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CHELSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Chelsea Under Pressure

DAMIAN GREENISH

Chelsea has never been dull but rarely have we faced such an array of challenges as we do at the moment. There is no part of Chelsea that is likely to be left untouched.

Basement excavation has been the bane of many a resident's life in recent years. The Council's revised policy to limit these excavations does not go as far as we wanted, but it is certainly a strong move in the right direction. However, opposition from developers and contractors is fierce and there is no guarantee that the new policy will be adopted.

King's Road, the commercial and cultural hub of Chelsea, faces many challenges. Both the current cinema sites are subject to schemes for redevelopment. The Royal Brompton Hospital has development plans for its buildings that front the King's Road. New proposals for the Old Postal Sorting Office and the neighbouring Bank are also being produced. Crossrail 2 will eventually give us an underground line beneath the

famous old road, but will we have a station and if so, where?

There has been much recent talk about "buy to leave" and the loss of affordable housing, which is changing the character of the area. Chelsea has a proud history of providing affordable housing; Sutton, Peabody and Guinness (to name but a few) all having estates in Chelsea. However, the Royal Brompton Hospital's current plans have no room to keep their HMOs and Sutton are planning wholesale redevelopment of their estate in Cale Street.

The Royal Brompton wants to expand, financed by selling off its hospital buildings, such as the Fulham Wing which the Royal Marsden needs for its expansion. We want both hospitals to expand. These challenges extend beyond Chelsea. Whatever is done at Chelsea Barracks will impact on us, as will the plans for Battersea Power Station, a massive mixed-use development (with minimal affordable

housing) on the south side of the river. Beyond there will be a forest of tall buildings dominating the eastern skyline of Vauxhall.

Your Society will meet these challenges. Our voice will continue to be heard as we seek to ensure that the traditional character of Chelsea is preserved, whilst its amenities are improved for all those who live and work here. With the sad demise of the Kensington and Chelsea Chronicle our role in keeping people informed about what is going on becomes ever more vital. With your support, we can achieve our aims, as our contribution to the success of the recent campaigns to save the pubs of Chelsea has demonstrated. The higher our membership, the greater our influence, so please encourage others to join us. We now need to redouble our efforts to meet these challenges.

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Picture: Hayes Davidson



View to Vauxhall in 2025

Progress on the Local Plan

MICHAEL BACH

In February the Council consulted on the “final” versions of the revised Basements and Conservation and Design sections of the Local Plan. This time respondents had to say whether they thought the revised documents were “sound” – “positively prepared”, “justified” and “effective” – and consistent with national policy. If you wanted a different or stronger policy, you had to say that the policy was “unsound”. All this terminology was a bit confusing, but residents wanting more than was on offer, had to say so.

Basements

The Council’s revised policy for basements proposes:

- reducing the maximum extent of basements to 50% of each garden and no more than one storey; exceptionally they might permit more flexibility in terms of extent of coverage of the garden and depth for large sites;
- clarifying the depth of basements, with the general height of a single storey defined as 3-4m floor-to-ceiling height, with a small extra allowance for a swimming pool;
- not adding further basement floors where one exists or planning permission for a basement has been implemented or one has been built through the exercise of permitted development rights;
- not excavating underneath a listed building and demonstrating there is no harm to the listed building when proposed in the garden;
- the visual impact of the external elements of basements to be considered on the character or appearance of the building, garden or wider area;
- including sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs), including 1m of permeable soil on top of the basement;

- the existing dwelling or commercial property to which the basement relates is adapted to a high level of performance in relation to energy, waste and water; for construction impacts to be considered at the beginning of the process;
- be designed to safeguard the structural stability of the application building, nearby buildings and other infrastructure, including London Underground tunnels and the highway; and
- they be protected from sewer flooding through the installation of a suitable pumped device.

The Society considers that most of the Council’s policy is sound, but should be more restrictive, namely:

- basement excavation should be confined to the footprint of the building, as in Hammersmith and Fulham
- no excavation should be allowed under listed buildings or their gardens
- based on experience of Sloane House and Sloane Lodge, no exceptions should be made for properties with bigger gardens – bigger basements means more nuisance.

The Society is particularly concerned that basements under gardens will lead to the gradual loss of Chelsea’s natural green character.

Conservation and Design

The object here was to consolidate the content of the existing 2010 Local Plan and the detailed “Saved” policies from the 2005 UDP, whilst thinning the text down considerably. For the most part this has been successfully achieved, although some of the previous UDP policies appear to have been lost or insufficiently reflected in the new policies which have

been “generalised” to an extent that they no longer specifically refer to issues that concern neighbours and which new planning officers and developers will no longer recognise as a matter of concern. The new plan needs to be written for the benefit of all users.

The next steps for both policies, following the Council Meeting on 16 April, will be to send these revised documents and all comments to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of the April. The Examination in Public will take place in July or August, which means that the new policy, if found sound by the Inspector, will not be adopted before the end of the year.

Housing and Enterprise Policies

Both these policies will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in December. The Housing paper will attempt to deal with the size of the super-prime units, but will still allow up to a quarter of the floorspace to be for large units. Both policies are likely to go to examination in March/April 2015 and be adopted by summer 2015.

The Enterprise chapter, which will include a variety of business uses, will need to build on the Council’s exemption from the freedom for offices to be converted to housing which applies in most of the rest of England, except Central London. The policy will need to be strengthened to recognise the importance of retaining premises for small firms. The Borough is one of the few local planning authorities that resists the loss of small offices to housing. Given the loss of offices in the last ten years, greater clarity is needed about what should be protected, such as first floor offices in main shopping streets and the Lots Road Employment Zone.

