of the restaurant. The Society has objected.

In the Pipeline?

The Marlborough School: John Lewis has been considering for some time what to do with Clearings, the old Peter Jones depot in Draycott Place. The firm has therefore had Dixon Jones (no relation!), architects of the modernised Covent Garden opera, working for it on ways to put flats on the site. This could involve demolition or conversion.

News has now come that John Lewis are proposing to rebuild Marlborough School and to house the children in temporary quarters in Clearings until the new school is built. When that is done the children will move out again allowing the conversion of Clearings to houses and flats and shops along Draycott Place.

Local authorities do deals like this nowadays. In return for paying for a

new school, John Lewis will be allowed to change the depot into much more valuable residential space – though some of it will be let at affordable rents.

A public exhibition on these ideas will be staged at the school on Friday 7th December from 4pm to 7pm.

Habitat and the Curzon cinema: The Cadogan Estate is preparing to redevelop the buildings that now house Habitat, the Curzon cinema and the Trafalgar pub. Cadogan is not trying to get rid of these tenants but to get more rent out of the site. So the cinema is likely to go underground and have an entrance around the corner in Chelsea Manor Street. Might the pub go upstairs? If it did then the whole of the King’s Road frontage of the site could be devoted to shops. Flats are likely too.

Cadogan are employing a firm called Soundings to find out the views of residents, businesses and other stakeholders. They will be running ‘pop-up’ consultation events in the King’s Road in November and December and also plan to form a ‘community liaison group’. If you are interested call Afolabi Spence at Soundings on 020 7729 1705 or email to 200-222Kr@soundings.com. Work is expected to start in 2016.

The Battle of Britten Street: How creeping development outwits the Council

MOYA DENMAN

Heinz Schumi opened his hairdresser’s shop on the corner of Britten and St. Luke’s Streets 20 years ago. Originally designed as a corner shop with accommodation above, it served the surrounding terraces built for workmen labouring on the Great Exhibition site. It has been a shop ever since.

Creeping change

As property values in Chelsea have risen, so has the pressure to maximise returns – hence creeping developments. Although applications for change of use of the building from a shop to residential were refused in 1980 and 1997, with an appeal dismissed in April 1999, during the 1980s a rear extension to the first floor flat and a conservatory at second floor level were allowed. More recently, after the building was sold to a new freeholder/developer, the glass walls of the conservatory were made opaque, and, it is rumoured, behind them there is now a proper bathroom. This alteration to the structure – in a conservation area – is a striking eyesore, but it was too late to take planning enforcement action, and, it appears, Building Control can do nothing.

Planning application – the lever to evict

Next, last year, came a planning application to redevelop and extend the basement and ground floors to provide a new flat and to reorganise the existing shop unit. That was refused, so the developer tried a new tack: he applied for apparently minor changes to the exterior of the building and change of use of a toilet ancillary to the A1 shop, “in connection with self-containment of entrance to upper maisonette”. In the application, he included other alterations to compensate for the loss of shop floorspace, notably a new staircase between the ground and basement floors of the shop, but as internal alterations do not require planning consent no account was taken of objections (including from the Chelsea Society) pointing out that the viability of the business was jeopardised by the proposals. Permission was granted on 6 September 2011. With his protected lease coming up for renewal in November 2012, Mr Schumi wasn’t surprised then to receive a Section 25 notice under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 notifying him that the landlord would oppose a renewal of the lease on

the legally permissible grounds that he had planning permission to redevelop the premises. Effectively, despite its laudable policies to keep life local and to maintain a mix of uses in areas away from the main shopping areas, the Council is a toothless tiger.

End of the road?

Mr Schumi has mounted a vigorous campaign to get the Council to reconsider – ideally to revoke – its planning decision. The defensive response is that this is a matter for landlord and tenant, not planning. But if a planning decision undermines the viability of a business and the rights of a tenant, where is the justice? And can we count on the Council to ensure that the premises, when redeveloped, will be re-let as a shop rather than used by the landlord for his own purposes (to which he is not entitled, not having owned the property for 5 years before he gained the planning permission)? Dream on...

The saddest thing is that the Planning Applications Committee took its decision under the chairmanship of one of the local ward councillors.

