THE CHELSEA SOCIETY REPORT

1986

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

founded by Reginald Blunt in 1927
to protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
38 Whitelands House,
Cheltenham Terrace,
SW3 4QY.

Registered Charity 276264

The Annual General Meeting

of the Chelsea Society was held at St. Luke's Church Hall, St. Luke's Street, Chelsea SW3 on Monday, 17th November 1986.

Colonel Alexander Rubens, Vice-Chairman of the Society, took the Chair.

The Chairman opened the Meeting by saying he was sorry members had to 'rough it' with himself in the Chair, but Sir Marcus Worsley was in Australia, from whence he sent his apologies for absence and also his greetings. Colonel Rubens then said it was a great pleasure to have the Mayor and Mayoress of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea with them and how greatly the Meeting appreciated their presence. He had a very sad announcement to make in that some members might not have heard the tragic news that dear David, the husband of Mrs. Lesley Lewis, had died very recently and he knew that all present would join him in expressing their deepest sympathy with Lesley, and also their admiration and appreciation for all she was doing and had done for the Society, and for her attendance at the Meeting.

With the addition of the wording 'held on Monday, 18th November 1985 at 6.30 pm' the Minutes of last year's Annual General Meeting were approved and signed.

The election to the Council of Mrs. Harriet Cullen and Mr. Denis Howard, both co-opted members, Mr. Julian Barrow and Mr. Jonathan Wheeler, all of whom had been proposed and seconded, was approved.

The Chairman said he was delighted that Mr. P. V. Oldak had consented to act as the Society's Hon. Auditor and that he had, in fact, audited the accounts for 1985.

The Chairman then asked the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Ian Frazer, to present the accounts for 1985, and on the proposal of the Hon. Treasurer, seconded by Mr. Hugh Krall, these were adopted unanimously. The Hon. Treasurer paid tribute to his predecessor, Mr. William Haynes, for the manner in which he had increased the Society's funds during his term in office. He also thanked Mr. Oldak for his help which he greatly appreciated.

Mr. Frazer reported that selling advertising space in the Report was becoming increasingly difficult and he would welcome suggestions from members at the end of the Meeting.

The Chairman's Report was given by Mrs. Lewis and, when thanking her, Colonel Rubens said that given the circumstances, it was quite miraculous that she had produced such a lucid and detailed account.

Mrs. Lewis then made the following Progress Report on the celebration of the Chelsea Society's Diamond Jubilee by a Charity Auction in aid of the Chelsea Physic Garden on 26th March 1987:

> You will have received the Blue Paper which gives particulars of the Auction on the 26th March 1987, and this has been circulated and is continuing to be circulated as widely as possible. There are plenty of them in the Hall and please take some to give to your friends. Gifts are beginning to come into Christie's South Kensington and I am sure many of you will be adding to them. I hope very much too that others will send a money donation, however small. The names of such donors will be listed in the Catalogue and will demonstrate members' recognition of the Society's Diamond Jubilee as well as the importance of the Physic Garden. What has been done so far has been to issue two notices, the first one in the winter warning artists so that they might do some Chelsea paintings in the summer, and we have already received some. We invited the Patrons whose names you see on the Blue Paper and I feel sure they will do all they can to make the event a success. You will also see the names of our Committee who have all been working hard in all sorts of ways. Mrs. Press let us have a splendid Launching Party for about fifty people in her beautiful house, 4 Cheyne Walk, and not only that but made all the arrangements herself, including most generous catering. Mr. Hughes-Onslow has most energetically collected advertisements from firms and organizations to put in the Catalogue and pay for the printing of it. This is a most valuable contribution which should add handsomely to our profits. As you know, sending-in to Christie's South Kensington was from 3rd November till 15th January. Many gifts from members and friends have come in and are now being catalogued. Almost as important as giving things to sell or raffle is to come to the Auction and encourage others to. Prices depend on the bidding and I hope we shall have the sort of bidding which makes exciting entertainment as well as bringing in the lolly. I hope that this event will not only be profitable for the Physic Garden and worthy of our own Diamond Jubilee but also be fun for all concerned. Now we can only wait to see what comes in, then the Catalogue will appear and we shall get an idea of how many people are coming.
>
> Meanwhile your Committee holds its corporate breath and keeps its two hundred or so fingers crossed!
>
> Donations please to Mrs. Lesley Lewis, 38 Whitelands House, Cheltenham Terrace, London SW3 4QY, at any time before the 26th March 1987. Cheques should be made out to the Chelsea Society, Auction Account.

Finally Colonel Rubens announced that next year's Summer Meeting was to be held at Hurlingham on Monday, 13th July 1987, at 6 pm. to 8 pm. Mr. Arthur Grimwade proposed a vote of thanks to Colonel Rubens for his Chairing of the Meeting which was greeted with acclamation.

The numbers present were in the region of 120.

The Meeting ended at 7.40 pm, when members and their guests adjourned for wine and conversation.

Chairman's Report

This is the alternate year in which the three longest-serving members of the Council retire, according to the Constitution, so we unfortunately have to lose Mrs. Pocock, Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Hayes. Betty Woolf has been our invaluable link with West London Traffic Reform and has put in an enormous amount of work, studying documents, circulating information, and keeping in touch with the representatives of the many affiliated Societies concerned with the future of the Riverside. We feel sure she will continue to help us but we must not ask too much of her because she has had a serious illness and we must do nothing to impede her recovery. We send her our thanks and best wishes. Penny Pocock, devoted as she is to Chelsea causes, could ill be spared but as her husband Tom Pocock, our Editor, cannot always attend meetings, we hope she will stand in for him, as a visitor, when editorial matters have to be discussed. Joan Hayes has been a most important member of Council because as Chairman of the Sydney Street Residents' Association, she knows more than anyone about the Heart Hospital proposals and has led protests on the planning when protest was needed. The Council has therefore resolved to co-opt her for the next two years, which may be crucial in the progress of Phase I of the hospital building works. There is a fourth vacancy caused by the retirement of Mr. Frost. He felt he could attend too few meetings owing to his frequent absences abroad and we must bow to his wishes. We know we can rely on his advice in major planning matters and specifically those affecting the Paradise Walk area. We thank him for his services.

The Honorary Treasurer and the Membership Secretary, who took up their tasks last year, have loyally performed them and, like their predecessors, relieved the Chairman of concern. Patricia Gelley has got our circulations out with great efficiency and with the same personal touch as Barbara Towle. She does it in her own style too and I had a nice ride in her Alfa-Romeo to deliver the notices to Addressograph, who send them out from a strange little court off the Charing Cross Road. I gratefully acknowledge the work of all the Society's officers, and also that of Mr. Campbell, at the Information Office in Chelsea Old Town Hall, who does so much for us. I welcome Mr. Oldak as Honorary Auditor and I am sure Ian Frazer's skilled accounting will give him few headaches. Last year's Report was much appreciated and we look forward eagerly to Tom Pococks next effort. The membership stands at 756, exactly the same number as last year although with some comings and goings.

1. *Planning Matters*

Eileen Harris and Mark Dorman, advised by our architect member Hugh Krall, have continued their regular monitoring of planning applications, which seem always to be increasing. There is plenty of money about

for alterations and it is strange that purchasers, who presumably buy a house because they like it, then want to tear it to bits and turn it into something different, almost invariably bigger. This may benefit the owner and, on the face of it the rates, but it puts an ever increasing strain on services, road maintenance, and parking, and continuously diminishes the light and air at the rear of buildings. I think the Borough would agree that there have been more cases than before of works being started without planning permission, and we must recognize their difficulties of enforcement. We shall be grateful to residents who alert us early enough for effective action. I must emphasize the essential unfairness of unauthorized work. Its mere existence prejudices the case because it may be difficult exactly to assess the former position and there is natural reluctance to enforce removal of advanced or completed work. Another anxiety is that the Borough now more often seems to lose appeals against their perfectly justifiable refusals. We must not lightly question the impartiality of Inspectors and Ministers but are they influenced by the political trend to favour development and potential jobs against residential and aesthetic amenity? Permanent residents in the long term ensure the well-being of an area such as Chelsea, using the shops, employing local labour, contributing money and voluntary work to desirable causes, supporting local institutions and upholding orderliness. Could the Borough provide an analysis of Appeal decisions for consideration by our MPs?

Cases:

a. *New Brompton Hospital, Sydney Street SW3*

The site has now been cleared for building work to start and it is hoped to complete the Hospital in three years' time. The Hospital authorities first proposed dark red bricks and bronze details for the face of the building. This was strongly resisted by the Chelsea Society and the Sydney Street Residents Association, through the Borough Planning Department, as being most unsympathetic to the area. This objection was sustained in June, since when suitable London Stock bricks have been agreed which will blend in with St. Luke's Church and Sydney Street houses. Finally in November a compromise has been reached for the inner window frames to be white with bronze surrounds. This restrained account provided for our Report by the Sydney Street Residents Association gives little idea of the prompt and effective action, combined with diplomacy with which Joan Hayes as Chairman, and her colleagues, fought what appeared to be a very arbitrary choice by the Hospital authorities. Their efforts procured a deferment and finally a much more satisfactory decision, and we salute then.

b. *Cardio-thoracic Institute, Cale Street, SW3*

Lord Flowers, Vice-Chancellor of London University, on 29th October laid the Foundation Stone of this building, which should be completed in the Autumn of 1987.

c. *Numbers 3, 4, 5, 8 Coulson Street, 13, 14 Anderson Street SW3*

We reported last year on these listed houses which are in a sorry state of repair, and noted the Borough Council's frustrated attempts to obtain Compulsory Purchase Orders. Some work was begun, with an undertaking that it should be completed by the end of December 1985, but the contractors appeared to have abandoned it after a few weeks. Our enquiries indicated that the Borough would be able to do the work and charge the cost on the properties if the undertaking was not honoured, but we were not informed that this procedure had been frustrated by the owner obtaining from the Court a further extension of time. During 1986 we received many complaints from our members and some notice of the matter was taken by national organisations. On 14 September I asked the Borough Council for more definite information but it is only now, in November, that we hear what happened, and that the Council was considering application for a further Compulsory Purchase Order. This was approved at a Meeting on 26 November but as the procedure is very slow the rehabilitation of these listed buildings still seems a long way off. While recognizing the Council's difficulties we do not understand why we should have been kept in the dark throughout 1986 and left under the false impression that effective action was well on the way.

d. *49A Elystan Place SW3*

This was a case raising important issues. Permission had been granted for additions to this house which is in a very densely occupied area at the angle of Elystan Place and Markham Street. Space and privacy at the rear were extremely limited and any additions at all were likely to affect the amenities of adjacent properties. Nevertheless permission was obtained and the applicants then proceeded to build beyond it in a blatant flouting of the planning procedure and in the face of numerous complaints. The Borough served an Enforcement Notice for removal of the excess work, and there was an Appeal against this on 8 May. I attended this on behalf of the Chelsea Society, in support of the objectors and the Borough. The Letter of Decision (13 November 1986) from the Department of the Environment has just been received and, subject to a right of appeal on a point of law, dismisses the Appeal though with some minor reservations. We trust that enforcement will now follow within the prescribed period and that the objectors, who ably conducted their protracted case, will not be too severely disturbed by the works.

e. *Numbers 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29b, 31, 35 and 53 Danvers Street SW3*

These houses belong to the Council and are mainly occupied by elderly tenants and divided into flats. They were due, even overdue, for drastic refurbishment and the tenants had for some time been expecting this. When the plans were produced however they made various objections and complained they had not been consulted as promised. Meetings were then held but the impression remained that early consultations has indeed been omitted and that at a later stage the Council was unwilling, on grounds of expense, to make minor modifications. There was some division

of responsibility between the Planning and Health and Housing Committees and as our terms of reference exclude much that concerns the latter we felt ourselves unqualified to judge the details. It would appear that several objections have now been met. More relevant to our interests was the fact that one privately owned house, Number 33, would be adversely affected by the proposed adjoining rear extension which was to be made uniform with the others. Number 33 is the end house in a block, an alleyway to a house at the rear dividing it from Number 35. The owners vigorously protested against loss of light and privacy at the rear and in their garden. We felt the Council was behaving very arbitrarily in not sufficiently recognizing the existence of this one privately owned house, and adapting their plans to it particularly as it was an end house. Among other things they were reducing light to a basement flat recently built with full planning approval and apparently with a minimum then of daylight requirements. As a matter of historic interest it may be noted that the sculptress Getrude Hermes had her studio here. At the present time it appears that the Council has granted itself planning permission despite the objections.

f. *39 Ixworth Place SW3*

Not entirely dissimilar to the above case is that of this small recently built house tucked in beside the commercial premises of Ixworth House. A proposal to refurbish and considerably enlarge the latter has damaging implications for adjoining properties. The light industrial and office use of Ixworth House is really now anomalous in an area recently developed as a high class and very expensive residential one. If the use cannot be phased out we think it should at least be strictly confined to its former limits whatever its commercial potential. We have strongly supported the objections from Number 39.

g. *Schemes in the pipeline*

There is no decision as yet on the vacant Sainsbury site. There has been much discussion on the mixed-usage development of the site at 73-79 King's Road and 44 Smith Terrace, and it would appear that a solution is being hammered out between the various interested parties. Access to the development from Smith Terrace has been refused, to the relief of many residents.

2. *Activities*

We had two lectures at the National Army Museum by kind permission of the Director Mr. William Reid. The first, on 19th February, was on "Sir Hans Sloane and the Chelsea Physic Garden" by Professor W. T. Stearn formerly of the British Museum (Natural History). He gave a fascinating account of this great man's contribution to the life of his time, and particularly to Chelsea, and we shall all in future look with even more reverence at his statue (in replica!) in the Physic Garden. The second lecture was by Mr. Boris Mollo, entitled "Getting a New Museum on the

Map. Twenty-five years of the National Army Museum". After enjoying Mr. Reid's hospitality for so many years for our lectures it was most appropriate that we should have one on the Museum and its most interesting history held us enthralled. Chelsea is indeed privileged to have an important national museum added to its attractions, and it can be seen growing under our eyes with its acquisitions and exhibitions. We look forward to reading about it in the article Mr. Mollo is contributing to our Report, and we hope that our Vice-Chairman has followed up the Russian connections which Boris and Sascha discovered on the night.

The Summer Meeting was held on 29 July at the Museum of Garden History, St. Mary-at-Lambeth, with about 130 members and guests present. An exhibition "Huguenots and Horticulture" was on view as well as the permanent exhibits in this wonderfully restored redundant church. The attractive shop was open for us and it was a fine evening on which to see the charming garden with its historic tombs of the Tradescant family and of Admiral Bligh of the Bounty. Mrs. John Nicholson, co-founder with her husband of the Tradescant Trust, gave a fascinating talk on the church's history and its rescue at the eleventh hour from demolition, threatened because of the dispersal of the congregation after the War, and the derelict state of the building. Our President, Sir Marcus Worsley, welcomed the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea to the meeting and warmly thanked Mrs. Nicholson for her splended address, as well as the members who had taken so much trouble in arranging for the refreshments. The small amount of business, conducted by the chairman, included election to the Council of the Rev. Dererk Watson, hitherto a co-opted member, and a reminder of the Charity Auction in aid of the Chelsea Physic Garden to be held in celebration of the Society's Diamond Jubilee in 1987. This was the last official occasion attended by the Macebearer, Mr. Morley, before his retirement. We shall miss his familiar presence and we wish him well.