Empty Housing – Buy to Leave – Nothing New in Chelsea

MICHAEL BACH

On 21 March the Evening Standard ran an article on Knightsbridge “Ghost Town of the Super Rich”, highlighting the fact that large parts of it are “empty” judging from the fact that there are no lights on at night and associating this with the latest Government figures for empty homes which put Kensington and Chelsea with one of highest vacancy rates in the country and with an increase of nearly 500 on the previous year’s figures.

On 28 March Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Council and local ward councillor for Hans Town, responded acknowledging the decline in the number of people living in the area and a growing problem with empty homes, some of which was due to overseas investors leaving them empty – now commonly known as the “buy-to-leave” phenomenon.

But there is nothing new about empty homes in Knightsbridge, although in the past the owners had their main home elsewhere in Britain. Now, if indeed they have a main home, it will be abroad. In fact here is nothing new about a high rate of empty housing in Kensington and Chelsea and not just in Knightsbridge.

Buy-to-Leave – a Chelsea phenomenon?

Foreign buyers are not a new phenomenon, but in the past they were buying existing housing to live in, rather than buying newly-built units. The new phenomenon of “buy-to-leave” may not have started with the Candy brothers, as since 2000 there has been a significant number of major new super-luxury housing schemes – aka super-prime housing – which have been developed for this “buy-to-leave” market.



Former Power House (Native Land)

This Newsletter first mentioned it following the Society’s “Vision for Chelsea” conference in 1998, starting with the Marjohn site (552 King’s Road), but anticipating Chelsea Barracks and Lots Road Power Station. By 2001 the 21 Manresa Road scheme came to our attention, a Victorian building converted

into 16 flats, the largest of which sold at a then new world record price of £27 million in 2004. This was one of the earliest Candy and Candy schemes, followed by 21 Chesham Place (Belgravia telephone exchange) in 2004, One Hyde Park (the definitive “buy-to-leave” development), Chelsea Barracks and, more recently,



21 Manresa Road: early Candy & Candy (2004)

Picture: Michael Bach

Picture: Michael Bach



Former Jamarhiriya School/The Glebe

Cheval House and 50 Cadogan Square. Other developers include Northacre (552 King's Road (former King's College) and The Bromptons, formerly part of Brompton Hospital on Fulham Road), Native Land (Cheyne Terrace, aka the former Power House in Alpha Place and Waldron House, Old Church Street), and Orion Capital Managers, a hedge fund who are funding the former Jamahiriya School in Glebe Place/Old Church Street – now renamed "The Glebe". This is being billed as "the most exclusive residential development in Chelsea". It is expected to exceed the extravagance of One Hyde Park. The block of apartments will include only six units, in addition to a penthouse with a giant terrace, and two detached villas. The villas are expected to sell for around £35 million each.

Finally, there is the Lots Road Power Station scheme. Nearly seven years after the twin-tower project was granted consent on appeal by the then Secretary of State (John Prescott) Hutchison Whampoa Properties

started work on site last September rebranding it as "Chelsea Waterfront", with Mayor of London Boris Johnson speaking at the ceremony. The £1bn scheme will be "the biggest riverside development on the north bank of the Thames for over 100 years", and will create 706 homes. The construction for Phase One (100 apartments) is expected to be completed in 2015/16, and Phase Two, which includes the power station itself, in 2017/8.

Major developments – but fewer residents

Despite new housing completed since 2001, Kensington and Chelsea was the only London Borough to show a decline in population between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses – the increase in empty properties contributed to this. Half the 115 areas for which Census data is collected in the Borough have more than 20% of housing units empty, Most of the new housing schemes completed since 2001 has gone to an increasing degree to the

"buy-to-leave" market and the prospects for schemes still to be completed and sold is more of the same. Taken together the major schemes completed in the Borough will have provided several thousand units, but only a small number of new homes – places that people live in year round. The major sites have effectively been "wasted" as they are not contributing to meeting the housing needs of this Borough or London.

Until London's housing reverts to being homes rather than tax-free investment vehicles for overseas investors, more of London's communities will lose their community life-blood. Meanwhile the large new schemes will be fortress blocks that are largely empty. But none of these will be on the empty housing list.

These largely empty "ghost blocks" similar to One Hyde Park, according to one hedge-fund manager, should be viewed as fortresses for a new "offshore class".

Planning Reports

TERENCE BENDIXSON

Chelsea Barracks

An application is before Westminster City Council for the first of the new buildings to go on the old Chelsea Barracks site. Architect Michael Squire has designed three linked blocks of flats that face the Royal Hospital along Chelsea Bridge Road. The proposed buildings look palatial, are faced with Portland stone and are thinly neo-classical in style. They are topped by heavy, boxy penthouses. The Society has argued consistently that any buildings on this location should look domestic rather than palatial, be faced in warm brick and subservient to Wren's Royal Hospital. English Heritage takes this line too.

Developers Qatari Diar are also working on two terraces of houses that will lie behind the flats. The houses, designed by Paul Davis Architects, are huge and aimed at the international investment market. They are Georgian in proportion but not in style and they too will be clad in Portland stone. The architecture proposed for the old Chelsea Barracks may not quite be Prince Charles's Poundbury-come-to-London, but it goes further towards re-interpreting traditional London town-making than anything since Chelsea Square and Chelsea Park Gardens - both built in the 1930s.

