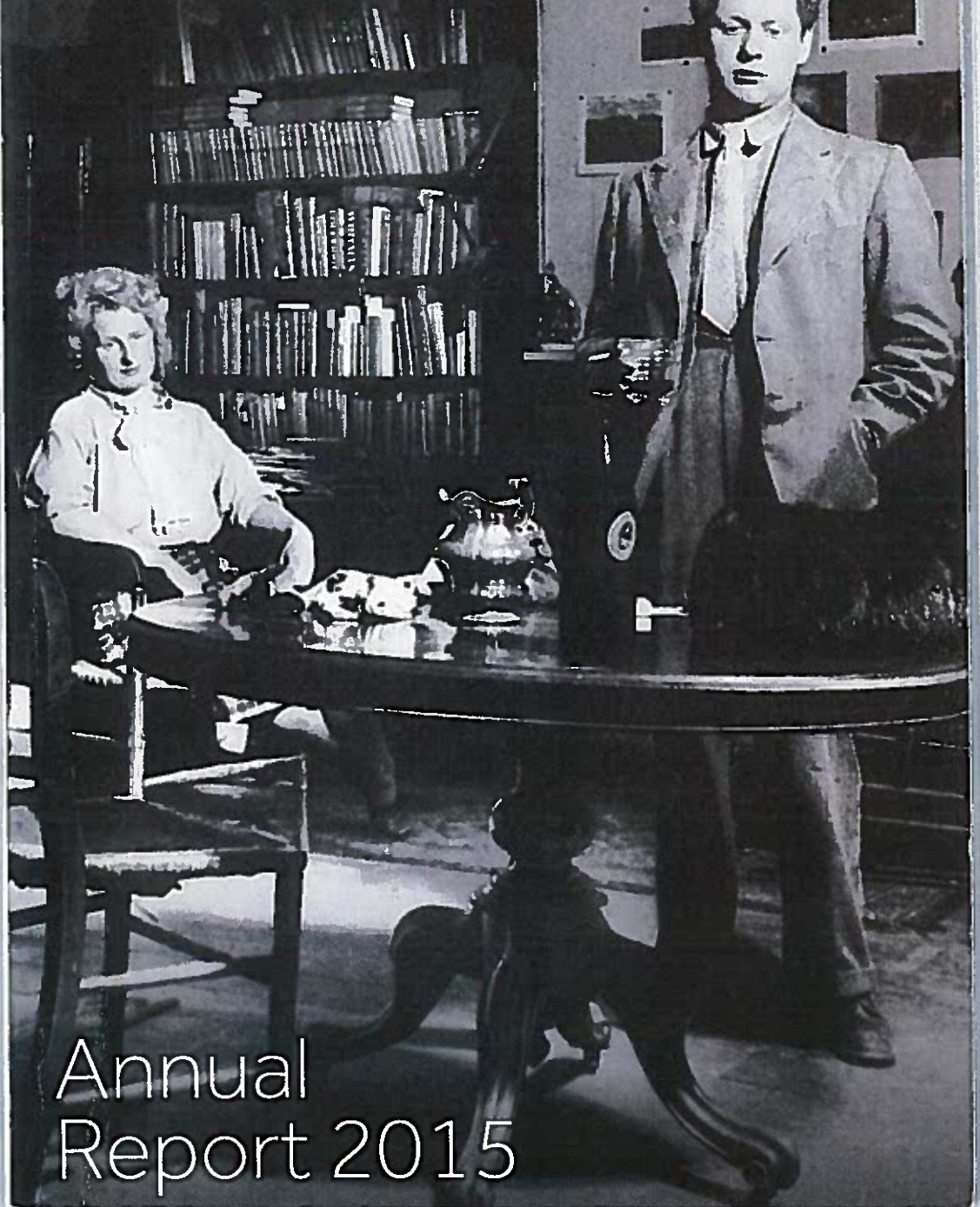




THE CHELSEA SOCIETY



Annual
Report 2015

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The wood engraving of Chelsea Old Church on the title page is by Hugh Krall

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

founded by Reginald Blunt in 1927
to protect the interests of all who live and work here and to
preserve and enhance the unique character of Chelsea.

www.chelseasociety.org.uk

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Annual General Meeting of the Chelsea Society

Held on Monday 23rd November 2015

at Chelsea Old Town Hall

Chaired by The Chairman, Damian Greenish
and Vice-Chairman, Sarah Farrugia

Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting and offered apologies from the President, John Simpson, who has been called away due to recent world events. He then introduced the Vice-Chairman (Sarah Farrugia), the Hon. Treasurer (Tom Martin) and the Hon. Secretary (Lindsay Kennedy) as well as the other Council members.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he planned to change the order of the agenda items so that he could deal with customary business first and then allow time to debate and vote on the resolutions that had been put forward.

Minutes

No comments were made and these were therefore agreed and accepted.

Point of Order

At this point, Gillespie Robertson raised a point of order that the resolutions be taken before any further business so that the meeting could see which way the Council members would vote. The Chairman thanked Mr Robertson for the intervention but pointed out that the Council members' votes would be equally visible later in the meeting. He therefore preferred to retain the planned running order.

Elections to the Council

Three members were re-elected to the Council (Martyn Baker, Michael Bach, Jane Dorrell) and one new member was elected, namely Dr. James Thompson.

Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts for the financial year to 30 June 2015. The Independent Examiner had scrutinised the accounts and the Society is deemed to be in good financial health. The statement of the accounts will be available in the *Annual Report*. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Members attend the Annual General Meeting at Chelsea Old Town Hall.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented his report for the year. The full text of his statement is published on the website and in the *Annual Report*. Questions were invited on the report and these are set out in Appendix 1. The report was then adopted.

Resolutions

Resolution 1: Crossrail 2

The Chairman invited Chris Lenon to propose the resolution 'The Chelsea Society opposes the plans to build a Crossrail Station and route in Chelsea.'

Mr Lenon noted that Crossrail 2 poses a threat to the amenities and character of Chelsea and therefore should be opposed by the Society. He went on to give further background and justifications for the resolution in terms of the case for transport, business and heritage. Mr Lenon invited the meeting to vote in favour of the resolution. The resolution was seconded by Gillespie Robertson. The Chairman asked if anyone opposed the motion and there were questions and comments from the floor, these are noted in Appendix 2.

The resolution was put to the vote and carried by a substantial majority (205 members were in attendance).



Danian Greenist addresses the Members at the Annual General Meeting

Resolution 2 : Change to the Constitution

Chris Lenon was invited to put forward the second resolution:
 "The Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day work of the Society, and subject to the following proviso 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. Such power shall not be exercisable by the Council if 10 or more members of the Society draw the Council's attention to a significant issue in relation to the said Objects which involves an area of more than 750 square metres of proposed infrastructure or other major construction development in Chelsea. In any such case the Council shall consult members by way of ballot to determine the policy of the Society on that issue. The Council shall make and publish every year a Report of the activities of the Society during the previous year."

Mr Lenon said that, once elected, the Council members are not answerable to the members of the Society. He noted that members can currently vote off Council members and can call an EGM but that would be at their own expense. Mr Lenon added that the Society should pay more attention to the views of its members and reflect these on significant issues. This could have the added benefit of strengthening any responses on planning issues. He explained that the resolutions being put forward as there needs to be a simple mechanism for members to decide the Society's policy on significant issues. He noted that he would be happy for

the principle to be included in a review of the rules and constitution. Gillespie Robertson seconded the resolution.