3. *Chelsea Physic Garden*

The Physic Garden had a successful year in spite of poor weather and there were over 10,000 visitors on Open Days between April and October. Work was begun on the greenhouses, on the conversion of the kitchen and renovation of the lecture rooms. The upper lecture room has an interesting open timber roof characteristic of its early twentieth century date and this will now be masked by a lowered ceiling. Some objections were raised to the screening of this feature but for acoustical and heating requirements the modification was certainly necessary. We understand that the timbers have been left intact. The outstanding event of the year was the Garden Party held on 12 June in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, on a beautiful day with everything looking its very best. She most thoroughly toured the garden and in her own charming and enthusiastic way managed to talk to a great many of the guests. An Open Day with free entrance to members of selected

Societies, including the Chelsea Society, was held on 15 July and well attended. This was a good idea of the the Curator, Mr. Duncan Donald, to spread wider knowledge of the garden and give advance publicity to our Charity Auction. On 6 July 1987 the Marchioness of Salisbury is holding a Garden Party at Hatfield in aid jointly of the Chelsea Physic Garden and the Tradescant Trust. The closing date for application for tickets at £25 each was 15 December but if you would like to receive an invitation please apply nevertheless, as soon as possible, to Lady Harriot Tennant, Appeal Director, Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS.

4. *Chelsea Art Society*

The Society held its 39th Annual Exhibition in Chelsea Old Town Hall Sports Arena from 17 to 25 October. At the opening by the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea the Mayoress presented awards to the artists, several of whom were Chelsea residents. The new President of the Society, Mr. Alan Gourley PP.ROI., has had a distinguished career in art since his studies at Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh College of Art and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. During the Exhibition he gave talks on "My life in Art", and a well-known artist, Charles Smith UA., held a demonstration of oil-painting. Four hundred and seventy items of paintings and sculpture were accepted for exhibition and the total of sales reached a record of about £10,250. As usual the standard was high, as might be expected from a Chelsea art society founded in 1910, and the Soirée held on 21 October was a notable social occasion. At their Reception at the Sketch Club, Dilke Street, on 19 June I was honoured by an invitation to speak on the Chelsea Society's links with art and artists.

5. *Conservation Area Proposals Statements*

Several members will be aware that brochures on our Conservation Areas have for some time been in preparation for the Royal Borough by Messrs. Miller & McCoy, Architects and Town Planners. Their purpose is to describe and analyse the character of each Area, what in fact must be conserved, and to indicate the Borough's likely response to planning applications. They contain interesting historical chapters incorporating much detailed and documented information and are a valuable addition to existing sources. They are copiously and aptly illustrated with photographs, reproductions, maps and line drawings. Residents were consulted at local meetings and invited to comment on the drafts before the final version was published. They are on sale at about £3 each from the Borough or can be consulted in the Public Libraries. The following have been published for areas south of Old Brompton Road: The Billings. Sloane Stanley Esquire, Elm Park and Chelsea Park, Cheyne, Thames, Royal Hospital, The Boltons, Thurlow/Smith's Charity. Chelsea is being printed. Yet to be prepared are: Hans Town, Sloane Square, Brompton Cemetery,

Carlyle Square (which has been combined with Elm Park and Chelsea Park to create Chelsea Park/Carlyle).

The undertaking is not without its controversial aspects. There is often disagreement on matters of taste, and fear that merely to mention an acceptable type of addition may put ideas into developers' heads. Generally speaking, however, we welcome the Statements which are attractively produced at reasonable cost and, when complete, will become increasingly useful.

6. *Wider Concerns*

Hitherto my Report has dealt only with Chelsea matters but we have been concerned with some issues which go beyond our own boundaries and have to be looked at in a wider context. The following have arisen:

a. *"Lifting the Burden"*

This is the title of a White Paper proposing amendments to the Use Classes Order 1972 which divides premises into such categories as residential, shops, offices, industry, institutions, entertainment etc. Where a change is proposed within one of these categories no planning permission is required but if the change is from one to another then an application for change of use must be made. In planning this is a very useful check and in Chelsea we welcomed, for instance, the differentiation of restaurants from other shops. The Government proposed, however, to simplify planning procedures by amalgamating some of the former classes e.g. by allowing limited use of private properties as offices, change from light industry to office etc. without planning permission and therefore without control at an initial stage. Many individuals and associations throughout the country objected and we supported our Borough in the view that the implications were devasting in an area such as Kensington and Chelsea. After much agitation the Government was induced to look again at the proposals which they had evidently been expecting to push through without controversy. I attended, with Borough representatives, a delegation to the Minister, Lord Elton, on 17 March and although the proceedings were not reassuring this and other pressure did procure a breathing-space after which some modifications emerged. "Lifting the burden" had seemed to mean removing hardwon controls over spoilers of residential amenities who thoroughly deserved to have laid on them every burden you could think of. I was so incensed at the conduct of the delegation by Lord Elton that I wrote a very rude letter about it to Nicholas Scott MP who obligingly sent it on to him. It is probably just coincidence that Lord Elton has now decided to withdraw from Government office! I must take this opportunity of congratulating Nicholas Scott, our Vice-President, on his Ministerial promotion and thanking him for the trouble he takes whenever he can over Chelsea Society concerns which must seem the depth of triviality when seen from Northern Ireland.

b. *The Chelsea Basin Scheme*

This huge redevelopment by the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is welcome in that the transformation of this derelict land into a complex of flats, shops, a marina etc. will allow a prime piece of riverside to be actively enjoyed. We are however apprehensive that access to it from our side of Chelsea Creek might seriously complicate traffic conditions in the Lots Road area. Our Borough no doubt is watching this.

c. *Battersea Power Station — Leisure Complex*

Traffic considerations again inhibit wholehearted enthusiasm for an imaginative major development. Our Borough is in consultation with the Borough of Wandsworth and it appears that the situation will be monitored.

d. *Princes Wharf, Anhalt Road SW11*

The Chelsea Society, represented by Hugh Krall and myself, joined the River Thames Society and a local residents' committee to consider the effect of a very large block of flats and houses to be built on an empty site upstream of the southern end of Albert Bridge. We in Chelsea could hardly complain about parking and traffic conditions but we did fear that the setting of Albert Bridge and the view across the river might be spoiled. Our own Borough has consulted Wandsworth about it. The proposed building, though perhaps not in itself disastrous, may be the forerunner of other developments on the south bank opposite Chelsea and we particularly dislike proposals for a dreary rectangular block on a site further upstream. Unless there is concerted planning to ensure breaks and height variations along the frontage we might end by looking at something like the view from the Tate Gallery.

e. *River Thames Society — Central Tideway Branch*

After something of a decline this Society has revived and might play an important part in co-ordinating riverside authorities. There is now no GLC to knock London Borough's heads together and they may not want to tackle the riverside scene as a whole. To play a worthy part the Central Tideway Branch needs the authority of a large membership and I hope some of you will pick up the leaflets available in the hall and lend a hand by joining.

f. *The Lorry Ban*

In the absence of the GLC the London Boroughs are evidently finding it difficult to agree on traffic matters. Our own Borough totally supports the principle of night and weekend lorry bans in Kensington and Chelsea and they deserve all the help we can give them. The future of roadbuilding is unclear and in any case only offers longterm solutions, and for residents in inner cities the only immediate relief from traffic noise and pollution is by control of heavy lorries. Perhaps in a few years' time the idea of

juggernauts thundering through inner cities for twenty-four hours a day will be seen as anachronistic as open sewers — though I am sure even those had their advocates in their time!

e. *The London Wildlife Trust*

Some of you may remember that the Trust started a small reserve on the Sydney Street Hospital site but that this soon had to be abandoned because building was due to begin. The whole movement however, to maintain sites where wild fauna and flora may be protected in the London area, is growing apace. Our Borough has shown interest and the Kensal Green and Brompton cemeteries may have potential. Perhaps some day we can find another site in Chelsea but meanwhile the movement is worth out attention because an element of wildlife (if not too wild) is certainly an urban amenity. Particulars of membership may be obtained from The Director, London Wildlife Trust, 80 York Way, London N1 9AG. The Patron is Lord Melchett whose family name is already linked with philanthropic work in Chelsea.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Effects of Planning Applications on individual residents' amenities

The Society's planning secretaries regularly monitor the lists of planning applications, and make objections to the Borough Planning Officer when either public or private amenities appear to be adversely affected. They can however only operate from the outside unless they are notified by residents that the proposals threaten amenities only visible from the inside or the rear of the premises. If residents desire the support of the Society in any objections they should at the earliest possible moment notify one of the Society's officers as indicated below, giving particulars with copies of any letters written by them to the Borough. The Society will in suitable cases support any reasonable objections, whether or not the residents are members, but membership of the Society makes contact easier. It is especially desirable that Residents' Associations should include some members. Particulars can be obtained from the Chairman or other officers or from the Information Office, Chelsea Old Town Hall.

Officers to be notified:
Chairman: Mrs. Lesley Lewis, 38 Whitelands House, Cheltenham Terrace, London SW3 4QY. Tel. 730 6030.
Hon. Planning Secretary: Dr. Eileen Harris, 16 Limerston Street, London SW10 0WH. Tel. 352 2420.
Hon. Assistant Planning Secretary: Mark Dorman Esq., 35 Smith Street, London SW3 4EP. Tel. 352 7390.

Chelsea porcelain: the mystery solved

by Elizabeth Adams

Some of the most beautiful porcelain ever made was produced in Chelsea during the four decades in the middle of the 18th century; it was as much in demand by collectors then as now. The china factory itself and the auctions, at which much of the wares marked with the sign of the anchor were sold, were the talk of fashionable London. Yet when production was moved to Derby the Porcelain Manufactory was demolished in 1784 and it vanished totally. Not only have no pictures or plans of it survived but within a century Chelsea people seemed to have forgotten where it stood. Most have agreed that it was somewhere between Old Church Street and Lawrence Street but one authority sited it by the river and a more recent theory was that it stood where the Kingsley School — now the Libyan School — was built. Certainly, fragments of porcelain and "kiln furniture" have often been found in the gardens of Nos. 14, 15 and 16 Lawrence Street, all Georgian houses built around 1790, but only now has the exact position of the Manufactory been identified — The Editor.

The conclusions which I have been able to draw from discoveries made in three sets of inter-relating documents have been published in an article in the new magazine *Ceramics*. These discoveries were concerned with the chronology and the sites (note the plural) of the famous 18th century Chelsea porcelain factory; and the documents from which the relevant material was drawn are the Fire insurance policy books of the Hand-in-Hand and the Sun companies (in the latter case with their "Indorsements" or alterations),[1] the Rate Books,[2] and the sale deeds for several Chelsea sites in the Middlesex Deeds Registers.[3] I came to the conclusion that the site of the earliest Chelsea porcelain factory (of which according to a newspaper advertisement in 1751 the "Chief-Manager" was Charles Gouyn) was in Church Lane, on the east side, the second house north of Justice Walk (or Cheney Row, or St. John Street, as the same thoroughfare was referred to in different records). This sizeable house had "a stable and Coach-house adjoining". The insurance policy taken out on 12th September, 1744, by Mr. Anthony Supply, a Huguenot surgeon, then the tenant of the house,[4] gives "Sprimont" as the actual "occupier". On 13th September, 1751, Henry Porter, a Chelsea man (who appeared in the records as a "victualler" as early as 1726) bought "Mr. Supply's House" from its real owner John Offley of Wichnor in Staffordshire, whose mother had been Margaret Lawrence, the last of that famous local family.[5]

Though the indenture for Henry Porter's purchase of the house was

not registered until June, 1753, it supports the idea that it *was* the site of the earliest porcelain factory since it specifically describes the stable and coach-house as "now converted into a Room for other use".

"Mr. Supply's House" is described in the Hand-in-Hand policies as "abutting north on Lawrence and south on Widow Westerband." This worried me until I went right back to 1709 in the rate books, when the house immediately to the north of Mr. Supply's was ascribed to a "Capt. Lawrence", and that on the south side to the Widow. There was no difficulty in tracing the occupants of Captain Lawrence's house until it came into the possession of a Mrs. Phillips in 1741. Mrs. Phillips was there until March, 1749, but by the end of 1750 her house had been sold to Henry Porter. It was a big house, 1280 sq.ft. in area, three storeys high, with a single storey addition of 210 sq.ft. and a coach-house and stable of 360 sq. ft. The principal rooms were fully panelled or "wainscot'd", the secondary ones "half-wainscot'd". When Henry Porter renewed the insurance policy on the property on 14th December, 1750[6] "Mrs. Phillips'" house was valued at £400 and described as "empty" — but in a different hand after that word was added the name "Sprimont".

In May, 1751, Henry Porter assigned the ownership of this property to his nephew Isaac Porter of St. James's, Westminster, Gent., asserting by Deed Poll that it had in fact been purchased with Isaac's money.

A few months earlier, in August, 1750, Henry Porter had insured a small house at the angle of Justice Walk and the north-west part of Lawrence Street.[7] The Rate Books show that "Mr. La Grave" was the occupier of this Corner property from Midsummer, 1749, and it was rated to "Mr. Andrew Lagrave Spriemont" "Mr. Andrew Legrove or Mr. Spriemont" through to September, 1759, when the entry changed to "Mr. William Mead or Mr. Sprimont". What absolutely confirms the association of this house and property with Nicholas Sprimont and his factory is its continued re-insurance through a series of policy renewals right through from August, 1750, to October, 1790. The death of Sprimont in June, 1771, and the demolition of the factory in 1784 made no difference; the Corner House survived.

The low number of its policy, 816, suggests that it was of early date, perhaps 17th century. We know from the plans of all three properties, which it has been possible to reconstruct from the descriptions and measurements given for them in the Middlesex Deeds Registers, that an almost square piece of land, roughly 90ft. × 90ft., lay to the north of the Corner House, and south of the west wing of old Monmouth House, the mansion which then closed the northern end of Lawrence Street. On this plot in 1749-50 we can safely say that Nicholas Sprimont erected his new factory, the Lawrence Street works. His widow Ann, testifying years later in 1776, in an affidavit for a legal suit *Chetwood v. Burnsall* for misappropriation of porcelain, said that "the said Nicholas Sprimont did sometime in or about the year 1750, build, erect, stablish several Houses, Warehouses, Kilns and other erections and buildings for the purpose of making porcelain and other wares at Chelsea aforesaid . . ."

Henry Porter died in September, 1766, and in his will did "give devise and bequeath unto my dear wife Elizabeth Porter all that my freehold Messuage or Tenement with the Appurtenances in the occupation of Mr. Mead and all that part or parcel of ground and the Erections, Buildings and premises with the Appurtenances situate lying and being in the parish of Chelsea . . . now in the tenure of Mr. Nicholas Sprimont as Lessee or Tenant thereof . . ."

Both these extracts refer to the Lawrence Street factory site. When it came into commission in 1750, the famous Chelsea anchor in its various forms seems to have been taken as the factory mark. Before this, the early porcelain, produced I believe on Mr. Supply's premises, was marked with the Triangle, the alchemical sign for Fire. Mrs, Phillips' house, I have elsewhere suggested, was used in conjunction with Mr. Supply's house from 1750-1759, when both were disposed of, as a training school for Sprimont's apprentices, who c. 1753 comprised a third of his workforce. It makes sense to suppose that they could have produced the rather naive and unmarked Girl-in-a-Swing porcelains; and the buildings may also have been used for the manufacture of the famous Chelsea Toys, the scent-bottles, seals, sweetmeat and snuff-boxes, etc., through the subsequent Red Anchor period, 1753-58. The 1750's were the most prosperous years of the Chealsea undertaking. Retrenchment and reorganisation c. 1759 meant that the porcelains of the Gold Anchor period (1760-1769) were produced solely on the Lawrence Street site.