200-220 King's Road: Curzon Cinema and Trafalgar Arms

The plan to demolish the Curzon Cinema and the Trafalgar Arms pub and create large new shops behind the facade of the old Gaumont Cinema has been delayed to enable Cadogan to revise the proposed offices. This has given the Curzon Group time to make a fresh case for the retention of a big-screen auditorium. They argue that with the emergence of a new genre of live opera and theatre performances - 'Live from the Met' and 'Live from the National

Theatre', for instance - big screens have found a new livelihood. They say too that, with the National Theatre adopting the Curzon Chelsea as its lead venue, directors will attend performances and take part in audience debates. All this should increase the King's Road cinema's attractiveness and commercial strength.

With many residents supporting the Curzon because they like the films it shows and the big auditorium, it remains to be seen to what extent Cadogan will change its plans.

National Westminster Bank, 224 King's Road

The National Westminster Bank on the corner of Chelsea Manor Street and King's Road is going to be turned into a shop. The Cadogan Estate is consulting on the change and on converting the upper part of the bank into expensive flats. The bank building, designed by Professor Sir Reginald Blomfield RA in 1909 is a piece of bold, Edwardian architecture and is one of the most notable buildings in the King's Road. As it is listed, its appearance will change but little.

Blomfield also designed the Quadrant (or curving part) of Regent Street, Lambeth Bridge and many country houses.

The Old Postal Sorting Office - Chelsea Manor Street

Many developers have tried their hands at reworking the old postal sorting office. It is a difficult site and it also includes the old Post Office in the King's Road.

The latest proposal by Madigan Brown, architects, breaks new ground with its neo-Gothic treatment. Is it neo-Waterhouse, neo-Giles Gilbert Scott or even neo-

Lancashire cotton mill? This and other new buildings being proposed for Chelsea would have been unimaginable twenty years ago. Modern architecture has not been eclipsed but, as in previous times, it is going to have to get used to living beside the revival of older styles.

The Marsden and Brompton Hospitals

Chelsea's two specialist hospitals are at loggerheads. The Marsden, which wants to buy the Brompton's Fulham Wing, is puzzled that the Borough Council seems to be so unsupportive of its need to grow. It has already spent about £100 million reworking its existing Edwardian building and is turning away patients for lack of space. As Britain's leading cancer hospital it needs to expand and, with the adjacent Brompton and Cancer Research Institute, is a cluster of expertise in cancer treatment with few parallels throughout the world.

As long ago as 2012 the Marsden applied to the Council asking to discuss plans for converting the Brompton's Fulham Wing into an annexe. Emails went to and fro for several months but nothing more happened.

Meanwhile the Brompton, having previously proposed to leave Chelsea, decided to stay and seems to have got the support of the Council for its plan. This involves selling large parts of its estate (including the Fulham Wing) for luxury housing and devoting the proceeds to building a new hospital stretching along Dovehouse Street and around the corner into Britten Street.

Such a move is dependent on the Borough Council granting changes in use - from 'social and community uses' to 'housing' - for several prominent hospital buildings. It would also frustrate the objective of



Brompton Hospital Fulham Wing

the Marsden which could pay a 'hospital' price for the Fulham Wing, but could not compete in price with developers intending to convert it to flats for multi-millionaires.

The Society, which wants to see both hospitals prosper and stay in Chelsea, has told the Borough Council that it is made uneasy by the prospect of so many hospital buildings becoming luxury flats. At a minimum we want to see the Marsden get room to expand into the Fulham Wing and the continuation, as affordable flats, of houses owned by the Brompton in Foulis Terrace.

Meanwhile, the Leader of the Borough Council has told the chief executives of the two hospitals to confirm that they are collaborating on their plans. The Council hopes to stop the dispute from blowing up in the midst of the local elections. The consultation period for the Brompton Hospital SPD was extended to 30 April. A petition sponsored by the Marsden supporting the retention of the Fulham Wing secured 6,623 signatures by 30 April. The Council has proposed that the petition will be presented to the Full Council

Meeting on 16 July – the petitioner will be able to make a 5-minute speech. In addition the Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider a revised SPD and the results of consultation.

Sutton Estate

A planning application to demolish the entire Sutton Estate in Cale Street is expected soon. Affinity Sutton, the huge housing association that now owns William Sutton's pioneering 'affordable' housing estate, is expected to propose the building of one group of flats for sale, the proceeds of which will be used to finance new affordable flats nearby. Tenants are currently being given notice to clear the way for this project. Some are content to move but others are deeply unhappy.

Glebe Place – Construction Chaos

Anyone who wants to see how bad cumulative basement excavation can be should visit Glebe Place. At the last count eleven houses were being undermined. And, to make matters worse, civil engineering related to the conversion of the old Kingsley School into just 6 flats for

millionaires, has led to the closure of the bottom of Glebe Place.

Communities Minister Drinks Beer at The Phene Arms

On 6 March Stephen Williams (Lib-Dem MP for Bristol North) dropped in to The Phene Arms for a beer. As Minister for 'localism, decentralisation, climate change' and many other things, he was intent on seeing one of Chelsea's 'saved' pubs. Ian Donaldson, a Councillor for Royal Hospital Ward, got a late phone call from Whitehall and with Tim Nodder of the Oakley Street Association and Vicky Jacobson from Christ Church, told the Minister and his officials how high residential property values are a threat to 'social and community' land uses.

There was also much talk about 'the pub is the hub', but if this is hardly true in Chelsea with its multitude of interests and social circles, no one is regretting the saving of the magnificent Phene. Clive Watson of the City Pub Company, generously hosted the event.