The Chairman invited David Le Lay to speak in opposition. Mr Le Lay said "I was Chairman of the Chelsea Society for 22 years and I am delighted that the Society is continuing to flourish. I beg you to vote against this resolution for the reasons set out in the Chairman's report. It is unworkable and based on the premise that the Society is undemocratic. This evening, you've heard many ways in which the Council listens including a proper AGM. The point about twenty members calling an EGM is not strictly accurate. There is a provision that the Council may ask for the cost to be covered but this is discretionary and represents a safeguard against calling frivolous meetings. No such safeguard is included in the resolution. Ten members is a very small number - less than 1% of the membership. I fear that, if passed, this resolution could be misused to silence the Society, for instance by developers. In addition, ballots are time consuming and expensive - and what would happen if the plans change, another ballot? I love this Society and I believe this would change its character and potentially wreck it. Please vote against it."

Further questions and comments were invited, and these are shown in Appendix 3.

Following the open session, Gillespie Robertson asked the Chairman for a vote on the principle underlying the resolution. The Chairman responded that the formal procedures in place mean members need to be given 28 days notice of resolutions and so they cannot be amended on the night. However, he did agree that the rules need to be updated. He also had no objection to Council papers such as minutes and notes of planning meetings being published to allow greater visibility of the workings of the Council.

On that basis, the proposer and seconder asked to withdraw the resolution. The resolution was withdrawn.

The Chairman then invited members to stay for drinks and the meeting was closed.

Appendix 1 - Questions and Comments following the Chairman's Report

Melinda Hughes "I would like a view of how Council members are likely to vote before the resolutions are put forward."

The Chairman responded that it would be presumptuous of the Council to take a position before the vote takes place.

Gordon Toland "Did the Chairman receive a reply to his letter to Greg Hands about social housing?"

The Chairman had not yet received a response, but a member of the MP's team who was present said he would follow up.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Peter Golding "The Council states some useful planning principles in its paper, but is it trying to preserve the building in the Sutton estate?"
The Chairman said that the planning committee is looking into this. He reiterated that an overall ambition is to resist breaking up of communities and any reduction in social housing.

Jean Keal: "I am a tenant in the Sutton Estate. We are campaigning for renovation not demolition. We want to retain social rental housing not just affordable housing."

Appendix 2 - Questions and Comments on the resolution regarding Crossrail

Does the resolution oppose the station or the route or both? (name not given)
Gillespie Robertson responded that there was no opposition to Crossrail 2 in general, just the station and route through Chelsea.

Kim Taylor-Smith: "Since I became a councillor, I have declared an interest in this subject. We need to consider the views and the needs of the next generation and so I do not think this is an appropriate time for this resolution."

Rosy Baker: "Greg Hands has suggested an alternative station in Fulham. Is a 'no' vote also a 'no' vote for a station in Fulham?"
Answer from the floor: "A route through Imperial Wharf would be expensive and difficult so a business case would not get through." The Chairman added that it was not for the Chelsea Society to suggest alternative locations for a station.

Appendix 3: Questions and Comments on the resolution regarding the Constitution

"Is it standard practice to ask for declarations of interest?" (Name not given.)

Chairman "Yes. For example, I personally excuse myself from any matters relating to the landowners with whom I deal."

Frank Busby: "There has been an influx of new members very recently. Is there a takeover bid going on?"

Sir Paul Lever: "The genesis of the resolution is that the Society took a position last year which is clearly out of kilter with the views of the members. The Council should reflect on this. The workings of the Council need to be more transparent so we can communicate our views. Whether real or not, there is a perceived problem with the communication between the Council and the Society members."

Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting of The Chelsea Society held on 23 November 2015 at Chelsea Old Town Hall

Mr President, Vice-Presidents, Members of the Council, Members of the Society and Honoured Guests. It is my privilege to address you once again on the affairs of the Society on what has been another very active and some may say challenging year.

I wanted to start by expressing my thanks and appreciation for the time and effort that the members of the Society's Council dedicate to the affairs of the Society. I would remind members that the Council receive no remuneration for their efforts and we rely wholly on people who are prepared to give up their valuable time for the benefit of Chelsea, to pursue vigorously the Objects of the Society.

I am delighted that Terence Bendixson, Michael Bach and Jane Dorrell have all been re-elected to serve as members of the Council. It also gives me great pleasure to welcome as our newest member, Dr James Thompson, who has just been elected today. All our elected members of Council are firmly rooted in the history and traditions of Chelsea and I know that they will play an active role in helping to secure the future of Chelsea by promoting our principal Object; to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea. We are allowed to have 12 elected members of Council; at the moment, the elected members number 10. Perhaps next year, as a demonstration of the commitment of our members, we could aim to have more candidates than spaces.

At the beginning of this year Nigel Stenhouse's term as Vice-Chairman of the Society came to an end. Nigel has been a member of Council for very many years and was Vice-Chairman for some 20 years. He has contributed enormously during his period of office to our work. I am delighted to say that, in order not to lose his knowledge and skills, the Council wisely decided to co-opt him as a member following the end of his term as Vice-Chairman.

Sarah Farrugia was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council having previously been the Hon Secretary. I would like to thank Sarah for the fantastic support that she has given to me over the past year. In addition, she has done substantial work towards improving our communications both with our members and with the wider audience, through our excellent website and also Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. In addition she has arranged surveys, focus groups, meetings etc. – more of that later.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sadly, owing to other commitments, Lindsay Kennedy has decided to stand down as the Hon. Secretary in the New Year; we are actively looking for her replacement. I thank her for all her hard work and support during her time with us.

I am afraid the same is also true for our Hon. Treasurer Tom Martin. Looking after finances is always a thankless task so it is right that I should publicly express my appreciation for all the work that Tom has done to keep our finances sound and our books in order during his term of office. In addition, the other support that he has given to the Society through his office in Walpole Street is greatly appreciated. He will be difficult to replace.

I reported to the AGM last year that Terence Bendixson was standing down as our Planning Secretary. At the beginning of the year the Council appointed Michael Stephen to become our new Chairman of the Planning Committee for the Council. It was accepted that the volume of planning work is considerable and requires the input of more than one person. There are four Wards within Chelsea and it was agreed therefore that we should appoint a representative from each of the Wards to deal with the more localised planning issues. The larger or more significant planning matters would be considered by the Committee as a whole and the most significant issues would be referred to the full Council. This is a system which we think will work well, particularly insofar as there will be local representatives for local areas who will be able to listen to what the residents, businesses and other stakeholders think.

Our Membership Secretary Allan Kelly has done remarkable work over the year and continuing to expand our membership. We now have over 1,100 members. Allan works tirelessly to promote the Society, not only through expanding our membership but also by regularly volunteering to help at many of the Society's events.

During the course of the year, we held receptions for new members, to introduce them to members of Council and also for volunteers, without whom the Society would find it virtually impossible to function. I hope we can repeat those next year; we seem to have attracted an extraordinary influx of new members over the last few weeks, many of whom may well be here this evening. I welcome you all and am delighted that there are so many new enthusiasts wanting to further the Objects of the Society. Next year's new members party should be quite an occasion.

Our Events Secretary Paulette Craxford has continued to play a huge role in arranging the numerous events which members attend and which are such an important part of our Objects. I will look at those in a little more detail shortly.