Cleaning Our Streets

Clean up After Your Dog

MICHAEL BACH

Good news – the Council has decided to outlaw dogs fouling in the road. It has always been an offence to allow dogs to foul the pavement, but many people still remember the catchphrase “kerb your dog” which implied that fouling the street was acceptable. It is not and is now an offence. A few years ago the Council reviewed its rules on controlling dogs, to limit the

number of dogs you could have on a lead walking along the street and to make it an offence to allow dogs to foul parks and open spaces. Now, prompted by Exhibition Road where it would be unsafe to have dogs off the lead or to allow them to foul the road, the Council’s Dogs Control Order deals with dogs either not on the lead in the road or

fouling the road. Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown said: “We consulted with representatives of dog owners who were very vociferous about our earlier changes. They were less concerned about these and I think they will make a cleaner and safer environment for everyone.” The next message is that dumping poo-bags is unacceptable: “Bag it and Bin it”

Decluttering our streets – are we going backwards?

MICHAEL BACH

For the last decade the Council has been working to improve our streetscape – many of our streets have been thoroughly “decluttered”, but now we are threatened by a new invasion.

When competition was introduced into the public telephone market we had an influx of new phone kiosks. Certain streets, such as the King’s Road, were inundated, so the Council called a halt in these areas. It has taken a long time to get rid of these phone boxes, even where they were no longer used other than for advertising.

BT’s new wheeze – an advertphone

We no longer need so many telephone boxes as most people have a mobile phone – we just need them in case of emergency. Now we are faced with the latest threat to our streetscape – the advertphone. JC Decaux, one of the main suppliers of advertisement panels in the world, has got together with BT and come up with a large advertisement panel (9 feet tall by 4 foot 6 inches wide) with a payphone on the back as a way of rolling out advertisement panels in over 40 locations throughout the Borough, including the King’s Road (9), Sloane Street (2), Sloane Square (1) and outside the Chelsea Westminster Hospital (1). The Society is opposed to the proliferation of on-street advertising panels.

In addition BT have a new kiosk with an ATM built into the back. One of these has already been granted by the Council in Chelsea. Beware of BT bearing gifts of ATMs and scrolling illuminated advertisements. Tell your councillors what you think about large advertising panels along the King’s Road.



Advertphone: Phone

BT Broadband cabinets

Last year, totally out of the blue, BT Openreach applied to put some 80 very large cabinets around the Borough. All were rejected by the Council as no attempt had been made to consider how best to site them to minimise the impact of the character of the Borough’s conservation areas. BT complained that the Borough was being obstructive, but in reality BT was uncompromising and did not consult on their proposals.



BT has now come back with a 150 cabinet programme which shows more concern for their siting. Nevertheless, there are still unresolved concerns about the siting of some of these cabinets.

The Leader of the Council, Sir Merrick Cockell, is particularly keen to accommodate BT’s rollout of faster broadband, although most users in the Borough, including two-thirds of business users, are satisfied with the current speeds.

Sir Hans Sloane: his other legacies

IAN FOSTER

This year is the 300th anniversary of Sloane’s purchase of the Chelsea estate in 1712. The circumstances of the purchase are becoming clearer and research on Sloane is currently the focus of a number of organisations, including the museums he inspired as well as various universities and academic institutions around the world, who are developing a renewed appreciation of his work and contributions.

Social history of Jamaica

At a recent ceremony at the British Museum a drum from Jamaica was given to the museum collection by Colonel Frank Lumsden, leader of the Charles Town Maroons of Jamaica. The Maroons are a people, originally runaway slaves, who Sloane encountered during his time in Jamaica. His record of the culture of

the island is now being recognised as a valuable contribution to the island’s identity, especially as this year is the 50th anniversary of Jamaica’s independence from the UK.

Contributions to science

Sloane’s contributions to science are being recognised. I have been invited to contribute an article for the ‘Notes and Records of the Royal Society’ which will centre on his contributions to science and include what is probably the earliest recognition of climate change due to human activity from his observations during his time in Jamaica. Also his early understanding of a past upheaval in the earth’s climate that we now know as the ice age and other significant facts.

Generally there is an increased appreciation for Sloane at this time and I am keen to engage Chelsea in this recognition which goes much further than his fame in the world of chocolate, which is somewhat misleading as he did not in fact ‘invent’ milk chocolate although certainly did much research on the properties of chocolate and used it often in his medical profession.

Sloane was a key Enlightenment figure and I am sure he would like to be remembered for these new discoveries about him especially in his beloved Chelsea where he has been remembered best.

Whistler Society seeks funds

A group of Whistler enthusiasts met at the Chelsea Arts Club earlier this year and decided to form a society whose aims are to promote interest in the life, work and influence of James McNeill Whistler

The intention is that the Society will be international to reflect the interest in Whistler that exists throughout the world, especially in the United States, as well as in Great Britain.

Dr. Stephen Bury, Librarian at The Frick Reference Library in New York and Professor Margaret Macdonald of The University of Glasgow have kindly agreed to be Hon. Patrons.