Lots Road Conservation Area

The Lots Road triangle, felt by some who live there to be a neglected corner of Chelsea, is being considered for designation as a conservation area. That it has been without one for so long confirms, for those who believe in the 'neglect' theory, the veracity of their viewpoint. They have a point. But previous understaffing in the Planning Department is relevant too.

Conservation area status gives Council planners greater control over the details of proposed development. If a house is in a street with spear-headed, wrought-iron garden railings, replacement railings would have to replicate the design already there. If all the houses in a row were without mansards, no householder (or developer) would be allowed to add one.

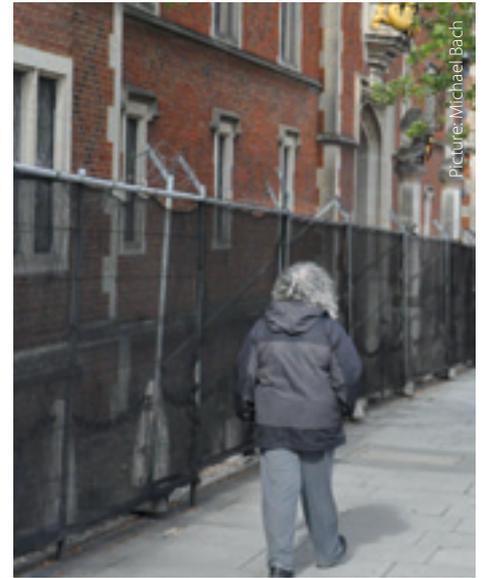
Conservation areas are thus all about fitting the new into the context of the old. Is this a good idea? Some see it as deterring innovation: you do not easily get permission to replace the brick facade of a house in a Georgian terrace with one made of glass. Some see it as preventing inappropriate design: look at what happened in the 1930s. Big, out-of-scale blocks of flats, as in Sloane Avenue, are not built today.

Once Lots Road gets its protection, the test for proposals will be whether or not they would 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance' of the conservation area.

The proposed conservation area is being used by the Council to test ideas for rewriting the policy statements covering the Borough's many other protected neighbourhoods. The question being asked is: What is the contribution of the existing buildings and streets to the character and appearance of the Lots Road triangle? If it is a positive one then the Council will seek to protect and enhance it by establishing a Conservation Area.

Crosby Hall

Many residents have commented on the "temporary" safety railings hemming in Christopher Moran's remarkable neo-Elizabethan palace on the Embankment - just downstream from Battersea Bridge. They have been there for the last decade or more. Now they are to be replaced by a splendid array of lacy wrought-iron railings, complete with a heraldic gateway, designed by John Simpson, one of the country's leading Georgian revival architects. The firm's website does not show any work done in an Elizabethan style but the drawings attached to the planning application promise a rare treat for Embankment walkers.



"Temporary Railings" around Crosby Hall - the end in sight.

Tall Buildings

MICHAEL BACH

One of the most shocking exhibitions – currently on at New London Architecture at the Building Centre in Store Street just off Tottenham Court Road – shows that, in addition to the tall buildings we can see today, there are some 240 buildings over 20 storeys in height under construction or waiting to be built in London.

The first question you ask is how could it happen – so many get approved yet slip through beneath the radar. The only people who knew were the Mayor of London's Planning Decisions Unit – if all these buildings were approved, I would love to see the ones that were refused. The exhibition shows animations - with buildings yet to be built popping up in a view, usually taken looking across the Thames. The most frightening view is the one across the Thames to Vauxhall. We all know about the lone, round 50-storey tower permitted by John Prescott where a helicopter crashed into it last year. The animation shows a forest of towers that dwarf what we think is a giant. See

picture in front page.

The good news – if you can call it that – is that we only have two tall buildings planned – at Lots Road – both allowed on appeal by John Prescott after support from the then Mayor, Ken Livingstone. The towers will be 122m/37 storeys and 85m/25 storeys respectively. After years of worrying about Wandsworth Council allowing tall buildings across the river, including Richard Rogers' Montevetro which was allowed after call-in by John Gummer, the buildings on the Battersea side look relatively modest. What the NLA exhibition shows, however, is that the City of Westminster and the Royal Borough have held out against the onslaught, whereas the attitude in Hammersmith and Fulham, Wandsworth and Lambeth seems to be "bring it on"! What has saved us, perhaps, is Battersea Park, but in the not too distant future we will see the mass of buildings round Battersea Power Station.

Pubs – what is happening?

MICHAEL BACH

After the success of winning three planning appeals in a row in 2012, in the last issue, I reported that the Council's new policy to protect pubs from change of use to housing was finally adopted. But what has happened?

The Cross Keys

The Cross Keys closed in May 2012 – before the Diamond Jubilee and the Thames Pageant – ahead of the public hearing into the appeal in July 2012. We got the result in September 2012, but soon after squatters moved in. The owner put the pub on the market for £4.5m. Over the next year and a half the asking price did not change much, but at the beginning of January 2014 Colliers International announced "the sale of Chelsea's oldest pub, the Cross Keys, on behalf of the private owner to Parsons Green Land for £3.9m." The announcement said that the

new owners had plans to completely refurbish and reinstate it as a public house, in addition to conversion of the upper floors to residential use.

The buyers, Parsons Green Land, are property developers specialising in acquiring and developing high-quality residential property.