Monmouth House itself, for long considered the site of the factory, was, I am convinced, rather the site of the Factory Warehouse, which occupied its Eastern Wing from c. 1747-1765. Sprimont's home was in the Western Wing from 1750 to 1759. He began to be troubled about 1756 by the illness (perhaps chronic nephritis) which finally killed him; and it can be deduced from an "Indorsement" to an Insurance policy that in 1759 he adapted part of the factory warehouse as living quarters. He also had a country house at Richmond, Surrey, in later years, and another, the site of which is not known, somewhere in Dorset.

Before I close I must warmly acknowledge and thank Miss Esther Darlington for her great kindness and indispensable help in my researches. It was she who put into my hands the key to the whole knotty business of the actual site of the Chelsea factory, by showing me, together with the deeds of her house in Lawrence Street, an attached old list of all those to do with every site pertaining to the factory. Without this I do not think the problem could have been unravelled. I trust I have teased it out correctly, and I thank her most sincerely. *(See illustrations, page 38).*

[1]The policy books for both Companies are held in the manuscript department of the Guildhall Library, City of London.
[2]Chelsea Library Reference Dept., Old Town Hall, King's Road, SW3.
[3]GLC Records Office, Northampton Street, Finsbury, EC1.
[4]Hand-in-Hand policy 3320.
[5]Middlesex Deeds Register, 1753. Book 2. No. 535.
[6]Hand-in-Hand policy 72516.
[7]Hand-in-Hand policy 816.

Gas lamps and a man called "Old Chelsea"

by Ernest Flint

In the Report for 1984, Ernest Flint — the brother of Rose Gamble, author of that wonderful evocation of her youth, *Chelsea Child* — described his experiences as a young man working on Thames sailing-barges. Now he writes about the Chelsea he knew more than half a century ago.

One of the charms of Chelsea is Albert Bridge with its supporting towers, toll houses, and lamp standards: Victoriana at its best. At one time it was decided that it was obsolete, sagging, and should be destroyed. Some saint opposed the plan, had the centre span shored up and the landscape was saved.

Up to the Thirties a Victorian coffee-stall was parked at the foot of the bridge on the Chelsea side every evening; it was a model of bright paint shining glass, and polished brass oil lamps. It had a coal-fired range, on which stood a copper spout-can containing spiced saveloys; when the hinged lid was raised, and brought down smartly to chop one off, the aroma could be felt. "A sav and a slice" with tea thrown in cost one shilling. The design of the stall with the bridge in the background, and the soft light of the gas-lamps on the Embankment would have made a fine subject for Greaves; there may be a drawing of his lying about somewhere covering this scene.

The stall attendant was a hard case gentleman called Joe. He had spent his life in the Navy, and was more than a match if there should be any hanky-panky among the customers. On the back shelf was a framed photograph of him when a boy, in uniform, with lanyard, "Death of Nelson" scarf, and straw hat. Each evening the stall was dragged to its site from a stable in Danvers Street by a rather weary little carthorse, and about one a.m., it was dragged back with the rather weary Joe leading the way. On one occasion, when entering the stable yard, they were confronted by an elephant, the horse shied, and Joe scooted out and ran into a policeman. On being told that there was an elephant adrift in the yard, he accused Joe of being drunk; Joe had a lot to say about this, so much, that a few neighbours came to their windows to complain about the noise. They explained that the elephant had been boarded out by a circus appearing at the Chelsea Palace the next day: Joe returned to the stable with a lot of shouted advice about other animals he might encounter, and to keep the amorous bearded lady at arms length.

At the corner of Danvers Street and stretching to the Old Church stood Lombard Terrace; it is a pity that this has not been preserved. What is left of Old Chelsea has to me, a charm, even a magic, that is hard to understand. We are lucky to have the place immortalised by such artists as Greaves and Henry Pether. A few landmarks of the age were Whitelands College, the Chelsea Palace, the Guardians' Welfare Office, Chelsea Workhouse with its procession of aged paupers (and some not so aged) drifting towards the gate at the tolling of a mournful bell at 5 p.m. Then there were the police station (a very busy place), a stewed eel and pie shop and next door the undertakers: coffins being made at the front window, and a chapel of rest "round the back". In spite of the poverty, it was important that the dead had a good send off, possibly helped along by the pie shop fare.

Behind this section of the King's Road a narrow lane ran from the river to the World's End public house. It was composed of small cottages, most of them covered in ivy or grape-vines, and a riot of marigolds, lupins, cats, dogs, chickens and rabbits. This was World's End Passage, a pub at one end, and a large rag-and-bone shop at the other. Rags, bones, and rabbit skins were shot onto the pavement from carts and there sorted out and weighed; once the price was agreed upon the merchandise was dragged into the cave. The front of this building remains unchanged, part of the interior has been turned into a restaurant: I could not bring myself to eat in there, spick and span as it now is.

Another pretty rural spot was Grove Cottages a little backwater off Manor Street. A large fig tree grew in the centre, and all the cottages were ivy or grape-vine-covered, with the usual abundance of flowers, animals and kids. At the far end were stables for costers, ponies and carts. Their day started in the small hours, going to the Borough and Billingsgate markets. Later in the day with carts all dressed up, they would trundle from street to square shouting their wares, and the prices thereof.

The eastern end of the borough and Belgravia was sacred ground. Displayed on some of the basement railings were metal notices, "Organs and Street Cries Prohibited". There was a great variety of street cries, prohibited or not. There was a tall gaunt man with a yoke across his shoulders from which dangled two drums; his cry was "Carbolic you wannit". Another pair crying "Cane chairs to mend": being secured an order they would squat down on the pavement and do their stuff. A favourite was the toffee apple man who cry was "Fruit sweet and firewood", but best of all were the lavender ladies, always in good voice singing their centuries-old song.

As a child I lived in a small cottage in Manor Street opposite The Beehive public house. On Sundays a character would appear with a few rats he had trapped in cages, the landlord of the pub would come out with his cross-bred terrier, Chum. The rats would be freed in the street and Chum would be freed to chase and kill them, which he never failed to do. When the pub opened, a huge mule would arrive towing a cart loaded with shrimps and winkles. Next in turn was the Salvation Army

band, followed by the muffin man with his wares in a tray balanced on his head and ringing his bell. Next a donkey towing a cart with watercress, a "ha'penny a handful", and large white celery with the stump not cut away.

In the twenties, living and rents were cheap. There were many weird people to be seen; artists and writers living on the sale of a picture or article, which was not very often. Even the mice went hungry. One old boy used to strut about wearing a black Homburg hat, tail coat, cape, cravat and jewelled pin. He would sweep into a pub as if he owned it, order half of bitter, and with a flourish produce an empty sardine tin from his tail pocket, fill it with beer and put it down for his dog. He was known as "Old Chelsea". He was well spoken, dignified, and world-wise and always waiting for something to turn up.

Chelsea is fashionable now, with excessive rates and property prices. A borough of make-believe, it seems to me.

New lamps for old, or old lamps for new?

Those who can remember the protests and the subsequent mourning in the early 1960s, when the Victorian lamp-posts were uprooted from the streets of Chelsea and replaced by tall standards, often out of scale with their surroundings, will have blinked with astonishment when walking into Glebe Place this year. The old lamp-posts had returned! A dozen of them, not exactly like those we had loved — their lanterns are somewhat wider — but a delight to the eye and an enhancement of Chelsea.

The first of the new reproduction lamp-posts (*see illustrations, page 36*) were planted in Launceston Place, Kensington, and then in Kelso Place, as well as Glebe Place, at the suggestion of the residents. This has been followed by requests for another 23 for the Boltons and 11 for Brunswick Gardens; enquiries are being made by residents of Lawrence Street, Chelsea.

So far a substantial proportion of the cost has been paid by the local residents, ranging from 45% in Launceston Place to 74% in Kelso Place; in Glebe Place it was 69%, or £7,180 out of a total of £10,460. The Town Planning Committee of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea decided at their meeting on 10th June, 1986, to recommend that the extension of the replacement scheme should be included in a future financial plan; that it could form part of the general Environmental Improvement Schemes; and that support should come from resources available in the Brighten up the Borough Fund.

Soldiers in Royal Hospital Road

The development of the National Army Museum

by Boris Mollo

The British Army has a continuous history of over 300 years while its roots go back 500 years to the end of the Wars of the Roses, the establishment by King Henry VII of a strong centralised monarchy and the formation of two royal guards which still exist today, the Gentlemen at Arms and the Yeomen of the Guard. Why then has the national museum of the Army only just been celebrating its 25th anniversary?

There are two reasons: first, Victorian values under which such matters as museums were regarded as the responsibility of private individuals rather then the state and which led to the formation in 1837 of the Royal United Service Institution in Whitehall. This occupied Inigo Jones's Banqueting Hall which was intended to be part of the palace of Whitehall which was never built. In 1962 the Government took this back into use as a banqueting hall and its collection was dispersed, much coming to the National Army Museum but much also being lost in the process.

The other was the British regimental system. The British soldier owes his loyalty less to the Army than to his regiment. We now stand alongside (not, I hasten to add, up against) no fewer than 150 regimental museums. We ourselves have our roots in this attitude. In 1922, the five southern Irish regiments were disbanded on the partition of Ireland and their silver, pictures and relics were sent to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst for safe-keeping. With the partition of India in 1947, many thousand British officers of the Indian Army returned to this country with their own, and in many cases, with their regimental treasures. They did not want their Army forgotten and so it was agreed that an Indian Army Museum should be set up in the old chapel at Sandhurst. Former members of the old Irish regiments persuaded the authorities to provide space in the basement of the old college to display their relics as well. The first acquisition in our register dates from October, 1950.

Now upon the scene steps a very special figure, our mentor, your neighbour, Field Marshall Sir Gerald Templer. He related that, as a small

boy, he was often taken by his father to the Scottish National Gallery. One day he said 'Daddy I'm tired of pictures, please take me to an Army Museum' and he replied 'There is no Army Museum, Gerald' and that was when he decided that there would be one before he died. He was brought up in a military atmosphere and was always interested in relics. He became a regular soldier in his father's old regiment, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, and in 1931 helped to set up his own regimental museum in Omagh.

He was on the fringe of early decisions concerning a comprehensive Army Museum but really began to take an interest on his return from Malaya in 1955 when he was given a year off before becoming Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Then he was, of course, the right man in the right place. It was, to his sadness a time of reduction and amalgamation in the Army and it was envisaged that some regiments might disappear entirely and require a home for their relics. He therefore persuaded Sandhurst to let the museum take over the old riding school and then persuaded the War Office to accept the concept of a *National* Army Museum at Sandhurst. In 1959, he retired from active service and was able to give full rein to this intent. He cajoled the politicians for money, he cajoled the public to give things and he cajoled the staff to get it ready in time for opening by the Queen.

But already he had his eye on the Chelsea site. It was apparent that the only way he would get hold of it would be by raising the necessary cash and this he set out to do. At the same time he was trying to delay any plans for this site as the Royal Hospital had thoughts of selling it for development. At this point I bring in, for the only time in this story, a "what might have been". Why did Sir Gerald not go for the Duke of York's Headquarters, a marvellous period building on a splendid site of its own, close to thriving Sloane Square? With hindsight it seems an obvious choice but it appears that although the idea was vaguely floated, it was rejected on the grounds of the difficulty and expense of converting it. One must remember that architectural attitudes in the '60s were very different.

It was not in fact until 1964 that he at last got his way. In the new Labour government was George Wigg, a great friend of the British soldier and as Chairman of the Royal Hospital Commission he was pressed by the Governor to come to a decision on the future of the site. The Minister of Defence, Denis Healey, pressed by Wigg on one side and Templer on the other, could only give way. He agreed and got the Cabinet to agree that if Templer could raise the money to build the museum, the Government would run it thereafter. He could now clinch the lease for the site and go public. The appeal was launched on 18th June, 1965, the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

The design of the building was produced by Lord Holford. There had been suggestions that it should be in the style of Wren to fit in with the Royal Hospital. A pastiche of this nature was not acceptable to an architect of Lord Holford's reputation and only the scale and proportion would be

kept in line. What he came up with has been described as a cross between a synagogue and a multi-storey car park but with a slight oriental feel as befits our Indian Army roots. By 1966, money was steadily coming in but not fast enough to go ahead with Holford's complete building, so modifications were made so that Phase I could go ahead with Phase II to be added later when funds would allow. The contract was signed in April, 1968, and the new building taken over two years later.

So, in 1971, the Queen opened this building. I suppose panic always surrounds events of this nature; within a few weeks and then a few days of the opening it did not look as if we could possibly be ready in time and Sir Gerald Templer made his views on this quite clear. We were delighted then when the last exhibit to be unveiled on the evening before the opening was the standard of the Scinde Camel Corps with the motto "Ready ! Aye ! Ready !" On the other hand, embarrassment came when Templer gave a press conference and *Peace News* sent a correspondent who turned out to be the man just released from prison for setting fire to the Imperial War Museum.

At that time, the museum told the story of the Army up to 1914 only. Although the Royal Charter did not specify any dates, the terms of reference as laid down by the Council specified that we should cover the British Army up to the 1st Battle of Ypres in 1915, the Indian Army to partition in 1947 and colonial forces to independence. This of course led to anomalies: showing Mons but not the Somme; showing the Frontier Force Rifles at Kohima in 1944, but not the West Kent Regiment. The reason for this restriction was to avoid conflict with the Imperial War Museum whose terms of reference were to tell the story of the British nation in all its aspects in the two world wars. However it soon became apparent that, by ending our story in 1914, we were leaving out the last 60 years of momentous events in the story of the Army. It was also clear that public interest was focussed more on the 20th century than on earlier periods and visitors were disappointed not to find this covered. And, of course, we were not including the later history of the Indian Army, which was within our formal terms of reference; but again it would have been anomalous to show the Indians and not the British. The 'on from 1914' movement developed and eventually an accommodation was reached with the Imperial War Museum by which, while we told the story, we would not compete with them for items of national importance relating to the two world wars.

Meanwhile, Templer had gone on raising money to complete the building and thanks to generous contributions from the Sheikh of Oman and the Sultan of Brunei, Phase II could go ahead. The Sheikh of Oman invited Sir Gerald and the Director out to Oman where he promised a generous sum. After the meeting, the Grand Vizier approached Sir Gerald, and asked if he would mind if it were spread over three years. Sir Gerald could only agree but he took the precaution on his return to London to insure the Sheikh's life. Phase II could now go ahead. A new design was drawn up by Karl Fisher, Lord Wolfson's architect, which, while merging well with the existing building, made much better use of the available

space. In essence, Phase II gave us two new exhibition galleries, a new reading room, offices and a reception room, cum small exhibition gallery, alongside the lecture theatre.

One of the new galleries was allocated to telling the story of the Army from 1914 to the present day. Planning started in 1980 and was well ahead when events in the Falklands added another important chapter to the story. We were in time to replace the planned display on Korea with another on the Falklands and it also gave us our title *Flanders to the Falklands*.

We now also have two special exhibition galleries, a large and a small. Special exhibitions are important to museums; they provide a new attraction of limited duration to bring in the public; they allow us to focus on some aspect of the subject, which we could not afford the space in a permanent exhibition; they allow us to bring items from the reserve collections which are not normally seen by the public; they allow us to borrow items from other collections which would only be available on short term loan; and, very importantly, they keep the adrenalin flowing through the staff, who otherwise have a tendency to retire into our collections and stagnate. Our most successful to date, which has just closed, was *Soldiers* linking with the television series and, thanks to the plug given at the end of each programme, our attendances last autumn were more than doubled.