We continue to look for a new Editor – as ever the plea goes out from the Council for members to put themselves forward for this role – but I am immensely grateful once

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

again to Sarah Farrugia who is standing in that role for this year to enable us to produce our *Annual Report*.

For all of you I have not mentioned individually, I can but apologise; it is no reflection on your contribution to the work of the Society which is enormously appreciated. I thank you all.

We have as usual had a very full programme of events, lectures, visits etc.

On 2 February David Le Lay, our Hon Vice-President, former Chairman and a retired architect gave another brilliant lecture. This time it was on the history of the four 18th-century houses which were built on the banks of the Thames between the Physic Garden and the Royal Hospital. The lecture, which was fully attended, was called *The Riverside Houses of East Chelsea*. The lecture built on papers that David had previously written and had published in the *Annual Report*.

This was followed on 23 February by a talk from Peter Matthews of the Museum of London. He gave a lecture entitled *The Story of London Bridges* which looked at the history of bridge building in London and considered how without them London would not have grown. The lecture illustrated how the bridges and the city evolved from the first stone London Bridge to the high tech crossings of today.

On 23 March Amy Concannon, Assistant Curator for British Art at Tate Britain, returned to give us a lecture on the later life of JMW Turner. Amy told us how Turner's later years were a period of exceptional creative flowering. The last 15 years of his life saw Turner produce some of his most famous works. The lecture explored this extraordinary period of Turner's life, paying particular attention to his link with Chelsea, where he made his final home.

On 21 April the Society had a visit for members to Merchant Taylors' Hall, which has been on the same site since 1347. The entire hall was burnt out in the Great Fire in 1666 and then later rebuilt. Owing to its enormous popularity, the tour was repeated twice; on 21 July and 14 September. The Society is immensely grateful to the Merchant Taylors' Company for accommodating these tours.

On 21 May the Society crossed the border to enjoy a visit to 18 Stafford Terrace in Kensington. From 1875 this building was the home of *Punch* cartoonist Edward Linley Sambourne, his wife Marion, their two children and their live-in servants. The preserved house gives a fascinating insight into the personal lives of the Sambourne family and also provides a rare example of what was known as an 'aesthetic interior' or 'house beautiful' style. The building has been immaculately preserved.

On 30 June we held the Society's Summer Meeting at Petyt Hall next to historic

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Chelsea Old Church, a true landmark of Old Chelsea. In what was fortunately a beautiful warm evening we were able to enjoy the lovely secluded courtyard garden. There was a good turnout of members (indeed, it was a sell-out) and we were particularly delighted that the Mayor and Mayoress were able to join us.

Doggett's Coat and Badge took place this year on a Saturday, being 1 August. Members of the Society welcomed the contestants as they arrived at the finish at Cadogan Pier. This year was the 300th anniversary of the race and those watching were treated to the spectacle of a very close finish. As many of you will know, this race for

Above and below, the Chairman, Damian Greenish, and other members at the Summer Meeting at Petyt Hall in June.



THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

newly qualified Thames Watermen and Lightermen is thought to be one of the oldest continuing sporting contests in the world and it is right that the Society, as one of the guardians of the traditions of Chelsea, should continue to play a role in it.

On 1 September, the leading Thames archaeologist Dr Fiona Haughey conducted a guided walk entitled *Explore the Foreshore* which was full of extraordinary facts about the history of Chelsea and the river. Many unique historical and archaeological items have been found on the foreshore at Chelsea over the years although none were I think discovered during the visit on 1 September. One particular historic item is the skull known as 'Chelsea Man' thought to be nearly 4,000 years old which shows the earliest evidence for surgery in London. We hope very much that further walks can be arranged for next year.

Between 28 September and 3 October the Society was honoured to host in an unoccupied retail unit in Cadogan Gardens an exhibition of the artwork of Hugh Krall entitled *The Changing River at Chelsea*. Hugh, an architect and artist who lives near the Thames in Chelsea, has been painting and drawing the river for very many years. The exhibition showed how the riverside area in Chelsea has changed over the years. Hugh has been a loyal and valued supporter of the Society over very many years and his generosity in allowing us to use his pictures of the riverfront for the Society's greeting cards is enormously appreciated.

On 21 October the Society had a visit to Apsley House which stands in the heart of London and is the former home of Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington. Originally designed and built by Robert Adam in the 1770s the house was bought by the Duke in 1817. Although the house was given to the nation in 1947 it still remains as the Wellington family townhouse.

Our autumn lecture was held on 23 October. Gillian Best had been commissioned by the Council to prepare for us a report on the history of social housing in Chelsea. It is



A scene at the end of Doggett's Coat and Badge race. It was a close finish with Louis Pettipher winning by seconds.



Members viewing The Changing River at Chelsea, an exhibition of artworks by Chelsea Society member Hugh Krall in September.

perhaps not entirely understood by many of those who now live in the best parts of Chelsea that for many years there were great swathes of Chelsea that were little more than slums. It was perhaps for that reason that some of the great Victorian philanthropists of the day Peabody, Guinness, Sutton and Lewis all chose Chelsea as one of their initial locations to build major Estates and housing for the poor. Those Estates survive to this day and remain a crucial part of not only the affordable housing stock but also of the heritage of Chelsea. Gillian presented her report to a packed audience in the Small Hall of the Town Hall – it was literally standing room only. It was a fascinating lecture to enable us to learn how there is still much of Chelsea that provides essential housing for what our politicians refer to perhaps rather demeaningly as 'ordinary people'. The future of this housing is constantly under threat from Government interference and commercial ambition.

I make no apology for setting out these events at some length. First, it is the duty of the Council to report to the members of the Society on those activities that we have undertaken as part of our obligation to fulfil our Objects. Secondly, and I shall return to this subject in a moment, the first of our specific obligations is to stimulate interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea. I think it is not co-incidental that our esteemed founder Reginald Blunt chose to place this at the top of the list. As so many have said, in order to plan for the future you need to understand the past.

All these events fulfil our Objects and I am proud of them. I am also extremely grateful to Paulette who dedicates an enormous amount of time and energy to setting up and arranging all these events. She does have a team of helpers and volunteers (without whom incidentally the Society would not be able to function) but she is the Events Secretary and is therefore deserving of the credit for another full and fascinating year of events.

Looking ahead to next year, we will have another exciting programme of lectures, events and visits details of which in due course will be announced on the website and circulated to members. Without doubt, our biggest event next year will be the Society's 2016 Exhibition to be held on Duke of York Square in June. The exhibition will be entitled *Royal Chelsea* and will look at the history of royalty (in its broadest sense) in Chelsea. Camilla Mountain and her Exhibition Committee are already hard at work in putting together the event.

It is fair to say that for much of this year, our second objective to encourage good architecture and town planning and civic design has been dominated by the toxic issue of Crossrail 2. Shortly, there is to be proposed a Resolution to this AGM that the Society should oppose both the construction of a station in Chelsea and to route the Crossrail line through it. In June 2014 the Council took a decision in the context of the then Consultation Paper issued by TfL that it would give conditional support to a station in the King's Road. That decision was made on the basis of the information then available. Subsequently a considerable amount of further information about the plans for Crossrail 2 has become available. Furthermore, forceful and substantial opposition to the Crossrail project passing through Chelsea has come from both many local residents and businesses.