Recently completed projects in Kensington and Chelsea include three pubs:

- **The Pembroke** (formerly The Colherne) 261 Old Brompton Road, SW5: 2nd and 3rd floors converted into flats
- **The Sydney Arms** 70 Sydney Street, SW3– 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors flats (Planning permission given in 2007, conversion completed January 2009)
- **The Ifield** 59 Ifield Road, SW10: Received permission to convert 1st

and 2nd floors to flats (July 2009) followed by change of use of ground floor and basement from a pub to three flats (November 2009) This two-step operation extinguished the pub.

Parsons Green Land propose to build an additional storey and convert the first, second and third floors to housing (5 flats). The Society is concerned that this would involve the loss of the first floor function room/dining room and would be likely to adversely affect the viability of the pub. The developer says that an extension to the basement could provide a basement function room. The ground floor has already been gutted and the staircase to the first floor has been removed. A planning application is expected in late May, meanwhile an open evening was held to discuss the plans and meet the potential publican on 14 May.

Picture: Michael Bach



Picture: Michael Bach



The Phene – new grey paint

The Phene

Last April the other pub owned by the Bourne family was sold for £4m to the City Pub Company. Since then the pub reopened under the new management last June, and was formally relaunched in January - invitations were extended to the campaigners to come and celebrate.

Since then it has been visited by the new Minister for pubs, Stephen Williams MP, to illustrate what can be achieved when the community and the Council work together to save community pubs.

The Queen's Head

Following the appeal against the Council's refusal to allow its conversion to three houses being dismissed – it is business as usual.

The Trafalgar

This King's Road pub is under threat from the Cadogan Estate redevelopment of 200-220 King's Road. The proposal is to move it round the corner into Chelsea Manor Street to become a "neighbourhood pub" rather than a King's Road pub. The Society has objected to this move as the pub would fall between two stools – neither a neighbourhood pub nor a King's Road pub.

Henry J Beans (formerly The Six Bells)

The Council gave planning consent in April 2013 for the change of use of 1st to 4th floors from a pub to six flats, including the loss of the first floor function room (formerly a famous jazz club). This project is currently under construction.

Le Colombier (formerly Princess of Wales)

A planning application to add a floor and to convert the 1st, 2nd and the new 3rd floor to housing was refused because the loss of the first floor would have been likely to undermine the viability of this popular restaurant.

Dead pub – formerly The Ifield



Picture: Michael Bach

Local Elections

MICHAEL BACH

The Local Election and the European Elections are being held on the same day – Thursday 22 May. It is hoped that by holding them on the same day it will be both more efficient for the Council and will generate a larger turnout.

In 2010, turnout in Chelsea wards was high (around 50%) except Hans Town where it was only 40% of those registered. It will be interesting to see if the current issues generate a better turnout.

Independent candidates

The appearance of independent candidates is a sure sign that there is growing dissatisfaction. In 2006 it was the Save Sloane Square Party who threatened to stand if the Leader did provide a third consultation on the scheme – the Leader backed down.



Heinz Schumi, Independent

This time three independent candidates are standing in Stanley Ward against Councillors Sir Merrick Cockell, Will Pascall and Paul Warwick.

The three Chelsea Independent candidates – Andrew Barshall, Heinz Schumi and Ian Henderson – accuse the Council of siding with developers, who they believe are forcing poorer residents and businesses from the area. They claim that the Council is complicit in granting numerous planning applications. They think it is time that someone stood up for the Chelsea community which they say is being eroded by planning consents granted which allow overseas developers to change the nature of the area.

Heinz Schumi, who has run a hairdressers in Britton Street for 21 years but was due to close in March, wants to prevent further “sanitisation” of Chelsea. He considers that the Council should save “assets of community value” and protect employment – he wants to preserve amenities, public services and social housing.

Ian Henderson is concerned about the future of the Sutton Estate – where he lives – which is about to be pulled down. The estate was built in 1912 with money left by the philanthropist William Sutton.

Independents standing elsewhere:

Ian Smith – Brompton

Alasdair Marsden – Chelsea Riverside

Ev Hesketh – Royal Hospital.

A full slate of Conservative, Labour and Liberal-Democrat candidates are standing in all wards. Nominations closed on 25 April.

Retiring Councillors

This year, partly due to the ward boundary changes, such as the disappearance of Brompton Ward, and a reduction in the number of councillors, a number of Chelsea councillors are standing down, including:

Councillor Ian Donaldson (24 years’ service) was elected for Royal Hospital Ward in May 1990. He has been a member of the Planning Applications Committee and the Major Planning Development Committee for many years. He chaired the Libraries and Arts Committee between 1996 and 1999, served on the Regulation and Enforcement Review Committee and was Vice-Chairman of the OSC on Environmental Services, Environmental Health and Planning Policy and Vice-Chairman of the Highways and Traffic Committee.

Councillor Matthew Neal (4 years’ service) was elected in May 2010 for Cremorne Ward. He served on the Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, the Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee, the Investment Committee and the Planning Applications Committee.

Councillor Louis Mosley (2 years 11 months’ service) was elected for Brompton Ward in a by-election in June 2011. He has served on the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee and its predecessor, the Health, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee. He has also been a member of the Planning Applications Committee.

Councillor Abbas Barkhordar (1 year 11 months’ service) was elected at a by-election in June 2012 for Brompton Ward. He served on the Audit and Transparency Committee, Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

Local Newspapers in Chelsea

MICHAEL BACH

There have been local newspapers in Chelsea for the last 145 years. From 1869 to 1972 Chelsea was covered by the Kensington News and West London Times. The Chelsea News – well known for its investigative journalism – operated from 1972-1997. From 1997-2010 our main local paper was the Kensington and Chelsea News. Since 2010 it has been called the Kensington and Chelsea Chronicle, with just the cover and perhaps up to two inside pages carrying Kensington and Chelsea News. From 1997 the publisher was the Trinity Mirror Southern Group. The last issue was printed on 24 April.