No sooner was Phase II open, than we were faced with another hurdle to cross, that of devolution, which was to take place on 1st April, 1984. Here, for once, political expediency and our own interests merged. Prior to 1984, we were a department of the Ministry of Defence; on 1st April, 1984, we became an independent trustee body, still funded by the Ministry of Defence but once removed. In practice it has meant that each year we draw up a budget and once that has been accepted, we receive the money as a lump sum and, within certain parameters, we can spend it where we will and switch resources from one part of the budget to another as the Trustees think fit. Staff costs take some 70% of our budget and in that area we are rather more tightly controlled; even so we have much more freedom to manipulate our funds to the best advantage of the museum than we ever did before.

Then there is the question of museum charges which is a contentious one at the moment. The Government would presumably like museums to charge but is approaching the question by encouragement rather than imposition. They say that they can maintain the present level of spending on the arts but cannot see any prospect of increasing it. Any major increase in funds must therefore be met if not in whole, at least in part, from other sources. They are prepared to encourage the use of other sources by being less demanding than in the past over the amount of funds generated by the museum that they claw back. In our own case, if someone wants to reproduce one of our pictures, the copyright fee is taken by the Treasury: there is nothing in it for us other than the publicity given by the credit line (often omitted!) and so it is in our interests to keep that fee as low as possible. On the other hand if we could keep it, we would raise the

fee to the norm charged by picture libraries and gain a reasonable income. What the government are now saying is that the level of "clawing back" would be no more than 5% of the total budget and anything beyond that could be kept by the museum. So at least if a museum does charge, it can keep most of the proceeds. In our case the policy of our Council is not to charge: if we were to impose charges with our visitor rate, the cost of collection would probably swallow up most of it.

Another aspect that the museum must now take seriously is sponsorship. In a sense the National Army Museum was a pioneer in that the whole of this building came about as the result of sponsorship at a time when the concept was much less accepted. We have been helped greatly by our overseas benefactors already mentioned. Since the building was completed and the Government's support in running it assured, we have rather sat back and put our minds to other matters. However the climate is now such that we must look at it again. I have mentioned the matter of charging as one source of income which we do not feel has much prospect for us. Business sponsorship has apparently much more. A word or two about how business sponsorship works. On average, British industry allocates some 0.25% of its profits to charity (compared with 10% in the USA). Under the general heading of charity must be included medical, social, education and environmental causes as well as the arts, so there is much competition for slices of the not-so-large cake. Trusts also make a distinction between charity where the giving is entirely altruistic and no return is expected and sponsorship, which is treated as part of the public relations budget and for which some quid pro quo is expected, such as brand image improvement, background promotion and what a would-be sponsor described as discharging the corporate social conscience. They may well want their sponsorship to fall within certain prescribed paramenters such as the inner city, educating teenagers or some such. For the seeker of funds, all these aspects have to be gone into carefully. No longer is it acceptable to use fund-raisers, you must set up your own fund-raising team of people who genuinely have your interests at heart and are prepared to work hard and long for you. If all this is planned and organised, then it is possible to get generous sums through sponsorship.

Now, too, there is marketing your museum. This starts with selling postcards from a small shop, charging reproduction fees for your pictures and exacting money from commercial users of your lecture room and reception rooms (not I hasten to add from cultural bodies such as the Chelsea Society). Museums are coming to realise that this is a base on which to expand. The V & A realise that their name alone is worth money and they are ready to exploit it — the Laura Ashley of the '90s, as Roy Strong has described it. It is early days yet to see how this approach can help us, but it is certainly something we should be examining.

What do we want this extra money for? A special exhibition is likely to cost up to £100,000. Then there is publicity. This is an area into which we have obviously not put enough resources but it is very, very expensive. We must therefore continue to work hard at our publicity to give ourselves

a firm image on our own and persuade people to come out of their way to visit this lovely part of Chelsea. More can be done to improve our facilities here, particularly in the provision of some form of catering. We have been less than keen hitherto in providing them because our level of attendance would probably mean that any such facilities would run at a loss; but it is apparent that people do expect something, particularly around here where there is little in the immediate vicinity.

Then we could do with enlarged and improved lecture facilities. Our lecture theatre has the advantage in that it can be cleared and used for other purposes, but for audiences of 100 or more it can become cramped and the back half cannot see the screen properly. One option therefore would be to have an arrangement which would include a larger improved lecture room linked with reception rooms with catering facilities which were designed also to give a service to the public. If the lecture-reception facilities could provide for up to 200, this in itself would be a commodity which the museum could offer for commercial use and bring in some valuable income.

We need to improve and allow greater public access to our reserve collections of uniform and equipment which at the moment are stored in a series of cellars under old college at Sandhurst. We have debated whether in the long term it would be better to have all our reserve collections on this site or whether we would do better to go for an out-station on the lines of the Imperial War Museum at Duxford airfield. The latter concept has a number of attractions. It could provide far more space more cheaply than we could ever achieve here. It would enable us to collect and display tanks, artillery and vehicles, which in themselves are a greater public attraction than uniforms, weapons and pictures. It would give us more scope to re-create scenes, old barracks, fortifications, vehicles in natural surroundings. If we had a site in a recognised tourist area, we could expect a substantial number of car-borne visitors who would expect to pay for entry. Even so it would require substantial extra resources to set up and run and it would disperse our efforts from our main centre here. We would even have liked dearly to have taken over the Sir John Soane stables next door but, even if they were vacated by their present occupants, the local depot of PSA, the Royal Hospital need the space for pensioners' activities.

So there remain decisions to be taken with the ultimate aim of making the National Army Museum a better known and a more attractive place for visitors and improving our research facilities and encouragement of scholarship in the history of the Army. In a quarter of a century we have achieved the original aim which Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer set himself and for which he spent his last 20 years of life working so hard.

The author is the Deputy Director of the National Army Museum and has based this article on a talk he recently gave to the Chelsea Society.

Fleet Street, SW3?

The shifting population of Chelsea can expect a new influx during the next two years. Not artists, boutique-owners or even punks this time, but journalists. In the exodus by most of the national press from its traditional home in Fleet Street at least two major newspaper offices are to be established just outside our borders to north and south.

Just across Chelsea Bridge, will be *The Observer's* new office, while Associated Newspapers — the *Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday* and *Evening Standard* — will occupy the upper floors of Barker's department store in Kensington High Street, their printing works moving south-east to the site of the old Surrey Docks. No doubt, Chelsea will be a favourite habitat for those who can afford it and Nos. 137, 49 and 31 buses will get new regular passengers bound south-east and north-west.

A matter of vision

Richard Rogers, the architect of the Lloyd's building in the City, the Pompidou Centre in Paris and a leader of the Modern Movement in architecture, found nobody to disagree with him when he advocated the removal of traffic from the Embankment. He was speaking at the opening of the New Architecture exhibition at the Royal Academy in October, when he was quoted by the *London Evening Standard* as saying.

"We would have to keep the Embankment road but we would put it underground in a pipe. Now that the Thames Barrier can control the level of the river and prevent flooding, there is no need for high parapet along the Embankment. That could be removed and replaced by steps leading down to the water. The new road would run under those steps.

"Now most of the northern bank from Chelsea to the City is cut off from the Thames by a torrent of traffic. So, if that went underground, or underwater, we would have a wonderful linear park from Cheyne Walk to the gardens of the Temple. This would bring people and activity back to the waterfront; the river itself could be used for transport and recreation; and, if we needed more space for this, we could always build floating islands. It could become a new and much larger Grand Canal. . . .

"It is not a matter of politics. . . . Even money is a secondary consideration. It is a matter of vision."

Adventure begins in Alpha Place

by John Oakley

The young people heading down Chelsea Manor Street for Alpha Place had a purposeful look about them and indeed their eyes were upon far horizons. Their stop at offices on the upper floor of the old Electricity Board building was only to be brief, for in the morning they were off to one of the wildest and remote regions of South America. They were another team recruited for Operation Raleigh, which has its headquarters in Alpha Place.

That afternoon they were greeted by other young people in the range of busy offices, where it is all coming and going and ringing telephones and the walls are covered with maps of parts of the world which most travellers cannot reach. The 75 newcomers — boys and girls between the ages of 17 and 24 — were greeted by a man twice their age whose face was familiar to them from the television screen. Colonel John Blashford-Snell, one of the last expolorers in the old, heroic mould, was going to brief them on the place from which he had just arrived and where they were just going.

The lights in the makeshift lecture-hall dimmed and a video screen lit up with coloured scenes of splendour and desolation; mountain ranges, frozen sea, cliffs of ice. "Those ice cliffs are as high as St. Paul's Cathedral," said Colonel Blashford-Snell cheerfully. "Chunks fall off them every so often like a load of bombs." The scene changed to a deep chasm in which lay the wreckage of a bridge. "That had just collapsed as we were completing it," he explained. "So we started all over again."

That was in the mountains of southern Chile and that was where they were going next day, travelling for five days: along Chelsea Manor Street and the King's Road . . . . by air from Heathrow to Santiago and then by internal airline . . . . next by bus and ferry and finally on their feet. Yesterday they had been at home, at work or unemployed, perhaps; tomorrow they would be one of the 4,000 young people for whom Operation Raleigh was devised by the Prince of Wales.

The aim is not only adventure-training such, as is offered by Outward Bound courses and suchlike, but to tackle real problems, help real people and face real hardships, too. In the present four-year programme, the 4,000 youngsters will take part in about 40 expeditions to some 30 coun-

tries. Each expedition is planned to last for three months and have a practical objective. In 1986, for example, they included the building of a medical centre in the Solomon Islands, the study of flora and fauna in Papua New Guinea, surveying an extraordinary cave system in Queensland, Australia, and building that bridge in Chile. No wonder that the official description of those taking part is "venturers".

"The point about our expeditions," says Colonel Blashford-Snell, "is that they are for real. The problems and the difficulties are there. If you fail to build the bridge over the ravine, the people in the village will not be able to take their produce to market. If you do not guide the people suffering from cataract over the hills to the medical centre for surgery, they will remain blind.

"I tell the venturers that the words 'can't' or 'failure' don't appear in our dictionary. I tell them that it is going to be tough with no home comforts. If something goes wrong, *we* have to put it right because nobody else will."

While most of his time is taken up in planning, despatching and visiting the various expeditions, Colonel Blashford-Snell must also explain the aims of Operation Raleigh to those who make it possible: the employers and other sponsors, who have paid, or contributed towards, the cost of £3,000 that it costs to send a venturer on an expedition.

"The challenges they must face on an expedition are real enough but, for them, the real world is the one they will find when they return home. Then they will have to tackle the problems that will shape their own lives and that of those with whom they live and work. We hope that in Operation Raleigh we can help young people to find their spark of leadership and enterprise and develop it into a flame to the benefit of themselves and of society."

An inspiring idea and a daunting challenge to the young who accept it and, in a quiet Chelsea street, begin to follow the long trail to their trial by adventure.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

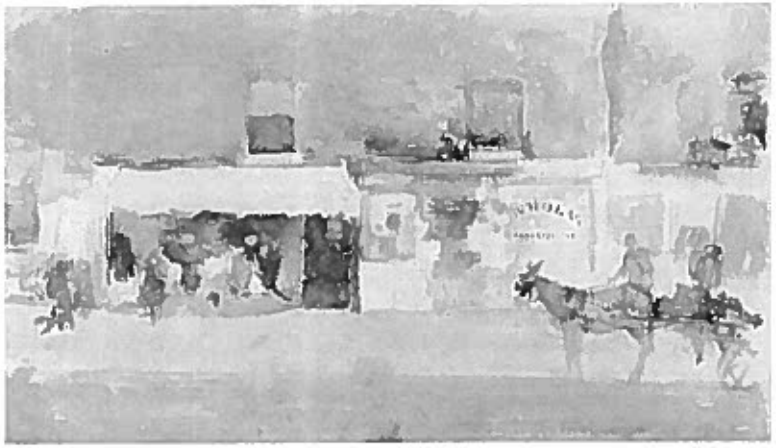
The Society is delighted to welcome new members and all who are interested in Chelsea are eligible to join, wherever they live.

The Subscription is £5 a year for a single member or £7 for a married couple, payable on 1 January. Payment by Banker's Order is very helpful, and subscriptions may also be covenanted if desired.

Please apply for a form and additional information to the Hon. Membership Secretary, 10/92 Elm Park Gardens, London SW10 9PE or the Chairman, 38 Whitelands House, Cheltenham Terrace, London SW3 4QY, Tel. 01-730 6030.

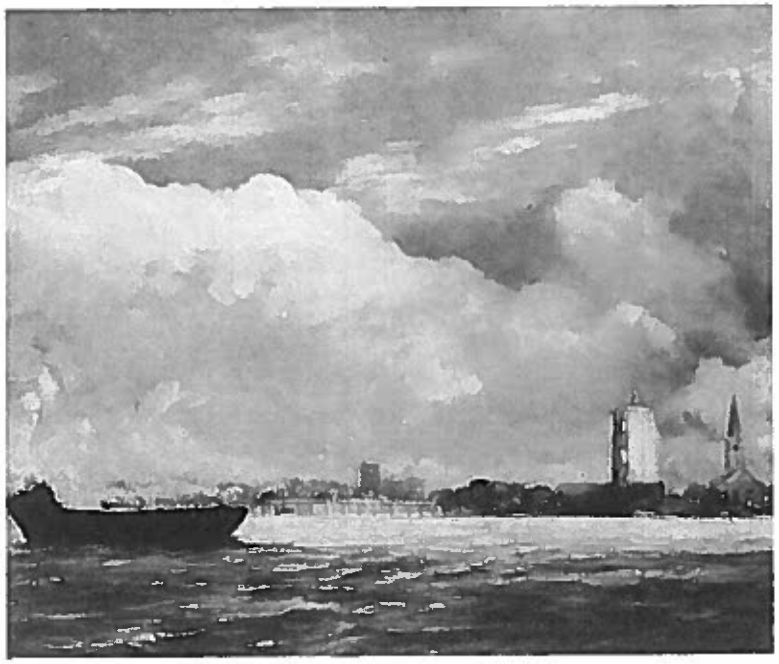
Visitors from Chelsea for Bligh of the Bounty. *Members of the Chelsea Society inspecting his tomb in the churchyard of the former St. Mary's Church, Lambeth — now the Museum of Garden History — where the summer meeting was held.*

Chelsea in the galleries. Dovehouse Street as it was early in the century painted in oils by Algernon Newton and exhibited this year by the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street.



"Street scene, Chelsea", was the brief description of this water-colour by Whistler in Christie's catalogue this year. The little shops he painted late in the last century were in Cheyne Walk and on the site of the house he himself was to occupy.

Riverside Chelsea: the view upstream from Greaves's boatyard, where the houseboats now lie, before the building of Lots Road power station in 1902. This painting in oils was sold at Christie's during the year.

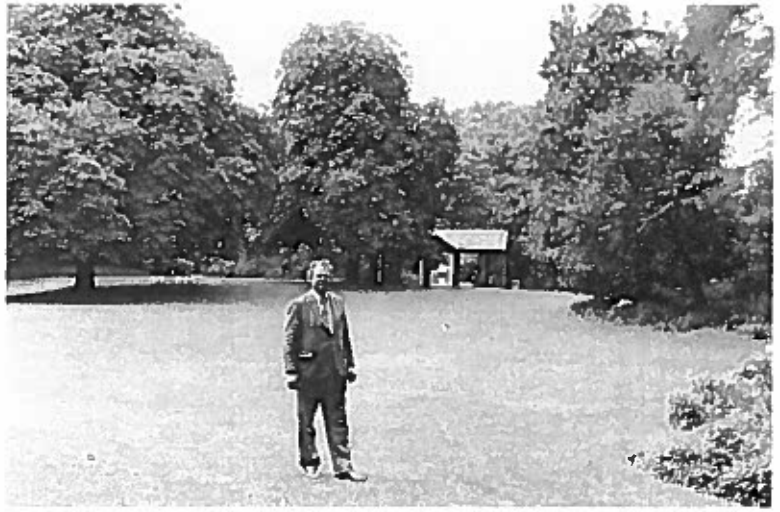


Another view of the river from Chelsea painted by John Constable. It sold for £59,400 at Christie's last April.