In consequence of that, the Council felt it appropriate that it should look again at the cases for and against Crossrail 2 coming through Chelsea in order to be able to respond to TfL's further Consultation Paper that was issued last month. Within the last few months therefore members of Council have held meetings with representatives of 'No to Crossrail', RBK&C, TfL and the Cremorne and World's End Residents' Associations. We have in addition had many other informal discussions with other Residents' Associations and individuals. Shortly, this meeting will as I say be asked to consider a Resolution to oppose Crossrail 2 in Chelsea. The Council felt it appropriate that we should know the result of the vote on that Resolution before we come to a final decision; it is therefore the intention of the Council to meet shortly following this meeting so that we can formulate our formal response to the Consultation Paper. The views of members will, I have no doubt, play a significant part in that decision.

Of course one of the many questions that we have to ask ourselves in relation to Crossrail 2 is: What will be its impact on the character and traditions of Chelsea?

Chelsea is unique. It has extraordinary mixed and integrated communities. It comprises a number of villages or communities who all have that one thing in common: they live or work in Chelsea and are proud of it. At its heart is the King's Road: still unique despite the onslaught of change and still managing (just) to retain that quirky irreverence that makes it so different. We may not have lions living in flats anymore but you will still meet a man on a bus with a live and talkative parrot on his shoulder or find Lady Godiva in her full lack of regalia walking from Whistler's Statue to the Chelsea Arts Club.

We are absolutely right to worry about whether an underground station in the heart of Chelsea will irredeemably change that, even if many of you will not be here to know the answer. But we must not lose sight of the other threats that we face in order to safeguard this unique place. The loss of social and affordable housing, something which this Government seems intent on pursuing or at least not addressing, is likely to have an impact on this place very much sooner than some of these invasive infrastructure projects. If you talk to the residents of Sutton or Cremorne or World's End they are proud to be part of the community of Chelsea and are desperate to remain so. However, they are fearful of their futures and worried that their communities will be destroyed in the pursuit of development. Several of the Estates have wonderful open spaces; areas that can always seem tempting for construction. The Society opposes the loss of any precious open space. The Society also opposes any loss of affordable or social housing and we will not support any scheme that fails to adhere to this principle. Indeed, what we need in Chelsea is, not more investment opportunities for millionaires, but homes for the diverse mix of people who presently make up the community of Chelsea.

As many of you will know, the plans by Sutton for the redevelopment of their Estate in Cale Street have now reached the stage of a validated planning application. It has only very recently been published but the Society's planning committee will look at the application very critically and will not support it unless we are convinced that, not only does it embrace good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees and the conservation and proper maintenance of open spaces, but also that it provides accommodation of no less a quality and at the very least for no fewer numbers than were provided by the original Estate; not incidentally the Estate following the removal of many residents but the full Estate. The Society has written to our MP Greg Hands about the Government proposal to offer 'right to buy' to Housing Association tenants and to fund this misguided policy by the enforced sale of Council housing. We will continue to make our voice heard on that issue.

I will mention briefly one or two other significant issues. There are many more but I cannot in the time available cover them all.

The scheme for the redevelopment of the Curzon cinema site in the King's Road was controversial, involving as it did the potential loss of a unique cinema and a pub

frontage on the King's Road. Having objected to the original scheme, the Society was subsequently part of the discussions with Cadogan over a revised scheme to retain the cinema and the pub frontage which enabled us to support that revised scheme when it was resubmitted for a planning consent.

The acquisition by the Metrobank of the prominent site on the corner of King's Road and Sydney Street is a bitter blow to those of us who oppose the prospect of King's Road becoming simply another High Street. It is I am afraid an unfortunate consequence of government dictates on planning policy over which we have little or no direct control. All I can say is that our planning committee member for that ward Patrick Baty has worked extremely hard to try to moderate the visual aspects of the plans.

We are assaulted on all sides by major infrastructure projects which, although in many cases not directly affecting us, nevertheless have an impact on Chelsea. There is Thames Tideway Tunnel, Counters Creek Storm Relief sewer proposal and the prospect of a third runway at Heathrow to name but a few. On our boundaries we have the development of Chelsea Barracks and in due course the prospect of Chelsea Football Club expanding Stamford Bridge. South of the river, high rise developments continue to grow and we have to look at them. There are Conservation Area reviews and a constant stream of Consultation Papers from RBK&C on many aspects of life in Chelsea. We are suffering further endless disruption of the King's Road by the National Grid's project to enhance the gas main in Chelsea. This is likely to continue for some time (it is a 5-year project); the list is really endless.

I mention these issues by way of example because it is sometimes suggested that the Society spends far too much time on lectures and visits and far too little time on planning. I reject those criticisms. A great deal of our work on these issues goes unremarked and largely unnoticed by a wider audience. The work is not glamorous; it is often a bureaucratic grind, looking at lengthy planning applications, with their statements, specifications and drawings. I am grateful to the hard working members of our Planning Committee who commit their time and expertise to deal with these issues on a daily basis.

There are also some who suggest that we do not listen to our members. Well I refute that too. At the beginning of this year we thought it would be helpful to develop a paper to provide guidance on our planning policy, to enable us to respond yet more effectively to the various planning issues that we face. Michael Stephen worked extremely hard preparing this paper and it went through many drafts, with inputs from many members of the Council.

Last month, the paper was published in draft on our website and we held a meeting at the Town Hall on 2 November to hear the views of, not only our members but also other residents, business owners and stakeholders in Chelsea. We wanted the

discussion to cover art and culture, local businesses, retailers, demographics, education, the environment – all the important issues that affect Chelsea as a place. We had a number of excellent presentations from our members and others on these topics. It was an opportunity for us to hear the views of our members.

Furthermore, before that conference, we had held meetings with many parties who were concerned with these issues; we convened focus groups to tell us what residents/families/businesses and others think about Chelsea, how they see the future and what role they think the Society should play in seeking to influence that future. We conducted an online survey to find out what people think is important about Chelsea, what we are proud of and want to retain and what needs to be improved. Much of this was organised by our Vice-Chairman Sarah Farrugia and she did a fantastic job. It is our intention that these meetings, discussions and presentations should in future become a regular feature of Society business.

So what did we learn from all that? Interestingly, a recurring theme in the responses was: distinctiveness. Chelsea has its own distinct style and character and it was apparent that many people feel that we are losing that character, sense of identity and the quirky irreverence that we have come to enjoy and see as integral to Chelsea. There is a feeling that the King's Road is becoming bland and unrecognisable from many other high streets, that the onslaught of development not only interrupts daily life here but also reduces the essence of the place in terms of character and interest. People are concerned that the level of overseas investment without residency is impinging on the area which is being dumbed down by those who have no affinity or concern for the way of life here and the heritage and special nature of the place. People are concerned that the future will bear little resemblance to the past. In many ways these are concerns about values and traditions – that the fabric of the place transcends the ordinary and should be prized and protected above all else.

It is difficult to disagree with any of that. The only point I would make is this. Change is inevitable and will happen. There is much that will happen here over which we simply have no control; the influx of money and the interference by central government being two of the most obvious examples. So what we have to do is to try to manage change and insofar as it happens to ensure that to the best of our ability, we ensure that any change fulfils our obligation to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea.

Our website is a mine of information and we communicate through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. One of our most hard-working volunteers does much work here to present the Society in a format fit for the 21st century. We publish Newsletters for our members, both online and in hard copy. Our Newsletter Editor, Michael Bach, produces those and they are full of information concerning issues affecting Chelsea. I am grateful to Michael for all the hard work that he puts into producing those.