Since the early 1970s a local newspaper has carried the Royal Borough's public advertisements, including the weekly list of planning applications – the only source of this information before the Council had a website. For most of the last 40 years these adverts were in the Kensington and Chelsea Times, later called the Kensington and Chelsea Informer, which, as part of the deal, was delivered free of charge to 70,000 households in the Borough. Two years ago the Council renegotiated the advertising contract and only required the Kensington and Chelsea Chronicle be distributed from just nine outlets in Chelsea. Now – who knows?

Letter from Chelsea

MICHAEL BACH

One of the pleasures of flying British Airways is John Simpson's articles in their High Life magazine about places and incidents in his busy life on duty as the BBC's World Affairs Editor – usually in the latest crisis. So it was a pleasant surprise to see an article in the March edition titled "Letter from Chelsea".

John's article seemed very familiar, telling the story how a "jolly lady" walked up to him in Sloane Square and said "I hope you don't mind my asking you, but are you willing to become the president of the Chelsea Society?" He then went on to recall his family's connections with Chelsea following his appearance on "Who Do You Think You Are?" and, in particular, that his ancestor was the first publican who managed The Queen's Head in Tryon Street.

Now everybody knows – John supports Chelsea!

Read the full article at: <http://bit.ly/N0uJtW>



End of the Road for Local Newspapers?

TERENCE BENDIXSON

The Kensington and Chelsea Chronicle published its last issue on 24 April. Trinity Mirror, the publisher, has decided that the papers have no future in this age of intensive digital communications. The Fulham and Westminster editions have gone too.

This leaves Chelsea without a local paper. Camilla Horrox, who last year wrote the society's newsletter on crossrail 2, sent an email on 14 April saying: 'it's come as a bit of a bombshell to all the reporters and photographers... Who have been made redundant. And it's very worrying that three central London councils will no longer be scrutinised...'

How right she is. What will happen? The freebie *Evening Standard* seems likely to go on reporting pan-London. Beyond that the very low cost of distributing news via digital media could see the emergence of local news services which beam stories their direct to mobile appliances. This is beginning to happen in the United States.

– STOP PRESS –

As from 2 May a new local newspaper, the Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Gazette, has taken over. Based on the first issue there will be no local news. At this rate this Newsletter will be the only newspaper – no pressure then!

Chelsea Society Exhibition 2014: *Chelsea in The Great War*

CAROLYN STARREN

Dates.....2 – 15 June (inclusive)
Open to the public.....10am – 6pm
Location.....Duke of York Square
Entry.....Free

Displays will show visitors in words, pictures and artefacts how the Great War affected Chelsea residents both at home and overseas, with a special section commemorating the contribution made by members of the Chelsea Arts Club to the war effort. Visitors will be encouraged to search our interactive map of Chelsea as of 1913. They will be able to discover where the many Chelsea casualties lived, in many cases the actual house. They may also be able to learn something about the lives of these soldiers both before and during the war. The map will also show the locations of air raid shelters, hospitals, supply depots, churches etc. One simple click of a mouse and images and text will appear giving further details.

Programmed ticketed events

Thursday 5 June - Ann de La Grange Sury and Gavin Roynon will be reading extracts from *Home Fires Burning*, the Great War diaries of Georgina Lee, Ann's grandmother. Georgina worked with Belgian refugees and in supply depots in Chelsea throughout the war. 6.30-8.00