Not quite what it seems. Chelsea Harbour — the 18-acre development now being built on industrial wasteland round the former Chelsea Basin — is in Fulham. But the windows of its flats will, as this model shows, command magnificent views down the river across Battersea Reach to Chelsea Reach.

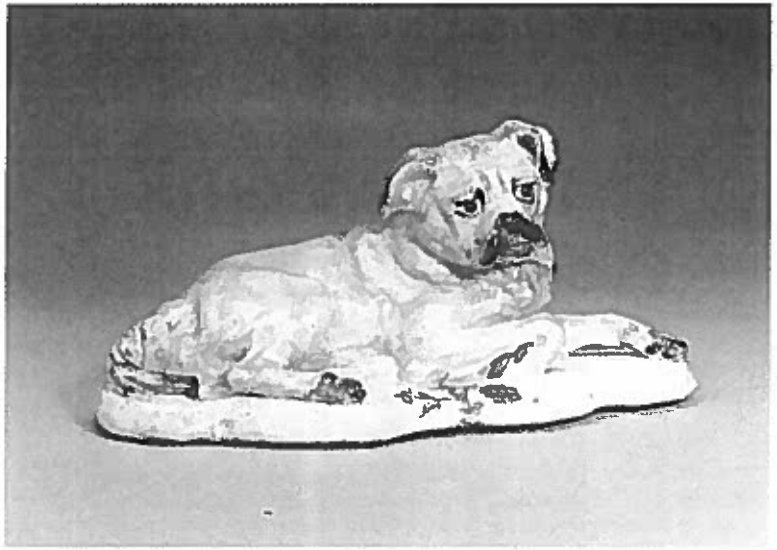
Old lamps: the 1960s pattern, too tall for the small houses of Bramerton Street. (See page 23).

New lamps: a Victorian-style lamp, the same height as the original gas-lamps, now lighting Glebe Place.

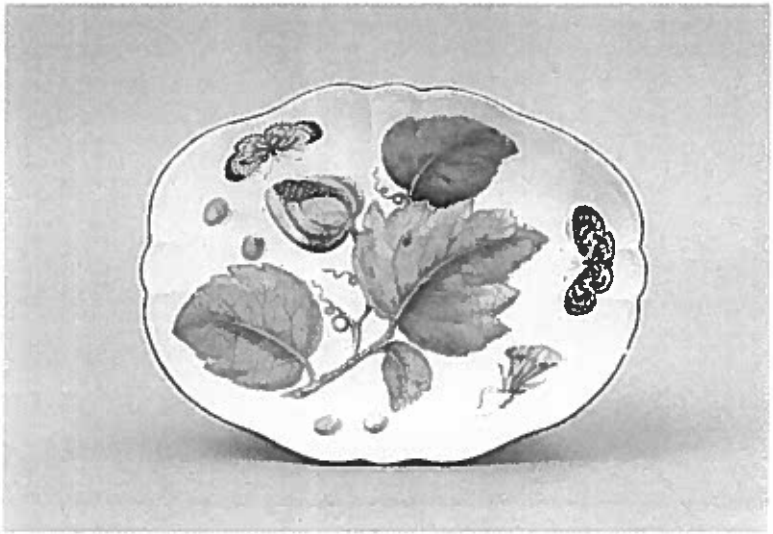


Ranelagh now. Mr. John Ottaway, the Superintendent of Grounds at the Royal Hospital, on one of the lawns in the beautiful but little-known gardens. The summerhouse was designed by Soane and the celebrated Rotunda stood beyond. (See pages 43-49).

Ranelagh then. The Rotunda at the height of its fame in the 18th century painted by J. Maurer in 1745. Ranelagh House stands on the left and the avenue runs towards the river.



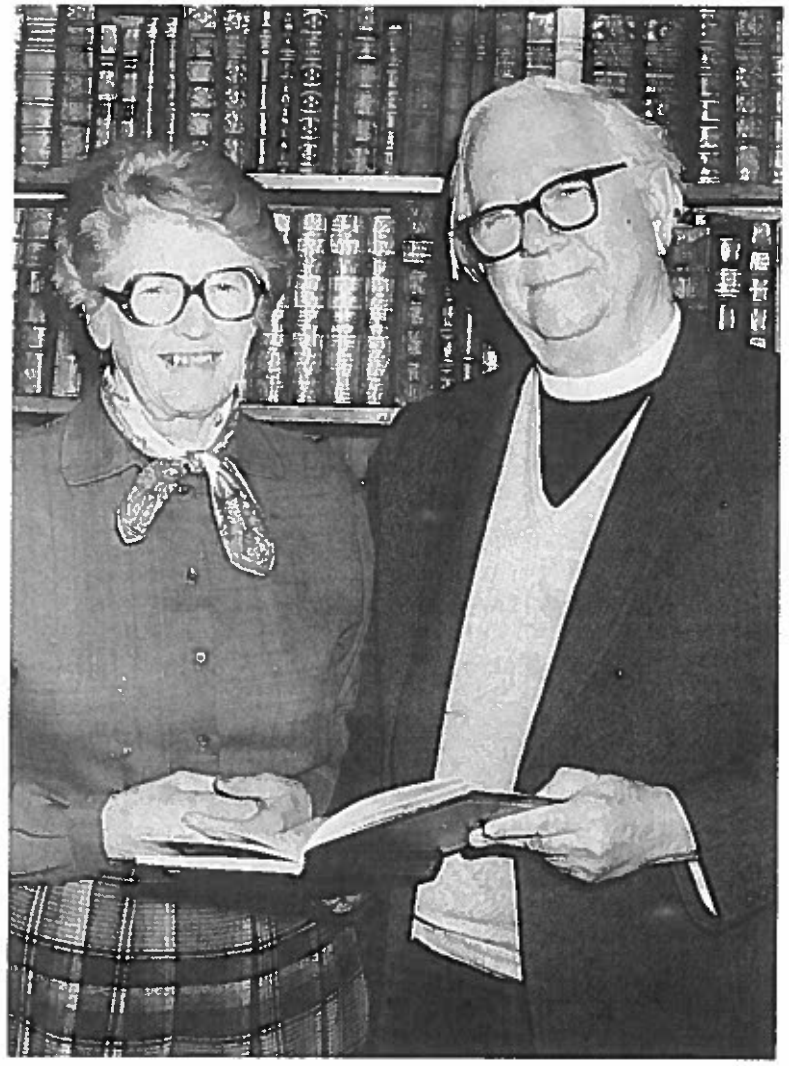
Chelsea porcelain at its most rare. No other coloured model of William Hogarth's pet pug Trump is known. Made around 1750, it sold for £85,800 at Sotheby's last May. (See pages 18-20).



A fine example of "Red Anchor" porcelain. A "Hans Sloane" botanical dish, made around 1750, which was sold by Sotheby's this year.

Chelsea Man at his most agreeable. Tobias Smollett (right) lived in part of Monmouth House at the top of Lawrence Street during the middle years of the 18th century. (See pages 53-56).

The gardens behind Monmouth House, where Smollett entertained his bohemian friends. The lawn is now the playground of the Libyan Government school in Glebe Place. (Water-colour in Chelsea Public Library).



Familiar faces, much-missed in Chelsea. Prebendary François Piachaud and his wife Mary before his retirement after thirty-five years as Vicar of Christ Church. Judge Peter McNair writes about them on the opposite page.

A benevolent presence

A tribute to Prebendary François Piachaud

by Peter McNair

Prebendary Piachaud retired as Vicar of Christ Church, Chelsea, in January, 1986, after thirty-five years in the parish. With his departure Chelsea has lost a distinguished and beloved citizen. François Piachaud came here after five years in a large parish in Leeds. Christ Church is one of the smaller Chelsea parishes, but over the years he became a familiar figure in the borough. In the early years he drove round in a succession of dilapidated Daimlers, none of which cost more than £100 and the last of which succumbed, curiously and rather ecclesiastically, to dry rot in its woodwork. In later years he went around on foot, or on a battered bicycle, wearing a large black hat, visiting the sick parishoners in our hospitals or the elderly and isolated in the parish and beyond. His benevolent presence about these duties will be remembered by many with gratitude as will his words of comfort to those in distress.

François was also a familiar figure in the Chelsea bookshops and the public library. Any visitor to the vicarage would realise why this was so. It was a large vicarage but every available space was given up to several thousand books, three deep in places. Shelves went up the stairs and along corridors as well as in most of the rooms. In his study there was just room for two armchairs and a desk, but otherwise it was books everywhere, in piles as well as on shelves. There was nothing frivolous to be found in this library. Theology, history and philosophy took first place but there was also room for a large part of the best English literature. He seemed to deem it his duty and pleasure to take in and care for ancient books. There were few towns in England where he could not direct you to a second-hand bookshop. He maintained that you should have four copies of any good book: the first edition, the best edition, a copy to read and a copy to lend to your friends. He had not read them all. I doubt if he could have read his Tibetan bible or his Sanscrit books handwritten on ola leaves.

But it was not his library that most distinguished him. Soon after arriving in Chelsea, he became Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of London, looking after the post-ordination training of the young London clergy. Many of these can no doubt testify to his formidable learning, but his interest extended beyond training clergy and beyond his small parish. He

was the main inspiration behind the founding of the Chelsea Council of Churches out of which sprang the flourishing Chelsea Social Council. He hoped for union between Methodists and Church of England and fought for this in the General Synod. He favoured ordination of women. He gave passionate support to Christian Aid and all the movements in which the church was concerned with in the world. He maintained a veil of silence over most of what he knew of those around him, but he enjoyed innocent eccentricities. The old lady who explained that she would have come to church but there had not been any Sunday for many weeks. Those who slept through his sermons and told him how refreshing they had found it. A curate who explained how he recited the Creed as he jumped out of an aeroplane.

But his parishioners will remember him best for the illumination which he gave to the doctrines of the Church of England, and his zestful participation in all of the controversies of the day as they arose in order to give informed guidance to his flock, expressing always the best of the liberal traditions of the Church of England. They will remember above all the wit with which his wisdom was laced. Some found his sermons, which could on occasions run to half-an-hour, rather rich intellectual fare, for he was inclined to assume, or, more accurately, pretend flatteringly to assume, a knowledge by the congregation of philosophy, history and English literature equal to his own. 'You will remember' he would say as he referred to some medieval French duke, Levantine potentate or obscure saint, but the rigours of the argument were mitigated by striking quotations and vivid anecdotes. There cannot be many other churches where there was so often a ripple of laughter during the sermon.

Here are two examples of his anecdotes. He was speaking once of the tendency to misunderstand the true nature of Providence. To illustrate this, he spoke of an acerbic bishop who, confronted with a lady who said, "My sister was to have travelled on that plane which crashed with all its passengers. Was it not providential that she changed her ticket?" The bishop replied "I don't know, madam — I never met your sister".

He once referred to a Scottish minister, carried away by thoughts of eternal damnation for those who repented too late, saying to his congregation "The poor souls looked up from the torments of hell and said to the Lord, 'Oh Lord, we didna ken, we didna ken', and the good Lord looked down on them and in his infinite mercy said'Well,you ken the noo'".

One of his favourite sources of quotation was Sidney Smith. Alas, I can only remember one. The first he used when dining with a parishioner: "You say you speak of Christian charity, sir. Strawberries for the vicar — that is what I call Christian charity".

All this sounds like an obituary, but it is not. François, and his wife Mary, who sustained him throughout his working life in Chelsea, are living in happy retirement in Maidenhead and will, I hope, return to visit us on many occasions. I hope that for many more years to come, to paraphrase his favourite Collect, he will continue to graft in peoples' hearts a love of God and increase in them true religion.

Ranelagh: the secret garden

by Giles Worsley

Ranelagh Gardens is among the least known of London's parks, almost a secret garden, and only with the Chelsea Flower Show does it come to life. It was not always so; in the 18th century it was the most fashionable and popular garden in London. But few who tread its paths today remember this or realise that one of the largest and most remarkable buildings of 18th-century England once stood here, the Ranelagh rotunda.

The first gardens at Ranelagh were laid out in the 1690s by Richard Jones, 1st Earl of Ranelagh, on land that he acquired from the Royal Hospital. In 1741 William Crispe and James Myonet took a lease on the house and grounds intending to develop them as pleasure gardens; in May 1742 these opened to the public. Crispe was the main partner, but overstretching himself (according to Horace Walpole, the work cost £16,000), was declared bankrupt in 1744.

Crispe planned gardens to rival the success of those at Vauxhall, and again music formed the core of the entertainment. Originally the gardens were open both to public breakfasts, where oratorio choruses were performed, and in the evening. However, complaints that the breakfast were tempting young City merchants and apprentices from their work led to these being banned by an Act of Parliament in 1752. Thereafter, the gardens generally opened at 6pm, two or three times a week during the season, with music from 8pm till 10pm, although Horace Walpole complained that the fashion was not to set out for Ranelagh till after 11 o'clock. There were also regular firework evenings and other extravaganzas.

Ranelagh's advantage over Vauxhall (which in 1742 was almost entirely out of doors) was a great covered rotunda, where the company could gather regardless of the weather. For the design of this Crispe turned to William Jones, later surveyor to the East India Company, but at that date only known for some plates in a pattern book. Why Jones was chosen is unclear, but it is hard to imagine a building of such a size being entrusted to an inexperienced architect. Theatres rather than conventional architecture lie behind the design of the rotunda; it may be that Jones's early history should be sought in the poorly documented world of theatre design.

Two carpenters, William Timbrell and John Spencer, contracted to build the rotunda. Timbrell was presumably a relation (possibly the son) of Benjamin Timbrell, the original lessor, one of the leading carpenters and master builders of his time. William Timbrell and Spencer remained partners into the 1750s when they were involved in speculative building

in St James's Square. Evan Thomas and Richard Hughes were paid for the slaters' work on the roof.

Jones's design was for a free-standing rotunda with four main doors like triumphal arches at the cardinal points. Between these, round the outside of the building, ran an arcade with a colonnade above, the latter being reached by stairs in the corners of the triumphal arches. Round the walls of the inside ran two tiers of 52 boxes, as in a theatre, those at ground level opening off the main body of the rotunda and also out into the gardens behind; the first-floor boxes being reached from the colonnade walkway.

The boxes were used for taking tea or coffee (no strong drink being served "for obvious reasons"), each of them having a table seating seven or eight persons. By 1762 they were decorated with a "droll painting in the mimic masquerade or pantomime taste". These were originally designed as blinds for the windows during masquerades, but were afterwards fitted up in the boxes, where their perspective, intended to be seen from a distance, rendered them rather preposterous. When the boxes were full, further tables and benches were arranged in the body of the rotunda.

The size of the rotunda is hard to grasp; it had an external diameter of 185ft and an internal diameter of 150ft (by comparison, the reading room of the British Museum is 141ft wide and the Pantheon in Rome 143ft). To vault such a space would have been an incredible undertaking; Jones was not so foolish as to try. The Rotunda was a place of recreation, not a public monument, and to have built in stone would only have bankrupted the proprietors even faster. So Jones built entirely in wood and supported the centre of the roof with an enormous octagonal pier, open at the base.

As it was originally intended to house the orchestra, the ocoustics proved unsatisfactory, and in 1743 a new orchestra stand was erected to one side, the former site being given over to a great fire set under a stove. This must have been an improvement, because, although covered, the rotunda was open to the elements on all sides.