Of course, it is always easy to criticise the work of others; even, sometimes to be ungracious or hostile. The Society would love to do more but we can only match our capabilities to our resources. Rather than stand on the outside and criticise, why not come and join us; volunteer to help and contribute to the work of the Society. As I said earlier, it has been a pleasure to see so many new members joining the Society in the last few weeks; I shall look forward to meeting you all and learning about the contributions that you can make to our work.

So you will see why I do not accept the suggestion that we do not listen and we do not communicate. Of course, we can always do better and with your help I am sure that we will do so.

There are two Resolutions on which you will be asked to vote this evening. I have already mentioned briefly the first one: Crossrail 2. The second Resolution in more fundamental insofar as it proposes radically to alter the Constitution or Rules in the Society to the effect that the policy of the Society on a significant issue involving 750 square meters of proposed infrastructure or what is described as other major construction development can be determined by the members and not by the Council.

This proposed amendment is unanimously opposed by all members of the Council. In order to appreciate why that is so, it is necessary first to understand what is the nature of the Society and how its Rules presently operate.

The Society, which is a registered Charity, was formed in 1927 with the principal Object to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea. The Constitution sets out four particular areas which are required to promote. First, we are required to stimulate interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea. I have already made the point that I do not think that it was accidental that this was listed first. Secondly, we are to encourage good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees and the conservation and proper maintenance of open spaces. Thirdly, we are to seek the abatement of nuisances. Fourthly, we are required to make representations to the proper authorities on these subjects.

The principal role of the Council is to fulfil these Objects; it is thereby responsible for the day to day work of the Society. The Constitution gives the Council power to take any action on behalf of the Society which the Council thinks fit in order to further the Objects of the Society. Every decision that we take has to be on that basis. Members of the Council are chosen, at least in part, for their expert knowledge and experience of matters which are relevant to the Objects. The primary purpose of the Council is therefore, not to represent the views of the members (unlike for example a Residents' Association), but to promote the Objects of the Society. Members become members of the Society because they share the same objectives.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

So it is the Council that is required (and has been required since 1927) to take decisions on behalf of the Society. There is nothing unusual about that; that is how charitable Amenity Societies are constituted.

Nevertheless, the members ultimately have considerable power. Their most important safeguard is the power to elect the members of Council. It is the case therefore that, if the members believe that the Council is failing in its duty to promote the Objects of the Society, then they can get rid of them. It is as simple as that. The members also have the power (as we see today) to put a Resolution before the Society. It would be a brave (I would say foolhardy) Council that chose to disregard a Resolution that is passed by the members, provided of course that the Resolution was in respect of an issue covered by the Objects.

The Council takes the view that the amendment in the second Resolution being proposed today is both unnecessary and unworkable. The amendment is unnecessary because the members already have the power to get rid of the Council and, as is being amply demonstrated today, they also have the power to pass Resolutions at General Meetings. The amendment is unworkable because, with great respect to the intentions and motives of the proposers, it has not been wholly thought through and its full implications have not been appreciated.

What this amendment proposes is that, in relation to these major issues (which are not incidentally defined) the Council's power to take decisions will be removed and passed to the members. The only precondition to that is that a minimum of 10 members of the Society (substantially less than 1% of our present membership) can "draw the Council's attention" (whatever that means) to a major issue (who decides?) and at that point it will be for the members to decide the issue by ballot. A ballot is a process of voting which needs to be in writing and in secret. At the moment, there is nothing in the Rules to cover the conduct of a ballot. There is no indication in the amendment as to who is to determine what question is to be put to the members but on each occasion that this procedure is invoked it would require the printing of ballot papers and circulation of those papers to all the members setting a date for their return and then a count. During this period the Council has no power to take any action because that power has been removed. So it is not difficult to see that any 10 members could remove the Council's ability to respond to a major issue simply by invoking this procedure. It is not difficult to envisage a situation where one might see several groups of 10 members asking for different questions to be put.

It is for these reasons that the Council is unanimous in its view that this amendment should not be made. Its effect, in my opinion, is potentially to emasculate the Society from being able to take a decision on a significant issue.

I will finish by making my annual appeal for those who care about the future of

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chelsea to consider joining the Council. I have made the point before that we still have fewer elected members of Council than spaces available. We are continuing our search for an Editor whose principal duty is to collate and publish the Society's *Annual Report*. In addition, we are looking for a new Secretary and a new Treasurer. We have a constant need for volunteers to help with events, the website and social media, liaising with local schools, selling cards and publications, answering historical questions, maintaining our archives and generally promoting the Society. The only qualification you need to have is to love and care about Chelsea. If you have that qualification please be in touch with Sarah.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your continuing support of the Society and the work that we do. We could not do it without you. We are facing challenges but this great Society has survived since 1927 and I have no doubt that it will continue to fulfil its role to champion the preservation and improvement of the amenities of Chelsea for many years to come.

Mr President, this is the Chairman's Report for 2015, in the Chelsea Society's 89th year.

Damian Greenish

Reginald Blunt and the Chelsea Society

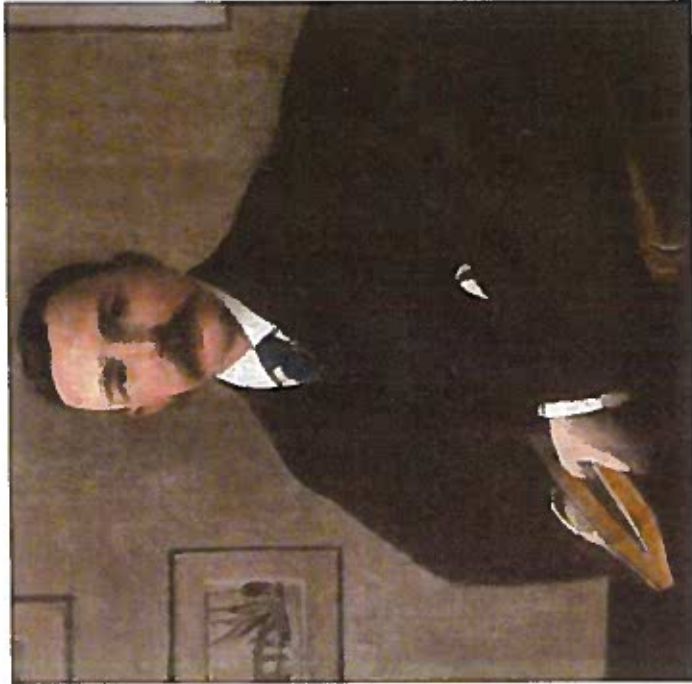
by John Simpson, C.B.E.

In 1927 a mild-mannered character in his 70th year with a bushy moustache founded a resistance movement. Sick of watching wrecking crews moving into street after street to free up space for the developers, Blunt set up the Chelsea Society. As a result, large tracts of Chelsea were rescued. Nowadays the Society keeps a watchful eye on everything that happens in our borough. No doubt, if the old boy hadn't founded it first, we would have had a Chelsea Society decades ago anyway. But Blunt gave it a particular tone, scholarly yet distinctly chirpy, which it maintains to this day.

For three decades before the Society was born, he wrote a series of factual books about old Chelsea, many of them for the publishers Mills and Boon (this was in the days before bodice-ripping). I've collected most of his books over the years, and have come to admire his knowledge and his ingenuity. He had a wonderful way of recycling the basic facts and legends in book after book, innocently yet with great skill, so you feel at home with what he writes without getting too irritated by the fact that you've heard it all from him before.