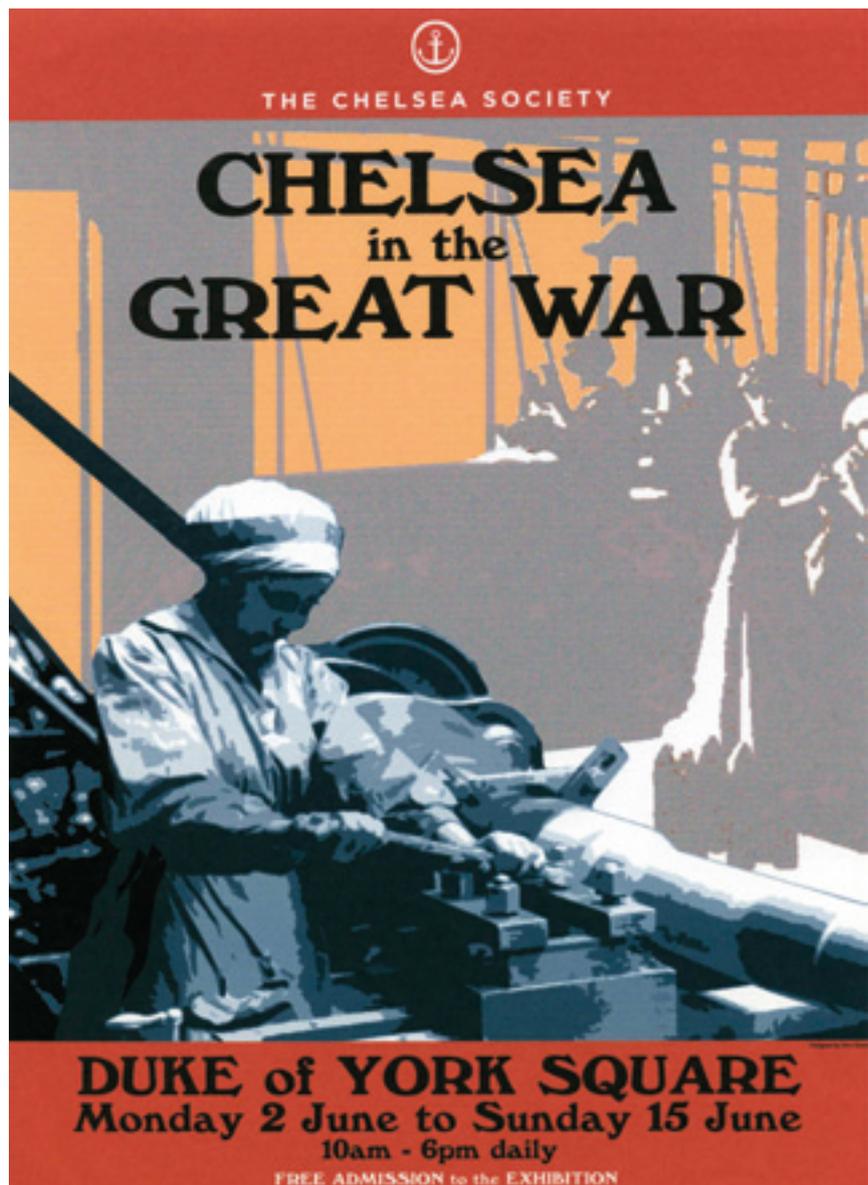
Tuesday 10 June – Day of events to celebrate Chelsea's fighting men. The highlight will be the return of the famous Football of Loos, featured recently on QI and in *The Times*, to the former Chelsea base of the London Irish Rifles from 1909 to 2000. There will be a talk on the incident and the football's subsequent history and Holy Trinity School choir will be performing

songs of the day. Free entry from 10-6, ticketed evening talk from 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Thursday 12 June - Talk by Dr Emily Mayhew, author of *Wounded: From Battlefield to Blighty* which tells the story of the courage, humanity and determination of the men and women who saved so many lives. Pippa Sharpe will talk on the

work of the Chelsea Hospitals in particular 2nd London Hospital located at former St Mark and St John's College and the Carlyle School. 6.30-8.00

For a full list of activities and further details of events, please visit www.chelseasociety.org.uk



Poster Design: Don Grant

The Footballers of Loos

CAROLYN STARREN

During the Christmas 1914 truce soldiers from both sides met in No-Man's Land. As well as exchanging cigarettes and souvenirs, some kicked footballs about, but, contrary to popular belief, there was no organised game.

Nine months later a group of London Irish Rifleman smuggled six footballs to the front line. On 24 September 1915, the night before the Battle of Loos, some of the balls were discovered by their young 18-year-old Lieutenant Dale. Fearing it would expose his men to greater risk he shot one ball and ordered others to be deflated. Rifleman Frank Edwards, captain of the football team, managed to keep one in his haversack. When the whistle blew the London Irish Rifles were the first out of the trenches. Just before this, Edwards re-inflated his football, saying later in an interview, 'We managed to get it laced up just before the artillery started the bombardment. It was like hell let loose.'

He lobbed the ball over the top shouting 'Play up, the London Irish!' He managed to dribble it 20 yards before being shot in the thigh. Rifleman Micky Mileham stopped to apply a tourniquet while others including Rifleman Jimmy Dalby and Bill Taylor continued to kick the ball across No Man's Land. It was eventually pierced on barbed wire on the German front line.

After the devastating battle - which resulted in 50,000 casualties - the muddy ball was recovered from the battlefield and taken back to Britain. In 1920 all the survivors who had been involved, signed the ball and it was donated to the Regimental Museum, then housed at the Duke of York's HQ, Chelsea.

The injury to Edward's thigh took a year to heal but the effects of the gas stayed with him throughout his life. A pub in Twickenham, The Rifleman, is named in his honour. Every September the Regiment

continue to commemorate their comrades on Loos Sunday at their HQ in Camberwell.

Frank Edward's grandson-in-law Ed Harris while researching for a book on the incident asked what had happened to the ball. It was found in a container in the sergeant's mess in very poor condition, close to disintegration. The ball has now been painstakingly restored by professional leather conservators.

We are delighted to announce that this famous football will be returning to Chelsea on June 10 2014. A day of events is being organised to celebrate this notable homecoming including a performance by The Holy Trinity School choir. Rifleman Edward's granddaughter and her husband will be there as well as members of the London Irish Rifles Association both past and present. Do come and join us for what promises to be a memorable occasion.



©London Irish Rifles Association

A cartoon by Regimental Sergeant Major Harry Tyers of the London Irish Rifles depicted the incident showing riflemen wearing gas masks. The Battle of Loos was the first time that poisoned gas was used on the battlefield. Due to the change of wind direction some of the gas rolled back into the British trenches causing the troops to hurriedly put on their rudimentary grey flannel gas masks

Your Society Needs You!

PATRICIA BURR

With our exhibition *Chelsea In the Great War* coming up soon - 2 to 15 June – we shall need a great number of volunteers to man the desk for fourteen days. Many of you have already indicated on the survey that you are willing to help and many more of you are on my list having helped at previous events. We are extremely grateful for all your support and I will be in touch with you later. However if there are any members reading this Newsletter who have not yet let us know they could help, or who would be willing to confirm when they can help, could you please let me know? My contact details are at the end of this message.