Sadly, no detailed plan of the roof survives, although one of the engravings of his designs that Jones had published, does give some indication of the main timbers. It must have been a great feat of carpentry and pays tribute to the skill of Timbrell and Spencer. As well as the support provided by the central pier, beams ran up between the boxes, disguised by ornamental plasterwork, every third one of them supporting one of the main struts of the roof.

A direct source for the building is hard to find. Although the idea of the Colosseum and other Roman amphitheatres must lie behind such a free-standing circular building, Jones paid very little heed to them in his design. While a more Classically-minded neo-Palladian might have seized the opportunity to reconstruct an amphitheatre, Jones in particular by using a colonnade above an arcade, showed he cared little for such purist ideals. The great central pier appears to have been an unprecedented solution to structural problems occasioned by the size of the roof.

With its boxes and decoration "gay as the Asiatic" the interior of the rotunda lies more in the tradition of theatre architecture than conventional Classical architecture. The plasterer was William Perritt, one of the family of Yorkshire plasterers, to whom payments totalling £957 14s 8¼d survive, including £95 4s for "68 Male and Female terms — emblematical and ornamental", which can be seen running all the way round the building above the boxes. The anonymous *Description of Ranelagh Rotundo and Gardens* of 1762, probably written by Richard Owen Cambridge, gives a detailed description of the decoration of the rotunda, with gilt, marbling and decorative paintings abounding.

The effect of the architecture and the decoration never ceased to amaze. An anonymous correspondent in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* in 1742 found himself "dumb with surprise and astonishment", while Samuel Johnson declared of Ranelagh that "the *coup d'oeil* was the finest thing he had ever seen". One of the best accounts comes from the realms of fiction, where Smollett's Humphry Clinker, comparing Ranelagh to the enchanted palace of a genii, was so overcome by the building and the music that he thought himself in paradise.

The rotunda dominated Ranelagh, but the gardens were equally important as a place of promenade, being full of wide, well-lit gravel walks, as well as having some more discreet serpentine paths. While some visitors came by water, most came by land, and armed horse patrols were provided by the management to deter footpads.

Leaving their coaches in front of Ranelagh House (where there was a convenient amphitheatre for the entertainment of servants) and paying their shilling or half-crown depending on the date, visitors entered the gardens through the house. By 1751 a covered way linked house and rotunda, so that the company need never get wet, but normally the company walked through the garden. The main walks were beyond the rotunda; Lord Ranelagh's lime avenue provided one, flanked by a canal.

Constant attractions were offered to draw the fashionable, and new buildings, whether temporary — like the elegant colonnade erected in 1776 by the noblemen and gentlemen of the subscription masque — or permanent, were frequently announced in the press. The most important of these buildings, in particular the Chinese bridge (which was built probably by the Jubilee Ball of 1749) were put up for the masquerades or jubilees which took place in the late 1740s and early 1750s. Canaletto's engraving records that which took place in 1751 for the Prince of Wales's birthday. Unfortunately they gained a bad reputation and "it being thought that these Jubilees were an evil tendency, by depraving the minds of the people, or at least furnishing opportunities for the commission of irregularities, they were discontinued".

Some of these garden buildings, like the temple and the link between the house and the rotunda, both of which were erected between the Jubilee Ball of 1749 and that of 1751, are recorded in engravings, but others have disappeared without trace. Cambridge mentions several more: an eight-columned rotunda dedicated to Pan, with a statue of one of his fawns on

the top; a grotto at the far end of the canal, where the Chinese bridge was eventually moved to, with a pump to exchange the stale water of the canal for fresh water from the Thames; and "two thatched hovels painted white, formed by four arches and terminated at the top in a point, erected at the time of the late masques".

Evidence of another four-columned porticoed temple can be seen at the bottom left of the 1777 survey of the gardens, while in 1789 "the superb Temple of Flora" was sold to the Duke of York to be re-erected at Oatlands, Surrey. Thus the gardens did not lack incident; Cambridge even claimed them to be laid out on similar principles to Chinese gardens.

One of the most celebrated characters of Ranelagh was Sir Thomas Robinson, "the Knight of the Woeful Countenance" as Mrs Carter described him, to whom, as manager, much of the success of the gardens in the 1760s and 1770s was due. When Crispe was declared bankrupt in 1744, the ownership of the grounds was divided into 36 shares, all profits from the season being divided among the shareholders. Robinson was one of the shareholders, another was Lord Verney, for whom he designed Claydon, Buckinghamshire. The correspondence between the two gives an insight into the financial workings of the gardens.

Robinson did not restrict his involvement at Ranelagh to running the gardens, but carefully manipulated his position to his financial advantage. He was a major shareholder, occasionally buying more shares; in 1771 he paid Lord Verney £828 for share number seven (in the same year the dividend was declared at £60 a share, a very respectable return of over 7%). Robinson also sought to benefit from the other attractions Ranelagh fostered, acquiring much of the surrounding land and the entertainments that were on them. His progress from his first acquisition in 1763 can be traced in the rate books, and the final extent of his purchases can be seen in the survey taken soon after his death in 1777. Some of this land Robinson sold on to the proprietors of the gardens for carriage stands, but most of it he retained, including the Assembly Rooms, which he bought in 1768, and the Swan ale-house.

In 1769, Robinson sold his Yorkshire estate at Rokeby. It has always been assumed that he was forced to do this by financial necessity. This may be so, but the collection of pictures sold at his death, the size of the house he built for himself, the shares in the gardens he held and the land he owned around it, show that he was not poor. It is possible that, lacking a son, Robinson sold Rokeby to finance his Ranelagh speculations, which were almost certainly more profitable than agriculture.

Some of the land Robinson kept for himself and on it he built a house which he named Prospect Place. From the rate-books it would appear that Robinson must have done this in about 1764-65, at the same time that he sold his former house in Whitehall. Although no drawings or detailed views of the house survive, its basic features can be determined from the 1777 survey of Ranelagh, from the sale catalogue of the contents of the house after Robinson's death and from a small detail on one of the

set of plates Wedgwood designed for Catherine the Great that are now in Russia.

From these we can establish that it was a very large house, about 140ft long, with two five-bay wings flanking a projecting colonnaded rotunda. In many ways it resembled Robinson's designs for Claydon, built soon after. The list of rooms in the sale catalogue make it clear that this enormous house was designed for Robinson's famous parties, rather than domestic life. Reception rooms predominated; there was a hall, saloon, library, state room, principal dining parlour, assembly room and ballroom.

Prospect Place did not long survive Robinson's death, and by the publication of Horwood's map of 1794 it had been replaced by tenements. The rotunda did not last much longer. A final burst of fashion in the 1780s was succeeded by a slow decline, which not even balloon ascents and firework displays with representations of Mount Etna with its lava flowing, could reverse. In 1803, the gardens finally closed their doors, and, in 1805, Ranelagh House and the rotunda were demolished. Today only the name survives.

This article was first published by Country Life and is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor.

Ranelagh today

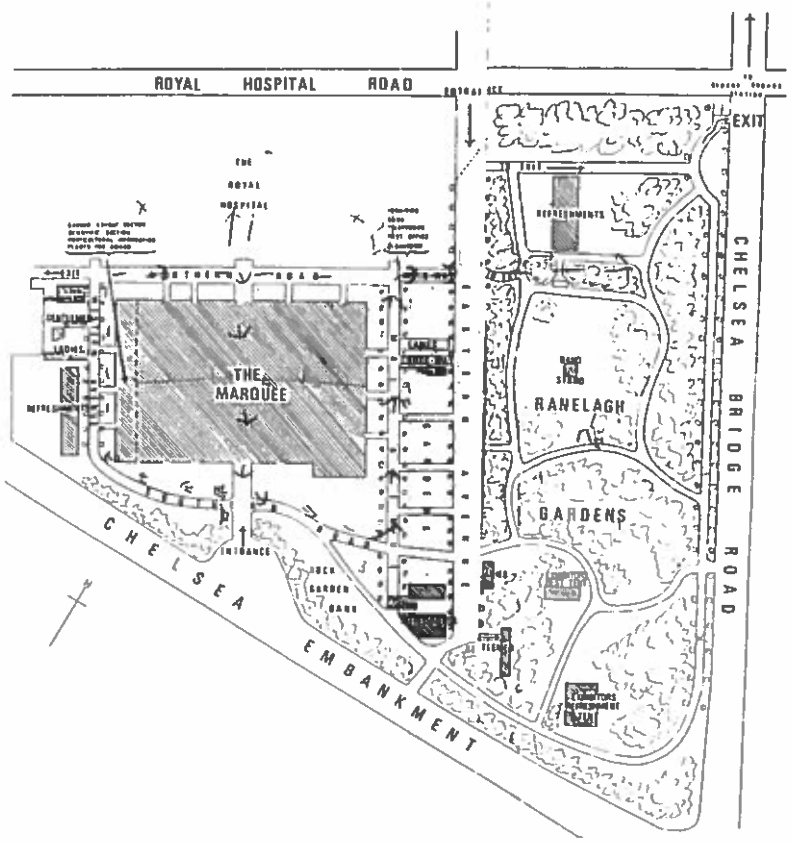
by John Ottaway

Ranelagh Gardens are still the resort of Londoners but their character is, of course, changed completely. They are today among the most beautiful and secluded of the capital's gardens, visited by relatively few but richly rewarding those who discover them. Owned by the Royal Hospital since 1826, they come under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor and have been administered the past 11 years by Mr. John Ottaway, the Superintendent of Grounds, a horticulturalist well known to members of the Chelsea Gardens Guild, on whose Committee he serves. The Editor visited Ranelagh in Mr. Ottaway's company and questioned him about the present and recent past. These are his replies:

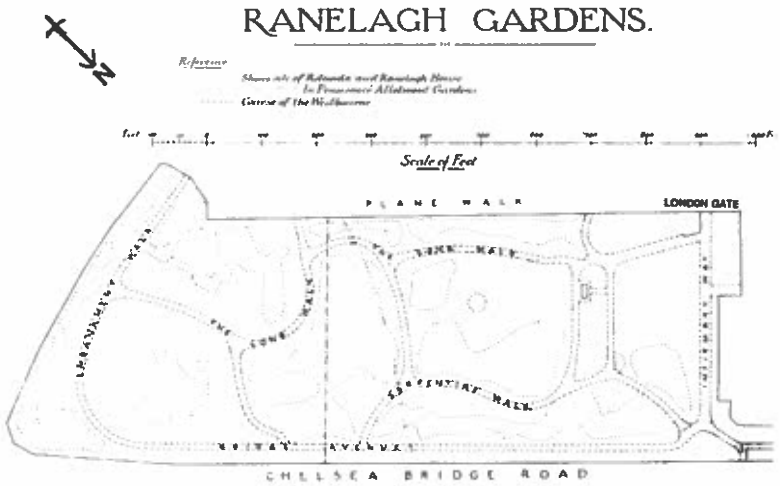
"The gardens are primarily for the In-Pensioners of the Royal Hospital and patients from our Infirmary but they are open to the public, too. They are regularly used by mothers and nannies with small children and for that reason no dogs are allowed, although they can be exercised in the Royal Hospital's South Grounds that are entered from the Embankment. It is a safe place, too, as the entrance is guarded and there are two large ex-Guardsmen on patrol. It is never crowded and I do not think that I have ever seen more than about 120 people here at any one time. A lot

of Chelsea notables must have spent some of their early formative years here.

"Ranelagh comprises 14 of the Royal Hospital's 60 acres of grounds, which include Burton's Court. It is mostly a tree and shrub garden although we do have a few flower beds and are particularly pleased with our looks in springtime when the daffodils are out. There are 60 different varieties of tree and the position of an example of each is marked on a map in the summerhouse so that it is a good place to learn to identify them. The oldest trees are about 90 years old and most of the smaller trees have been planted since the end of the war. Sadly, we lost at least 40 elms from disease but replanting is a continuing process so that the overall appearance of the gardens should remain fairly constant.



Ranelagh Gardens at the time of the Chelsea Flower Show (above), and (opposite) a detailed plan.



"Of course, the whole character of Ranelagh has to change for the Chelsea Flower Show each year, when the gardens are used as a catering area. I act as liaison officer between the Royal Hospital and the Royal Horticultural Society and it is a happy relationship. For a week there are thousands of people here, food and drink being served in marquees and a Guards' band playing on the lawn. As you would expect, the grass takes a beating but my eight gardeners start work on the lawns immediately with the help of the Society, spiking and dressing them and, where necessary, oversowing. By mid-July the grass has recovered and the gardens have resumed their looks.

"The summerhouse was designed by Sir John Soane in 1834 but has been somewhat altered and its original thatch replaced by tiles. But all traces of the 18th century seem to have disappeared. The great Rotunda stood on the flat lawn to the immediate south of the path known as Infirmary Way and its exact position is marked on the map in the summerhouse. We had to dig a trench across part of the site quite recently but found no foundations so perhaps they still lie deeper down. The ornamental canal, which you can see in 18th century prints of Ranelagh survived until 1863 when it was filled in, apparently because the Pensioners used to fall into it. So all we have found to recall those times are broken clay pipes.

"The lay-out of the present gardens was designed in 1859 by the landscape architect John Gibson. During the last war, vegetables were grown here but afterwards they were restored to his plan, including more than a mile of gravel walks. Amongst potential problems arising since that time has been the huge increase in traffic along the Embankment. Obviously there is pollution from fumes but, I am glad to say, tests have discovered no ill-effects upon trees and plants. Although busy roads run along three sides of Ranelagh it is an amazingly peaceful place — quieter than it sometimes was 200 years ago, I expect."

A Tale of Two Societies

Chelsea's northern counterpart

by Tom Pocock

Hearing that Hampstead had been celebrating its Millennium in 1986, Chelsea people might have noted that not only could they have done the same but might have held their anniversary party last year, a thousand years after "Cealchythe" was first mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. However, Hampstead thought of the idea and Cheslea did not, and, by all accounts, some good parties were thrown on the Northern Heights.

When remembering this similarity in age, other comparisons occur. Both places were robust and fashionable small towns just outside London and both are smart residential districts of the capital today. Hampstead has the Heath; Chelsea, the Thames. Both have long attracted the same sort of residents: those with professional or passing interest in literature and the arts; sometimes a touch bohemian.

Both command fierce loyalties, despite their shared characteristics. My own father, the son of two Hampstead families, never shook off his hankering for the place, even after many happy years in Chelsea, stoutly maintaining that he was "a hill man". There have been attempts to define the subtle differences between natives of the two; the most accurate suggesting that Hampstead people tend to be a little more idealistic, even fey, while Chelsea people are more practical and jollier. The debate continues.

A binding factor, common to both, is that they benefit from well-established, powerful and active amenity societies, theirs being the older. The Chelsea Society was founded in 1927, when the Heath and Old Hampstead Society had already been busy for more than thirty years. Our society is rather larger than theirs with about 750 members to their 600; they publish quarterly newsletters in addition to an admirable Annual Report; both are fortunate to have an intelligent and forceful lady to take the chair at their meetings: Hampstead's counterpart to Lesley Lewis is Peggy Jay.

Mrs. Jay has, of course, been a formidable figure in the wider London political scene for many years, particularly in the happier days of the now-defunct Greater London Council. I lunched with her recently to ask her about the Society in the restaurant of Burgh House in Well Walk, itself one of their triumphs.

This is a beautiful 17th century house, which seemed doomed a decade ago; riddled with dry rot and, even if it could be saved from demolition, likely to be converted into offices with strip-lighting in its panelled rooms. The Hampstead Society went into action, raised £100,000 and bought a seven-year lease of the property, then took a second lease and now it is unthinkable that Burgh House should be lost. It has been cleverly converted into a local museum, art galleries, a music room available for functions, a cosy little restaurant in the basement and an information bureau in the hall. "Every day and evening Burgh House is alive and busy with local activities," said Mrs. Jay. "It has become a very real centre for Hampstead life and particularly so for our voluntary helpers, who are often retired and have now found a new and constructive purpose."