I first became aware of Reginald Blunt in the 1980s, when I dropped in at a delightful bookshop in the King's Road called Chelsea Rare Books, opposite what is now the Bluebird Café. Nowadays, of course, there seems to be no room for an antiquarian bookshop in the King's Road – just for an extraordinary range of women's shoe-shops, women's dress-shops, and the occasional coffee-place. (I know – there are lots of marvellous exceptions, to quote the distinguished Chelsea resident Oscar Wilde, but if you closed down all the clothes shops in the King's Road there wouldn't be a huge amount left.)

Anyway, I wandered into this isolated palace of rest and culture, and the delightful man who ran it asked me if I was looking for anything in particular. My mind always goes blank when booksellers ask me questions like that, so I said I was interested in local history. That usually shuts them up, but this shop had an entire shelf of Reginald Blunts; Mills and Boon's finest. I reached up and grabbed one at random: *Paradise Row, or, A broken piece of old Chelsea, being the curious and diverting annals of a famous village street newly destroyed, together with particulars of sundry noble and notable persons who in former times dwelt there, to which are added likenesses of the principal of them and of their several houses.*



Reginald Blunt. © Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Now, of course, you're thinking that dear old Reginald was a bit of a prat, and maybe he was. But this was 1906, and pomposity was still in vogue. And anyway his heart was in the right place: the delightful William and Mary and early Georgian houses of Paradise Row (which we know as Cheyne Place) were still being knocked down in favour of a lot of Edwardiana; attractive enough to us nowadays, but not a patch on the magnificent old courtiers' houses they replaced. I bought the book, of course; I suppose it was the words 'curious and diverting annals' that did the trick.

A decade later, by chance, I went to live in a flat in one of these Edwardian replacement houses in Cheyne Place. Its vast rooms ('The biggest drawing-room in Chelsea', announced the estate agent proprietorially when we went to look the place over. I dismissed that as estate agent-speak at the time, but I've never come across a bigger one) lent themselves ideally to our large, sprawling 1890s African furniture and the Afghan carpets I'd haggled for long and hard in Peshawar and Kabul. A few years later, we moved to a small, delightful 1840s terrace house in a nearby square; the furniture stuck out through the doorways and we had to roll up the carpets at the ends.

You might expect that Reginald himself lived in one of Chelsea's Georgian gems, but no – he occupied a flat (number 14) in Carlyle Mansions on Chelsea Embankment, overlooking the river. It's a towering, delightful red-brick building dating from the 1880s: exactly the kind of thing old Blunt campaigned against elsewhere in the borough. Journalists writing about the area usually manage to say that people call Carlyle Mansions 'Writers' Block', because so many famous authors lived there. It sounds like the kind of thing journalists do say.

Blunt had a fine country house in Berkshire, but Chelsea was his great love, together with the china that the potters of Chelsea turned out. He tried to make regular visits even during the Second World War, when he was in his eighties and Chelsea was targeted nightly by German bombers. The loss of Chelsea Old Church darkened the last year or so of his life: it was worse, he must have thought, than the development he founded the Chelsea Society to protect against. I've always thought it was a prime example of the uselessness of mass bombing, that Battersea and Lots Road power stations (the Germans' primary targets) should have survived, when so much of Chelsea was flattened around them.

Reginald Blunt died in 1944, at the age of 87. What would he have thought of Chelsea now? He'd have been amazed, I'm sure, by the extraordinary prosperity of it, and the ludicrous prices that houses and flats command; a great deal of his Chelsea was staunchly working-class. He'd be horrified that it was no longer a natural home for artists and their studios. Some of the architecture would probably make him feel that the German bombers should make a return trip. But at the same time he would surely see that it's still recognisably his Chelsea, in spite of everything. And of course the Chelsea Society has played its part in keeping it that way.

A complete set of Annual Reports and books by Reginald Blunt are available to view by appointment in the Chelsea Library.

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FLAT-IRONY

(with apologies to the *Walrus and the Carpenter*)

<p><i>The Builder and the Architect</i> Were walking close at hand They wept like anything to see Such old, old houses stand. 'If these were only cleared away' They said, 'it would be grand'.</p> <p>'If seven men with seven picks Should hank for half a year Do you suppose,' the Builder said, 'That they could get them clear?' 'I doubt it,' said the Architect, And shed a bitter tear.</p> <p>'O Landlords, come and walk with us, The Builder did implore, 'A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, Along this river shore. We want to build more blocks of flats And more and more and more.'</p> <p><i>The Builder and the architect</i> Walked on a mile or so, And then they rested on a seat Conveniently low, And one by one, as owners came, Another house would go.</p>	<p>'The time has come', the Builder said, To talk of chromium baths, Of service lifts and swimming pools, and crazy pavement paths, Of radio sets in every room And smart electric heartlis.'</p> <p>'It was so kind of you to come, And only think how nice A Cheyne Walk of towering Flats With every new device.' The Architect said nothing but 'Just name your lowest price.'</p> <p>'I weep for you, the Builder said, 'I deeply sympathise! With sobs and tears he sorted out Those of the largest size Holding his pocket handkerchief Before his streaming eyes.</p> <p>'Dear People,' cried the Architect Can nothing more be done? Has Chelsea no old houses left? But answers came there none. And this was scarcely odd, because They'd pulled down every one.</p>
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R.B., The Chelsea Society, Twelfth Annual Report 1938-9

(Reprinted by special request from a Christmas card)

Watch the Windows

by Terence Bendixson

Take a walk with me down Old Church Street from the King's Road. Go past the Red Cross shop and Manolo Blahnik's sculpture-for-the-feet shoes and have a look at No. 47. It is a terrace house in tan-coloured brick with bronze window frames and it is modern, modern, modern. Your gut reaction will tell you whether you are trendy or, dare I say it, fuddy duddy. No, that's not fair. It will tell you whether you are a student of the art of architecture in all its forms and finishes or someone who thinks that some styles are superior to others.

No 47 is designed by TDO Architecture, a small London practice that mixes teaching (at Cambridge) with building. The house was shortlisted in a 2015 competition set up by the Royal Institute of British Architects to find the best designed house in London. It is obvious that No. 47 was expensive and the quality of the work is first class.

When it went to the Town Hall for permission, I was still Hon. Sec. Planning for the Society and opposed it. Why? Because it was due to replace one of a group of three 1960s houses designed by the talented Louis de Soissons.

Two of them are still there and No. 45 has its original and delightful doorcase. They were about as good as any houses built in Chelsea in that decade and the trio seemed to me worth keeping as part of the story of 20th-century architecture.

TDO did, however, do all the right things. They related the size of the house to its neighbours, topped it with a mansard roof, and chose bricks that relate to those of other buildings nearby. Modernity was largely confined to the pattern of the windows – which is random – and to the lavish use of bronze,



No. 47 Old Church Street: brick and bronze. (Ben Blosson)

WATCH THE WINDOWS

a material alien to Old Church Street but very unobtrusive. I said that the positioning of the windows is random but that is not true. They are related to the rooms behind them – big for big living rooms and small for smaller ones. In other words they are just as windows were before the arrival of Italian Renaissance thinking, with its symmetry and hierarchy of proportions, banished the older logic of Merrie England and dear old Tudor. Some kind of a wheel has come full circle and yet the patterning of the windows of No. 47, though restless and jazzy, is masterful – random but very carefully designed. TDO and Doug Hodgson, the firm's co-founder, deserve the plaudits they have received in *The Daily Telegraph* and *dezeen* magazine.