The Society has a committee, chaired by David Le Lay, which has secured a domain name and has opened a bank account. It is hoped that it will soon become a registered Charity for tax purposes. It is hoped to officially launch the Society early in the New Year when applications for

membership will be invited from all those who share the Society’s aims.

At this stage, the Society is in urgent need of ‘seed’ money in order to set up and get running. Anyone donating £500 or more will become an official Patron.

If anyone is interested in helping contact: davidlelay@btinternet.com.



James McNeill Whistler
-Nocturne - Battersea Bridge

Opera Prelude

Set up in 2010, as a non-profit project, Opera Prelude hosts a wide variety of opera appreciation classes, given by talented young opera singers in Chelsea’s Cadogan Hall.

The classes are informative and entertaining with a mixture of detailed exposition illustrated with live performance and well-known recordings to enhance the understanding and appreciation of opera.

No previous qualifications are necessary to attend and the audience are not required to sing!

Venue: The Cadogan Hall
Time: 10.30 – 12.00
Tickets: £25 (All proceeds from ticket sales are used directly for the singers benefit)

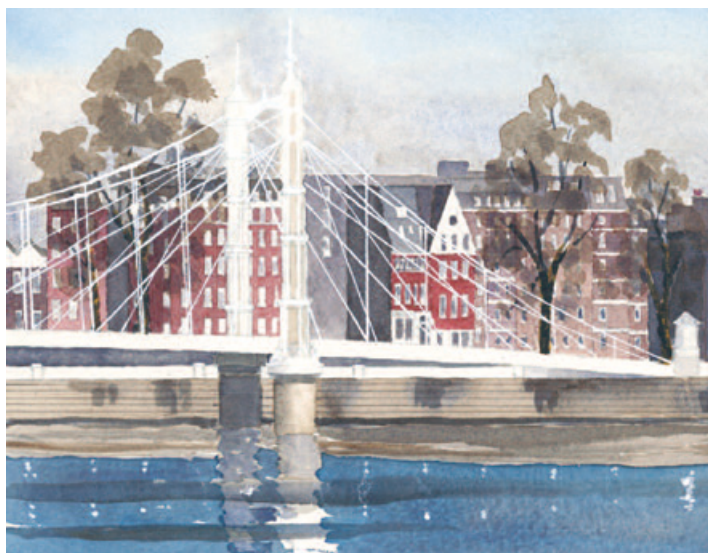
Further information, singer’s biographies and booking details, contact:
Fiona Hamilton 07908894333
www.operaprelude.com

PATRICIA BURR

Cards For Good Causes: Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street

Cards for Good Causes have been selling charity cards at their shop at Holy Trinity for 25 years. To mark this anniversary, and to launch their 2012 season, a short Service of Thanksgiving was held on 11 October to which representatives of the 60 charities whose cards are on sale were invited.

The Rector, the Rev. Rob Gillion officiated. Carols were sung, the first of the year for all of us: not surprising given it was only October. Indeed the shop's opening coincided with the Church's Harvest Festival, but Father Rob had no complaints. He said he wished the Christmas spirit lasted all year long (as doubtless do most retailers) and one cannot have too much of a good thing. Allan Kelly, the Manager and a loyal friend of the Chelsea Society read the lesson, also with a Christmas theme.



Cheyne Walk - part of the new artwork for the 2012 cards

Chelsea Society's cards

The Chelsea Society has been selling its cards there since 2003. This year we have five designs, four of which have been designed by Hugh Krall: one, a view of 1-40 Cheyne Walk, is new. Holy Trinity is our most successful outlet and last year we made £1,618.14 after paying CFGC 23% commission on our sales.

Holy Trinity benefits from our presence there. Not only do we contribute to their funds, but many thousands of people are introduced to the Church. It is a beautiful setting and it is no hardship spending four hours a week as a volunteer, a requirement for all participating charities, either organising the goods or operating the till. The atmosphere is welcoming and we often have the benefit of an organ recital, a nativity play or even a wedding service.

Do drop in. We are open until Wednesday 19 December. The only problem you will have is choice. There is a host of advent calendars, stocking fillers, gifts for young and old and over 500 designs of cards on offer.

Chelsea Society 2013 Lectures:

14 January: Tite Street: Julian Barrow

11 February: Speaker to be confirmed

18 March: The Pre-Raphaelites in Chelsea:
Dr Alison Smith t(Tate Britain)

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOU

We want to be able to communicate with you by email. If you have access to email, please send it to:
honsecretary@chelseasociety.org.uk simply stating 'this is my address' and giving your name.

Our website is at:
www.chelseasociety.org.uk

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The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Chelsea Society.