Sitting at our lunch table in the garden, she talked of their successes and failures. "Like Chelsea, we have been losing our proper shops to boutiques and restaurants and there is not much we can do about that," she explained. "There are now 45 restaurants within a quarter of a mile of the Tube station. But we have been successful in stopping the building of most tower blocks although we were only able to delay the construction of the monstrous new Royal Free Hospital, for five years; being outside the scope of planning regulations, it was finally built and now spoils the view of London from Hampstead."

"One problem that affects us more than Chelsea is the selling of gardens as building plots. Most of the big Victorian houses here had huge gardens and it is tempting to sell part to a developer. The new building in Well Road, where I live, is at the end of the garden of a house in Well Walk that runs parallel to it. Our greatest recent battle was over Witanhurst, the big house overlooking the Heath from Highgate Hill. Over 13 years there have been over a hundred public meetings about that and two public enquiries to decide whether its garden could be turned into a housing estate. We did not win, but we did manage to get the number of new houses cut from more than two hundred to seventy. Developers now realise that it is better to have us as a friend than as an enemy."

As in Chelsea, there has been the threat of new trunk roads. "We fought the plan to turn East Heath Road into a four-lane highway that would have cut Hampstead off from the Heath, and to build a 'spaghetti junction' intersection near Keats Grove. Our through-traffic is still heavy but at least road-widening has not been allowed to suck in more.

Hampstead is fortunate: whereas there is only a narrow road separating it from the Heath, Chelsea surrendered its intimacy with the Thames when the Embankment was built in the 1870s, although this remained a pleasant promenade until the onslaught of the present volume of traffic with its noise and fumes over the past two decades. It was, however, threats to the Heath that brought about the creation of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society. The battle to save the Heath from developers had already been won when the Metropolitan Board of Works — the forerunner of the GLC — bought the first 220 acres of it in 1872, leaving a viaduct as the only sign that its former principal landowners had planned to cover it with

roads and villas. The threat that brought the Society into being was that the over-enthusiasm of the new, well-meaning ownership would be to convert it into a municipal park. Since that time, the Heath has not only been kept wild but enlarged, and for this the Society should take much credit.

Whereas few, if any, Chelsea people can now go boating on the Thames, most Hampstead people regularly roam their miles of green countryside, maintained as such with a surprising degree of sophisticated husbandry. The trees, wild flowers and birds of the Heath are prized and guarded with intense pride and affection and reports on their welfare are regularly written for the Annual Report, or Newsletter, by John Hillaby and other naturalists. Yet the Heath is now under threat again. Since the demise of the Greater London Council, whose officers ran the Heath with great expertise and in close cooperation with the Society, its future remains — at the time of writing — uncertain. Mrs. Jay views with alarm the proposal that it should be split between the boroughs of Camden and Barnet. "They would be unlikely to agree about anything," she said. "Why, when we managed to preserve and restore the old toll-house by the Spaniards Inn on the border between the two boroughs, Barnet demanded that the down-pipe from the gutter around the little roof be moved so that Camden's rain did not use Barnet's drains!" She favours a solution that puts the Heath in the care of a single, preferably elected, authority.

"We must never forget that the Heath is London's open space and does not belong to one borough, or even two," she said. "Happily during the interregnum, the London Residuary Body, is being helpful. They, like the Greater London Council, and indeed the Department of the Environment, realise that we are a Society to be taken very seriously."

The President of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society is Lord Cottlesoe; its chairman, Mrs. Peggy Jay; and the address of its Membership Secretary is 9 Hampstead Hill Mansions, Downshire Hill, London, NW3. The usual annual subscription is £3.50.

Smollett in Chelsea

The original Chelsea Man?

by Lewis Kennedy

If any one historical character had to be chosen as the quintessential Chelsea Man, the short list would probably include Augustus John, Whistler and Carlyle. But each was an oddity and too individual to represent a type. The character in question would have to be mildly bohemian, convivial and, because we are thinking of traditional Chelsea, trying to scratch a living from the fringes of literature or art. So the man who comes to mind is Tobias Smollett.

Those who can remember the social life of the 1950s and before, when the number of painters in what was then the artists' quarter of London was at least equalled by writers, would recognise Smollett's circle two centuries before. He came to Chelsea with his Creole wife in 1753 for its fresh river air which he believed would benefit their delicate daughter Elizabeth. He rented part of Monmouth House which then stood across the top end of Lawrence Street and which also housed the proprietor of the Chelsea Porcelain Manufactory, C Nicholas Sprimont, and some of his showrooms *(see Elizabeth Adams's article, Page 18).*

He had already written two novels, *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle,* but now fell on hard times. His *History of England,* written in Chelsea, was unworthy and a failure, and an attack on Admiral Knowles, under whom he had served in the West Indies when a naval surgeon, in the *Critical Review,* which he edited, brought about a libel action, a fine of £100 and three months in prison. Despite his troubles, Smollett led a cheerful life, frequenting Don Saltero's coffee-house at 18 Cheyne Walk, where he would meet a particular friend Captain Robert Mann, who had sailed round the world with Anson and was later recalled to the Royal Navy and killed in action.

Although constantly hard-up he entertained neighbours, mostly down-at-heel journalists and publishers' hacks, at Monmouth House. When his daughter died at the age of 15 in 1763 — she was buried at the Old Church — he went abroad but he could still write, "I cannot help respecting Chelsea as a second native place notwithstanding the irreparable misfortunes which happened to me while I resided in it."

He remembered Chelsea when living in exile near Leghorn, where he died in 1771, and recalled his parties in Lawrence Street when writing the following passage from his last novel, *Humphrey Clinker.* In this he described a visit to his own house in Chelsea as told by the fictional character Jerry Melford, who arrived with his friend Dick Ivy, a poet:

"He lives in the skirts of the town, and every Sunday his house is open to all unfortunate brothers of the quill, whom he treats with beef, pudding and potatoes, port, punch, and Calvert's entire butt-beer . . . I was civilly received in a plain yet decent habitation, which opened backwards into a very pleasant garden kept in excellent order; and indeed I saw none of the outward signs of authorship, either in the house or the landlord, who is one of those few writers of the age that stand on their own foundation, without patronage, and above dependence. If there was nothing characteristic in the entertainment, the company made ample amends for his want of singularity.

"At two in the afternoon I found myself one of ten messmates seated at a table, and I question if the whole world could produce such another assemblage of originals. Among their peculiarities I do not mention those of dress, which may be purely accidental. What struck me were oddities originally produced by affectation, and afterwards confirmed by habit. One of them wore spectacles at dinner, and another his hat flapped; though as Ivy told me, the first was noted for having a seaman's eye when a bailiff was in the wind, and the other was never known to labour under any weakness or defect of vision, except about five years ago, when he was complimented with a couple of black eyes by a player with whom he had quarrelled in his drink. A third wore a laced stocking, and made use of crutches, because once in his life he had been laid up with a broken leg, though no man could leap over a stick with more agility. A fourth had contracted such an antipathy to the country that he insisted on sitting with his back towards the window that looked into the garden, and when a dish of cauliflower was set on the table, he sniffed up volatile salts to keep him from fainting; yet this delicate person was the son of a cottager, born under a hedge, and had many years run wild among asses on a common. A fifth affected distraction; when spoken to he always answered from the purpose; sometimes he suddenly started up and rapped out a dreadful oath; sometimes he burst out a-laughing; then he folded his arms and sighed; and then he hissed like fifty serpents. . . . . A certain winking genius, who wore yellow gloves at dinner, had, on his first introduction, taken such offence at S—— because he looked and talked, and ate, and drank, like any other man, that he spoke contemptuously of his understanding ever after, and never would repeat his visit. . . .

"Curious to know on what subjects the several talents of my fellow-guests were employed. I applied to my communicative friend Dick Ivy, who gave me to understand, that most of them were, or had been, journeymen to more creditable authors, for whom they translated, collated, and compiled in the business of book-making; and that all of them had, at different times, laboured in the service of our landlord, though they had now set up for themselves in various departments of literature. Not only their talents, but also their notions and dialects were so various, that our conservation resembled the confusion of tongues at Babel.

"We had the Irish brogue, the Scotch accent, and foreign idiom, twanged off by the most discordant vociferation; for as they all spoke together, no

man had any chance to be heard, unless he could bawl louder than his fellows. It must be owned, however, there was nothing pedantic in their discourse; they carefully avoided all learned disquisitions, and endeavoured to be facetious; nor did their endeavours always miscarry. Some droll repartee passed, and much laughter was excited; and if any individual lost his temper so far as to transgress the bounds of decorum, he was effectually checked by the master of the feast, who exerted a paternal authority over this irritable tribe.

"The most learned philosopher of the whole collection, who had been expelled the University for atheism, has made great progress in a refutation of Lord Bolingbroke's metaphysical works, which is said to be equally ingenious and orthodox, but in the meantime he has been presented to the Grand Jury as a public nuisance for having blasphemed in an alehouse on the Lord's day. The Scotchman gives lectures on the pronunciation of the English language. . . .

"The Irishman is a political writer, and goes by the name of Lord Potato. He wrote a pamphlet in vindication of a minister, hoping his zeal would be rewarded with some place or pension; but finding himself neglected in that quarter, he whispered about that the pamphlet was written by the minister himself, and he published an answer to his own production. . . . Little Tim Cropdale the most facetious member of the whole society had happily wound up the catastrophe of a virgin tragedy, for the exhibition of which he had promised himself a large fund of profit and reputation. Tim had made shift to live many years by writing novels at the rate of five pounds a volume: but that branch of business is now engrossed by female authors, who publish merely for the propagation of virtue, with so much ease, and spirit, and knowledge of the human heart, and all in the serene tranquillity of high life, that the reader is not only enchanted by their genius, but reformed by their morality.

"After dinner we adjourned into the garden, where I observed Mr. S—— gave a short separate audience to every individual in a small remote filbert walk, from whence most of them dropped off one after another without further ceremony; but they were replaced by fresh recruits of the same class, who came to make an afternoon's visit; and among others a spruce bookseller, called Birkin, who rode his own mare, and made his appearance in a pair of new jemmy boots with massy spurs of plate. It was not without a reason that this midwife of the Muses used exercise a-horseback, for he was too fat to walk a-foot; and he underwent some sarcasm from Tim Cropdale on his unwieldy size and inaptitude for motion, who proposed that they should run three turns round the garden for a bowl of punch, and he would run boots against stockings. The bookseller, who valued himself on his mettle, was persuaded to accept the challenge; and forthwith resigned his boots to Cropdale, who, when he had put them on, was no bad representation of Captain Pistol in the play. . . .

"No sooner had they started in the race, than Cropdale disappeared in a twinkling through the back door of the garden, and Birkin setting out to pursue him, received a thorn in the foot, which sent him hopping back

to the garden roaring with pain, and swearing with vexation. When delivered of this annoyance, he looked about wildly exclaiming, 'Sure the fellow won't be such a rogue as to run away with my boots! . . . I lost twenty pounds by his farce which you persuaded me to buy. I am out of pocket five pounds by this damned ode, and now this pair of boots, brand new, cost me thirty shillings as per receipt.'

"There was not one of these men to whom S—— had not done a kindness; one he bailed out of a sponging house, and afterwards paid the debt; another he translated into his family, and clothed when he was turned out half-naked from jail; a third, who was reduced to a woollen night-cap, and lived on sheep's trotters, up three pair of stairs backwards in Butcher's Row, he took into present pay and free quarters."

Not all Smollett's visitors were of this order. David Garrick, the great actor, was a friend as was his fellow-editor John Wilkes, although they later fell out. Dr. Johnson was an acquaintance and, because, of Smollett's naval connections, appealed to him when his servant was caught by a press-gang near the Thames. The youth was freed after Smollett wrote to appeal, "I am your petitioner of behalf of that great *Cham* of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is Francis Barber, had been pressed on board the *Stag* frigate, Captain Angel, and our lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy in a sickly lad of a delicate frame and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his Majesty's serice."

It is tempting to wonder whether Johnson was with Smollett when he was reputed to have visited the Porcelain Manufactory and tried his hand at the potter's wheel, although authorities on ceramics maintain that the story concerned another visitor of the same name.

Nothing now remains of Smollett's house which was pulled down in 1834, when Carlyle was moving into Cheyne Row and just before the building of the little houses on the east side of Lawrence Street, although a plaque on the wall of 16 Lawrence Street records his stay. The grave of his daughter Elizabeth is not marked on the floor of the rebuilt Old Church but her name is recorded on one of the beautifully embroidered kneelers there. Tobias Smollett's other memorial is the spirit of hospitality and good fellowship that still lingers in Chelsea. *(See illustrations, page 39).*

Obituaries

Dr. David Lewis

Dr. Lewis, husband of the Chelsea Society's Chairman, died on the 2nd November, 1986, aged 77. He was an eminent scientist, a devoted husband, and a good friend of many members of the Chelsea Society.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society at the early age of 22, and for the next 55 years he worked as a medical entomologist, studying the insects which cause diseases in man. Much of his work was done abroad, in Nigeria and Albania, then in the Sudan from 1935-1955. From 1956 to 1974 he continued his work in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Malawi and Tanzania, Venezuela, Brazil, Iran, and Pakistan. He wrote about some exciting travel along Himalayan gorges. He was in Belize in 1958, and in Borneo in 1972 as one of a team investigating ourang-outan malaria and its possible connections with human malaria. From 1974 to 1983 he worked in the Natural History Museum studying West Malaysian sandflies and many unpronounceable insects from distant parts of the world. In 1985, he was awarded the Rickard Christophers Medal of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, as the world's leading authority on sandflies, and he already held the Chalmers Medal of that Society, 1953, for his work in the Sudan. His published work earned him the Doctorate of Science of Cambridge University.

David was the son of a clergyman, and lived near Lesley in Essex. They met at the age of ten beside a pond. Lesley says she fell in love instantly and forever. She feels that he (the future scientist) was more interested in the pond. As neighbours they kept in touch, but David was much abroad, and they did not marry until they were both 35, in 1944. After the war Lesley went abroad with David and they worked as a team. He wrote: "My wife came too on this otherwise lonely project, and as usual organised all the necessities of life far from our home on the Blue Nile. She also trained herself to capture biting flies instead of swatting them, though we were subjected to what she termed a 24-hour biting service, provided by simulids, mosquitoes, Haematopota and tsetse." When David came to work in London in 1974 he took great interest in Lesley's work with the Chelsea Society, and we remember how successfully he worked the slide machines when she was lecturing.

Everyone I have spoken to agrees that the outstanding characteristics of David were his helpful sympathy and his great courtesy and gentleness. We will miss him very much.

Alexandra Orde

Mrs. Arthur Mitchell

Mrs. Arthur (Evelyn Violet), "Molly", died on 2nd August, aged 90. She had been a member of the Chelsea Society for many years, and was a supporter of numerous good causes in Chelsea, especially Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, for which she worked most devotedly. She arranged for the restoration of the fine wrought-iron chandeliers which had hung in the church before the bombing, and had them replaced there as a memorial to her husband. As a graduate of London University and a former worker in University administration she brought to all her tasks efficiency and sound judgment but she will perhaps be remembered as much for her delightfully outgoing personality and her selflessness. She was the widow of Arthur Croft Mitchell, (1872-1956), a distinguished painter of landscapes, flowers and interiors with figures. He built a house, Vale End, Mallord Street, in 1913, with two magnificent studios, and she lived there for sixty years until her death, sharing it latterly with her son Terence who is Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum. Her elder son, Colin, now retired, was Lecturer in Geography at the University of Reading. I remember with great pleasure the splendid family meals she used to dispense around the fine dining-room table at Vale End, and the stimulating conversation in that house so full of associations with art and artists.