If you prefer symmetry cross the road, walk a bit further down the street and admire John Simpson's impeccably detailed neo-Georgian houses just before Chelsea Old Church and its hall. (He also designed the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace.)

Let me now move on to three other new Chelsea buildings, two built and one still in the pipeline. First let's stroll over to the corner of Chelsea Manor House and Alpha Place and look at the flats that have replaced the old Power House – the office and electricity substation of a 1930s power company. The new, pink brick building is called Cheyne Terrace and is a mix of 26 unaffordable and 13 affordable flats, entered (disgracefully?) by separate posh and non-posh doorways.

Here the design is largely symmetrical. The windows are both lined up and identical but the character is more 1930s than Georgian. Note particularly the way that the windows on the first and second floors are united by cement mouldings. This adds incident and helps to create the effect of a heightened



Cheyne Terrace, Chelsea Manor Street: the entrance to the affordable flats is on the right and almost invisible. (Native Land)



Henry Moore Court, Mauresa Road: a second courtyard lies beyond; the door of one of the two large houses is on the right. (Paul Davis)

WATCH THE WINDOWS



Affordable town houses in Dovehouse Street. (Paul Davis)

floor – a *piano nobile* – without the cost of higher ceilings. The building is a decent, unobtrusive piece of work and, because its walls come down to the back of the pavements, it carries on the existing street lines. Will it win friends? Probably not. Modernists will view it with contempt. Those who want continuity will see it as insufficiently Georgian.

Now turn round and walk back up to the King's Road and head for Manresa Road and the site of the lost, lamented Chelsea College of Art. Today it is occupied by another mix of dwellings for rich and poor with the latter living, amazingly, in a row of three-storey town houses in Chelsea Manor Street. Just think what they would be worth if put on the open market.

Henry Moore Court, where the rich live in two houses and 15 flats, consists of a pink brick, U-shaped *cour d'honneur* giving onto Manresa Road and, behind it, an internal courtyard finished in white render. It is an indication of our time that the inner court is modernist while the one facing the street, with its cosy pink brickwork harks back, like Cheyne Terrace, to the Thirties.

Again and in strict contrast to the minimal bronze window frames of No. 47 Old Church Street, Paul Davis & Partners (now PDP), the architects, framed all the windows with cement mouldings and linked those on the first and second floors to create the effect of a *piano nobile*. It is a neat idea, it adds stature and interest to the façades and feels comfortably traditional. Walk around the corner into Dovehouse Street and see the double height window moulding applied, again very neatly, of façades to two floors and a mansard. It will be interesting to see if this motif reappears in other developments yet to come.

Finally, let's turn to the work of housing associations which are building today's equivalent of council houses. Affinity Sutton, the association which owns Sutton Dwellings in Cale Street, and which wants to demolish most of the blocks that make up this very dense 1912 philanthropic estate, has been trying for several years to produce a scheme that would satisfy the planners at Kensington Town Hall. In November, in the face of residents campaigning fiercely to preserve and modernise the old buildings, they submitted an application. This is not the place to discuss the pros and cons of the dispute but it is worth looking at what HLM architects propose.

WATCH THE WINDOWS



Part of the proposed Sutton Dwellings estate: this south-looking, computer generated image (an attenuated tower of St Luke's is in the background) probably exaggerates, as estate agents' photographs do rooms, the breadth of the space. (HLM Architects)

This is modern stuff with the shape, size, patterning and recessing of the windows, almost by themselves determining the look of the façades. Only warm-coloured brick and grey-finished penthouses (which will not be visible from close up) complete the design. It is a calm but quite complex piece of work. Again, the choice of materials and the limiting of height to six floors promise something that will, in time, settle into Chelsea at least as well as the existing estate. And the architects must be pleased with themselves that they have contrived, in a way that breaks all classical conventions, to introduce the effect of a *piano nobile* on two of the upper floors. It shows very clearly on the flank wall of the building on the far right.

Chelsea is fortunate in its new buildings. Some awful things were allowed to happen in the 1960s. Look at the lumpish podium and tower at the corner of King's Road and Sydney Street or at the utilitarian tower behind the old Town Hall. These things no longer happen due to a combination of rising standards of architecture, more sophisticated developers, the development control powers provided by Conservation Areas and the very considerable skill of the Borough's conservation planners. I wonder what Reginald Blunt, the founder of the Chelsea Society, would have thought about it?

An Interview with Gerald Scarfe

by Sarah Farrugia

The Chelsea that Gerald Scarfe enjoys is not dissimilar to the one most of us recognise – his Chelsea features the same backstreet stroll to Peter Jones that many of us know – the well loved restaurants such as La Famiglia and the river straddled by the most graceful of the world's bridges – The Albert Bridge.

Perhaps the artists and creatives of Chelsea, such as those who still live here, may relate most to Gerald's connection with his studio, which is his sanctuary at the top of his home – light and airy and now, so embedded into his world and into Chelsea, that he is afraid if he left, the muse would leave him and his art would wither away, losing the life force that comes to Gerald via the beat of the Chelsea streets and the constant flow of the Thames. He recalls the story of Francis Bacon who, upon finding fame and fortune, left his hovel studio for an expensive new place in Kensington only to be sent mad by the clean and well ordered space and driven to return to the grunge and disarray of his first studio. Gerald's art and his studio are firmly rooted in Chelsea.

Gerald Scarfe moved here in his 20s, now over 50 years ago. This was slap bang in the 60s heyday and he was enthralled from the start. He moved across town from Hampstead and whilst he missed the famous Hampstead Heath he soon settled into the way of life here. Memories of playing snooker for money late into the night at the Chelsea Arts Club with David Hemmings support the very essence of Chelsea mythology; and then walking home unsteadily at 3 in the morning. Vintage cars paraded the King's Road; Gerald himself drove an E-Type Jag – this was given to him by the *The Daily Mail* as an enticement to join the paper. The Queen's Elm pub was a regular spot where Gerald used to enjoy a drink with Laurie Lee. The Chelsea Arts Club holds a warm place in Gerald's



Gerald Scarfe in his Chelsea studio.

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERALD SCARFE

heart and although it may have changed over the years, the space with its garden and its bar gives something special to his sense of place here.

Gerald worked as a journalist on foreign assignments, posting drawings from far-flung spots such as Saigon or Calcutta. Perhaps it conjured up the kind of magic and mystery that sums up the Chelsea way of life: exotic and straightforward in equal measure.

It is against this glamorous backdrop that the anxiety of overseas investors buying up Chelsea purely for the sake of financial gain palls. The loss of potential young Chelsea-ites no longer able to continue here is a theme for Gerald as it is for so many others who have grown up here: the idea of bohemians and liberals being unable to stay and thrive is a constant concern. Gerald is of course realistic and says "it's the same everywhere – the artists colonise un-smart places, the well-to-do want to mix with them and soon the trendy crowd is crowded out and the golden goose moves on and so it goes on across London and far beyond". Like many of us Gerald is sad that the spirit of the place has changed so much and will continue to do so with overseas investors buying up so much property, and young people unable to start out life here because prices are so high.

As we talked we wondered whether the old Chelsea charm could possibly be recreated elsewhere? But we concluded that it's impossible to create a place in any manufactured way: places like Chelsea evolve and change according to their own character. People make places and the diverse and eclectic communities who have lived here over the generations have a collective memory and an acceptance of what's good and what's not very good. Gerald sums it up, "A place like Chelsea just kind of happens – you can't create it."