I think you will find the exhibition based on life in Chelsea between 1914 and 1918 particularly interesting with some surprising activities in the Borough, for example not one but two aircraft factories. In addition we have readings from a fascinating diary of a Chelsea resident writing to her newborn son, a talk by the author of a critically acclaimed book *Wounded: From the Battlefield to Blighty*, and the actual football kicked to launch the offensive at the Battle of Loos by the men of the Irish Rifles in 1915. It was retrieved from the barbed wire and brought back to regimental headquarters at the Duke of York's. On 10 June it will be brought back 'home'.

The duties are not onerous and most people work in pairs, doing two-hour stints, to encourage visitors to join the Society, tell them about its activities and sell cards and literature. In addition, to add icing to the cake, we hold a party for all those who have helped.

However we are conscious that we do not

seem to attract many men as volunteers and their help, not only in stewarding but with setting up and dismantling, would be very much appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Patricia Burr, 19 Cheyne Court, Flood Street, London SW3 5TP

Email: pburr@btinternet.com.



©London Irish Rifles Association

1916 watercolour celebrating the Footballers of Loos, by the well-renowned battle artist, Lady Butler

Winter Lectures 2014: Celebrate the River Season

PAULETTE CRAXFORD

Monday 3rd February:
*Picturing London's River:
Artists and the Thames*

Our Celebrate the River Season started with a lecture by Amy Concannon, who is the Assistant Curator for British Art 1790–1850 at Tate Britain. She gave us a fascinating talk about how the Thames had inspired some of the greatest paintings ever to be produced in Britain. Her excellently illustrated and informative talk focused on works from the 17th to the mid-19th century and featured the work of Canaletto, Rubens, Richard Wilson and John Constable. The lecture culminated in a focus on JMW Turner, who was born streets away from the Thames and died right by it, in Chelsea. There were some lively questions from the floor at the end of the lecture which highlighted Amy's deep knowledge of her subject.

Monday 24th February:
*The Panorama of the
Thames Project*

We were extremely grateful to our former Chairman David Le Lay for standing in and giving this lecture when the original speakers had to drop out at the last minute: they live on an island in the Thames and were in imminent danger of being flooded.

David gave a brilliant lecture. He was very familiar with the project as he had researched all the buildings along the Chelsea stretch of the river which are shown in Samuel Leigh's 1829 Panorama of the Thames. He spoke about each building in turn, detailing the history and also showing how the buildings look today, bringing to life both the past and the present. David has an amazing knowledge of Chelsea and all the members were delighted that we were able to hear him speak. The evening was a huge success.

Monday 31st March:
*The 500th Anniversary of
Watermen's Hall*

Following his extremely popular talk last year, Robert Crouch MVO, H. M. Bargemaster Emeritus, returned to tell us more about life on the river. He gave an absorbing talk about the last 500 years, starting with the first Act of Parliament by which Henry VIII tried to control the wherryman. He took us through various sections of river history to more recent times, and how the river is used by the watermen of today. Once again he captivated his audience.

Leighton Thompson (1909-2014)

DAVID LE LAY

The death, at a venerable age, has been announced of the Reverend C. E. Leighton Thompson, a former Vicar of Chelsea Old Church. When he was appointed Vicar to the parish in 1950 it comprised a small congregation who met every Sunday in the Moore Chapel which was surrounded by the ruins of the ancient parish church that had been bombed by a direct hit in 1941. Leighton Thompson provided the

determination, leadership and inspiration for the rebuilding of the former church to its former glory, the detailed story of which he recorded in a book "The Rebuilding of Chelsea Old Church" that he personally published in 1992, the year of his retirement.

Upon retirement, he was fortunate to be able to continue living in Chelsea and moved into a small flat in Redburn Street, his devoted wife, Prudence, having died

just before his retirement. Just a couple of years ago, being no longer able to look after himself, he moved into St. Wilfrid's Care Home in Tite Street. Leighton Thompson was a life member of The Chelsea Society and throughout his long tenure as Vicar of the Old Church he always kept in close contact with the Society with whom he and his church had the most amicable of relations.

Dates for your Diary

22 May	European and Local Elections
29 May	Summer Meeting: Royal Hospital
2-15 June	Chelsea Society's Exhibition: Chelsea in the Great War: Marquee on Duke of York Square, King's Road
3 June	Governor's Review, The Royal Hospital
19 June	Guided Walk: Whistler's River
15 July	Doggett's Coat and Badge Race, Cadogan Pier: 12.30pm
20 July	Brompton Cemetery Open Day: Chelsea Society stand – all day
1-30 September	Thames Festival
18 September	Visit: Thames River Police Museum
30 September	Visit: Thames River Police Museum
20 October	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall (TBC)
3 November	Residents Association Meeting, Chelsea Old Town Hall
24 November	Chelsea Society AGM, Chelsea Old Town Hall



Picture: Michael Bach

The Tardis has landed!

The first advertphones by JC Decaux and BT have been installed in King's Road – a major setback for clearing the clutter! Whoever thought this was a good idea needs to have a rethink. The Council is negotiating for a reduction in size for these major obstructions that dwarf passers by. We have still to see the "benefit" of fewer BT phone boxes. But what about the rest?

Get in Touch

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.

We would like everyone's email address so we can alert you when we need your support. If you have not yet done so please send your email address to Allan Kelly at membership@chelseasociety.org.uk

Our website is at:

www.chelseasociety.org.uk

For those of you interested in keeping in touch with Twitter – follow us on [@chelseasociety](https://twitter.com/chelseasociety)

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