Lesley Lewis

Mr. Jeffery Daniels

Jeffery Daniels, the Director of the Geffrye Museum at Shoreditch, died in February at the age of 53. He was an art historian and a contributor to many journals of the arts, combining his interest in British architecture and design with a deep love and knowledge of 18th century Venetian painting. He was appointed to the Geffrye Museum in 1969 and was tireless in promoting that fascinating but out-of-the-way collection of English furniture and domestic design. He lived in Edith Grove and was a member of the Chelsea Society.

Sir Percy Rugg

Sir Percy Rugg, a former chairman of the Greater London Council and leader of the Conservative Party in the old London County Council, died on 7th September at the age of 80. He was also a councillor for Kensington and Chelsea and president of the Chelsea Conservative Association. He lived in Hurlingham and was a life member of the Chelsea Society.

A solicitor by profession, he was active in local government for 30 years in Hertfordshire as well as in London. An excellent speaker, he was in constant demand both as a decisive chairman of meetings and as a witty after-dinner speaker. He was a Deputy Lieutenant for Greater London and was knighted in 1959. Among his many interests was the care of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Baroness Trumpington, who gave the address at his memorial service, has said of him, "Percy Rugg touched the lives of countless people. We all knew him in a different way — as a skilled, concerned lawyer, as a politician who worked hard for the Conservative Party, as a sportsman, as a man who laboured for the good of others, both in his attachment to the schools he so lovingly governed, and in the way he advised others and used money for the charitable causes so dear to his heart. How difficult it is to encapsulate the life of a man whose zest, trustworthiness and natural integrity touched all those with whom he came into contact. . . . If I were to sum up my idea of his life, I would quote: 'Do little things as though they were great things — and you will live to do great things as though they were little things'."

New at the Library

The annual list of acquisitions drawn up for us by the Librarian at Chelsea Public Library

Books

CRAWFORD, ALAN	*C. R. Ashbee,: Architect, Designer and Romantic Socialist.* Yale University Press, 1985. (the first full scale biography)
DIX, Frank L.	*Royal River Highway:* a history of the passenger boats and services on the river Thames. David & Charles, 1985.
GIBSON, Peter	*The Capital Companion:* a street by street guide to London and its inhabitants. Webb & Bower, 1985.
NORRINGTON, Ruth	*The Household of Thomas More:* a portrait by Hans Holbein described by Ruth Norrington. Kylin Press, 1985.
SURTEES, Virginia	*Jane Welsh Carlyle:* a biography. M. Russell, 1986.
SURVEY OF LONDON	Volume XLII *Southern Kensington: Kensington Square to Earls Court.* Athlone Press, 1986.
TRENCH, Richard	*London under London:* a subterranean guide. Murray, 1985.
WALLLACE, Theo	*A History of Hans Town, Chelsea.* Chelsea Conservative Association, 1986 (a brief pamphlet history).

Articles

ADAMS, Elizabeth	The sites of the Chelsea Porcelain Factory in *Ceramics,* 1985 p. 55-62.

Treasurer's Report

As you know, my predecessor, Bill Haynes, handed over the Society's finances in very good shape and I should like to pay a tribute to him for the great success he achieved in building up the funds over his period of office.

In the year to 31st December 1985, the surplus has increased marginally — up from £1,290.79 to £1,353.88. The main increases came from advertising revenue via the annual report, deposit interest received, and income tax recoveries on deeds of covenants. I have to mention that revenue from advertising is proving far more difficult to obtain for the 1986 report and if any member has any idea for overcoming this I shall be very pleased if they could have a word with me.

The main increases in expenditure for 1985 arose from an increase in the cost of producing the annual report and increases in the costs of the summer and annual meetings but all these items — as the main point of contact for the membership — represent money well spent.

I believe the surplus to be reasonable in the context of the Society's aspirations and ambitions. As you will have concluded yourselves, there is no need to propose an increase in subscriptions for 1987. However, may I make the usual plea that all members send their 1987 subscriptions without further reminder please. It does save postage and, of course, time!

The balance sheet had a accumulated funds of just over £11,500 at 31st December 1985, of which £3,187.38 is represented by the Life Membership Fund. 1987 is the Society's diamond jubilee and we may want to utilize some of our reserves to ensure that our efforts to celebrate this by supporting the Chelsea Physic Garden Appeal meet with the greatest success.

Finally I must thank Mr. Oldak for his kindness in agreeing to audit these accounts. His help is very much appreciated.

Ian Frazer
Hon. Treasurer

17th November, 1986

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1985

Income and Expenditure Account — General Fund

	1985 £	1985 £	1984 £
Income			
Annual Subscriptions		1,929.85	2,015.95
Donations received		570.50	531.00
Donation received from Joyce Grenfell memorial trust		—	300.00
Surplus of receipts from meetings over costs of meetings		—	21.40
Income tax recovered on convenants ...		232.80	119.14
Advertising revenue in 1985 annual report		712.50	600.00
Deposit interest received		531.94	288.93
		3,977.59	3,876.42
Less:			
Expenditure			
Cost of annual report	1,815.90		1,690.85
Stationery, postage and miscellaneous expenses	419.24		403.47
Cost of annual general meeting ...	230.65		141.73
Subscriptions to other organisations ...	35.50		15.50
Cost of summer meeting	122.42		34.08
Donation towards bulbs on Dovehouse Green	—		300.00
		2,623.71	2,585.63
Excess of income over expenditure for the year		1,353.88	1,290.79

Income and Expenditure Account — Life Membership Fund

Balance of Fund — 1st January 1985 ...	2,761.22	2,419.84
Income National Savings Bank account interest	426.16	341.38
Balance of fund — 31st December 1985 ...	3,187.38	2,761.22

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1985

	1985 £	1985 £	1984 £
Current assets			
Debtors		1,681.60	1,426.51
Balance in National Savings accounts		3,567.03	3,225.65
Balance at bank — current account ...		857.43	1,568.05
— deposit account ...		7,444.73	5,380.79
		13,550.79	11,601.00
Less: current liabilities			
Creditors	1,920.90		1,756.15
Subscriptions received in advance ...	96.00		91.00
		2,016.90	1,847.15
Net assets		11,533.89	9,753.85
Represented by:			
Balance of Life Membership Fund ...		3,187.38	2,761.22
Add: Balance of General Fund 1st January 1985	6,992.63		5,701.84
Surplus for the year	1,353.88		1,290.79
		8,346.51	6,992.63
		11,533.89	9,753.85

I. W. FRAZER, *Honorary Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE HONORARY AUDITOR to the members of THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

I have examined the balance sheet and income and expenditure accounts set out above and I certify them to be in accordance with the books and vouchers of the Society.

Dated: 16th October 1986
London

P. V. A. OLDAK
Chartered Accountant

CONSTITUTION

1. (1) The Chelsea Society shall be regulated by the Rules contained in this Constitution.
(2) These Rules shall come into force when the Society has adopted this constitution at a General Meeting.
(3) In these Rules the expression "existing" means existing before the Rules come into force.

OBJECTS

2. The Objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea particularly —
(a) stimulating interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea;
(b) encouraging good architecture, town planning and civil design, the planting and care of trees, and the conservation and property maintenance of open spaces;
(c) seeking the abatement of nuisances;
(d) making representations to the proper authorities on these subjects.

MEMBERSHIP

3. Subject to the provisions of Rule 7, membership of the Society shall be open to all who are interested in furthering the Objects of the Society.

THE COUNCIL

4. (1) There shall be a Council of the Society which shall be constituted in accordance with these Rules.
(2) The Society shall elect not more than twelve members of the Society to be members of the Council.
(3) The members of the Council so elected may co-opt not more than four other persons to be members of the Council.
(4) The Officers to be appointed under Rule 5 shall also be members of the Council.
(5) In the choice of persons for membership of the Council, regards shall be had, amongst other things, to the importance of including persons known to have expert knowledge and experience of matters relevant to Objects of the Society.
(6) The Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day work of the Society, and shall have power to take any action on behalf of the Society which the Council thinks fit to take for the purpose of furthering the Objects of the Society and shall make and publish every year a Report of the activities of the Society during the previous year.
(7) The Council shall meet at least four times in each calendar year.
(8) A member of the Council who is absent from two successive meetings of the Council without explanation which the Council approves shall cease to be a member of the Council.
(9) Three of the elected members of the Council shall retire every second year, but may offer themselves for re-election by the Society.
(10) Retirement under the last-preceding paragraph shall be in rotation according to seniority of election. Provided that the first nine members to retire after these Rules come into force shall be chosen by agreement or, in default of agreement, by lot.
(11) Casual vancancies among the elected members may be filled as soon as practicable by election by the Society.
(12) One of the co-opted members shall retire every second year, but may be again co-opted.

OFFICERS

5. (1) The Council shall appoint the following officers of the Society, namely —
(a) a Chairman of the Council,
(b) a Vice-Chairman of the Council,
(c) an Honorary Secretary or Joint Honorary Secretaries,
(d) an Honorary Treasurer and
(e) persons to fill such other posts as may be established by the Council,
(2) The terms of office of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be three years and those of the other Officers five years from the date of appointment respectively. Provided nevertheless that the appointment of the Chairman shall be deemed to terminate immediately after the third Annual General Meeting after his appointment.
(3) The Officers shall be eligible for further appointments to their respective offices.
(4) Nothing herein contained shall detract from the Officers' right to resign during their current term.
(5) By Resolution of a majority of its members the Council may recind the appointment of an Officer during his term of office for reasons deemed substantial.

5A As a Transitional Provision for the purpose of carrying out Rule 5(2) the existing Officers shall continue to serve within the provisions of this sub-rule.

PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

6. (1) The Council may appoint a member of the Society to be President of the Society for a term of three years, and may re-appoint him for a further term of three years.
(2) The Council may appoint persons, who need not be members of the Society, to be Vice-Presidents.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

7. (1) The Council shall prescribe the amount of the subscriptions to be paid by members of the Society and the date on which they are due, and the period in respect of which they are payable.
(2) Membership of the Society shall lapse if the member's subscription is unpaid for six months after it is due, but may be restored by the Council.
(3) Until otherwise prescribed under this Rule, the annual subscription and the amount payable for life membership shall continue to be payable at the existing rates.*
(4) Members are invited to pay more than the prescribed minimum, if possible.
(5) Members who pay annual subscriptions are requested to pay by banker's order, unless they are unwilling to give banker's order.

GENERAL MEETINGS

8. (1) In these Rules "General Meeting" means a meeting of the Society which all members of the Society may attend.
(2) The Council shall arrange at least one General Meeting every year, to be called the Annual General Meeting, and may arrange as many other General Meetings, in these Rules referred to as Special General Meetings, as the Council may think fit.
(3) General Meetings shall take place at such times and places as the Council may arange.
(4) The President shall preside at any General Meeting at which he is present, and if he is not present the Chairman of the Council or some person nominated by the Chairman of the Council shall preside as Acting President.
(5) Any election to the Council shall be held at a General Meeting.
(6) No person shall be eligible for the Council unless —
(i) he or she has been proposed and seconded by other members of the Society, and has consented to serve, and,
(ii) the names of the three persons concerned and the fact of the consent have reached the Hon. Secretary in writing at least two weeks before the General Meeting.
(7) If the Hon. Secretary duly receives more names for election than there are vacancies, he shall prepare voting papers for use at the General Meeting, and those persons who receive most votes shall be declared elected.
(8) The agenda for the Annual General Meeting shall include —
(a) receiving the Annual Report; and
(b) receiving the Annual Accounts.
(9) At the Annual General Meeting any member of the Society may comment on any matter mentioned in the Report or Accounts, and may, after having given at least a week's notice in writing to the Hon. Secretary, raise any matter not mentioned in the report, if it is within the Objects of the Society.
(10) The President or Acting President may limit the duration of speeches.
(11) During a speech on any question any member of the Society may move that the question be now put, without making a speech, and any other member may second that motion, without making a speech, and if the motion is carried, the President or Acting President shall put the question forthwith.
(12) If any 20 members of the Society apply to the Council in writing for a Special Meeting of the Society, the Council shall consider the application, and may make it a condition of granting it that the expense should be defrayed by the applicants.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

9. (1) The existing Council shall continue to act for the Society until a Council is formed under Rule 4.
(2) Within five months of the adoption of the constitution the existing Council shall arrange an Annual or a special General Meeting at which the first election to the Council shall be held.
(3) The existing Officers of the Society shall continue to serve until Officers are appointed under Rule 5.

AMENDMENTS

10. (1) These Rules may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at an Annual or Special General Meeting, if a notice in writing of the proposed amendment has reached the Hon. Secretary at least two weeks before the General Meeting. Provided that nothing herein contained shall authorise any amendment the effect of which would be to cause the Society at any time to cease to be a Charity in Law.

(2) The Hon. Secretary shall send notices of any such amendment to the members of the Society before the General Meeting.

WINDING-UP

11. In the event of the winding-up of the Society the available funds of the Society shall be transferred to such one or more charitable institutions having objects reasonably similar to those herein before declared as shall be chosen by the Council of the Society and approved by the Meeting of the Society at which the decision to dissolve the Society is confirmed.

**The existing rate is £5 annually payable on the 1st January. The annual husband-and-wife rate is £7.*

List of Members

An asterisk denotes a life member. The Hon. Membership Secretary should be informed of correction or changes in name, address or title.

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*Lt.-Col. J. H. Allason
Mrs. Nvala Allason
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*J. A. W. Ambler
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*Douglas H. Andrew
*Miss G. P. A. Andrews
James Arbuthnot
J. N. Archer
Mrs. Victoria Archer
*Mrs. John Armstrong
*David Aschan
*Mrs. M. G. Aschan
Miss D. M. Ashcroft
Martin Ashley
*Major A. L. Ashwell
The Hon. Nicholas Assheton
*Mrs. R. J. V. Astell
*Mrs. Philip Astley, O.B.E.
Mrs. Douglas Auchincloss

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F. R. Baden-Powell
Lady Bailey
Miss Patricia Banks
George Barclay
Mrs. George Barclay
D. Baring
*D. H. Barlow
J. C. Barnard
Sir John Barran, Bt.
Lady Barran
*Miss Jean Barrie
Julian Barrow
Mrs. Julian Barrow
Simon Barrow
*Derek Barton
*Mrs. Derek Barton
Mrs. Roger Bassett
*Mrs. L. Bayfield
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Mrs. J. H. B. Beal
*Miss Vivien Beamish
*Miss A. M. G. Beaton
*E. V. Beaton

*J. Becker
Robert Beckett
Mrs. Robert Beckett
Mrs. Patricia Behr, M.B.E.
*William Bell
Simon Bendall
Mrs. Simon Bendall
M. G. Bendon
Mrs. M. Bendon
F. C. Benenson
Mrs. F. C. Benenson
Mrs. Anne Trego Bennett
Mrs. R. A. C. Berkeley
*Miss Anne Berriman
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Mrs. Patricia Bevan
*Ernest Biggin
Miss Celia Bigham
John Bignell
Michael Bignell
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Miss Alison C. Birkett
*E. W. Bissett
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*Mrs. G. Blakiston
Miss S. K. Boord
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*Lady Bottomley
*Timothy Boulton
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Mrs. Michael Bryan
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Chelsea Methodist Church
Chelsea Yacht & Boat Co. Ltd.
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*Miss E. A. Ziegler
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The following are Life Members of the Society for whom we have no addresses. If anyone can give any information on these, would they kindly contact the Hon. Membership Secretary.

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