As we all know Gerald has spent much of his professional life drawing ferocious cartoons of political figures and although Chelsea has been home to some of the most famous in recent history he tends to keep a distance, simply observing from afar – in fact he doesn't want to get to know them. His work is to comment on their political lives not how they behave in his company. This was a lesson learned early in his career after meeting Ted Heath at a lunch with his then editor at the *Daily Mail*. He was piqued by Heath's rudeness and his subsequent drawings of him were coloured by that meeting.

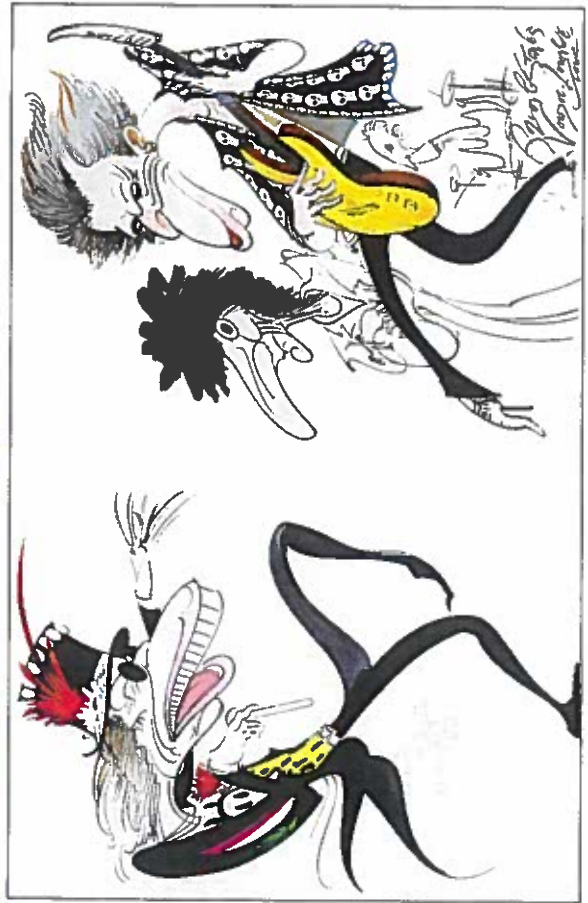
"I have been asked over the years if I look at people and see them as a rhinoceros or hippopotamus. I don't, although my wife thinks I do." He says he is a suspicious person by nature. "I often look at a politician and think, why is this bastard lying to me?" The more colourful a politician is the better it is for Gerald – he says "Boris is a walking caricature and has made it too easy – he does half my job for me." But many of his more vicious cartoons over recent years have been of Tony Blair and his role in the Iraq War.

Gerald is like so many of us who love to meet and be around people from all walks of life – he relishes those exchanges – although he does also note there are some very stuffy people living in Chelsea too. He still remembers the King’s Road when it was full of ordinary shops, butchers, bakers and so forth. “The King’s Road remains the spine of Chelsea and life throngs along even though it is full of shops selling jeans nowadays.”

Gerald has welcomed one change however – the café society that has grown up in the area. As an inveterate people watcher he enjoys sitting outside Colbert or one of the

Left: ‘A Chelsea Pensioner’, penned by Gerald Scarfe.

Below: The Rolling Stones



many street-side cafés watching the world pass by.

I asked Gerald if there were any improvements he’d like to see in the area. He felt it would be sensible to look at the side roads close to the Brompton Hospital. He’d noticed many times ambulances battling their way through the traffic, particularly in Dovehouse Street, and wondered whether that street should be limited to ambulances only. However, he notes that there could be objections to any changes in the area. “People objected to Chelsea Green being developed some years ago as it would cause issues with parking and that could have a knock-on effect with traffic and customers ... so the underground car parks that some new buildings have would seem to be a good move”.

Other than that small amendment you get the impression that Chelsea is pretty perfect for a creative way of life – plenty of characters and a burble of local life with a few hotspots and old friends thrown in.

Gerald’s professional life has included working with some musicians, with his drawings being used by two of the world’s most imaginative bands – Pink Floyd – remember *The Wall* anyone?, oh, and The Rolling Stones. The Rolling Stones Exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in 2016 could revive some of those heady times when rock royalty strolled the streets of Chelsea.

One last thing that Gerald says has changed. “You can’t park an E-type Jag outside the Curzon while you go in to see a film nowadays”.

I think we’d all agree the place is very much the worse for that.



Pink Floyd, ‘The Wall’.

The Rites of Spring – The May Queens of Whitelands

by Dave Walker

There was something in the air in the last quarter of the 19th century. In the midst of growing urbanisation, Victorian innovation in art and industry, mass advertising and the rise of a popular urban pleasure culture there was also a hankering for the customs and practices of an older country, an England of the imagination. The fever for historical pageants had not yet hit the country but in the quiet cloisters of a teacher training college in Chelsea the Principal was corresponding with one of the most famous men of the age to create an event which combined romantic ideas of old English customs with High Anglicanism. John Faunthorpe and John Ruskin instituted the first May Queen Festival at Whitelands College in 1881. Between them they glossed over the wilder pagan/medieval versions of May Day and the Celtic festival of Beltane. The tradition they started continues today.

Ruskin's idea was for one of the students to be elected May Queen by her fellows. She would receive a specially commissioned silver cross and would give out gifts (of books by Ruskin, donated by him) to selected students, designated the Queen's maidens. There would be a crowning ceremony in the College Chapel, processions and light-hearted ceremonies. The idea probably wasn't a hard sell as far as the student body was concerned. The young women of Whitelands worked hard under strict discipline and attended religious service often. Charles Kingsley, father of the novelist of the same name and Rector of Chelsea, reported an atmosphere of 'silence, simpering and stays' at the College under a Lady Superintendent who had previously been in charge of a penitentiary. The idea of a day of harmless fun was probably pretty attractive. The College had an excellent academic reputation and its students frequently went on to senior positions in the growing education sector, one of the first professions in which women could attain eminence. So the students could be allowed a day off.

Ruskin's idea was that the "likablest and the lovablest" should be the queen. If this sounds a bit mawkish to modern ears we should remember that a sentimental attachment to young women by avuncular older men was not uncommon then. The Victorians in general were given to sentimentalizing youth perhaps because they frequently saw it snatched away by sudden disease and death, the very fate of Rose la Touche, a young woman Ruskin took an interest in after the end of his marriage, who died at the age of 27.



Queen Ellen I

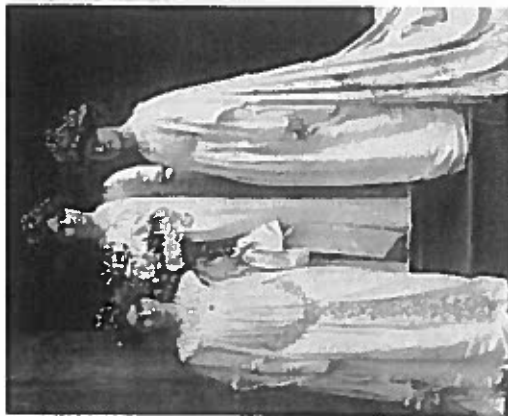
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Queen Elsie and Queen Edith 1897

Not all the arrangements worked out initially. The first queen, Ellen Osborne, happened to be in mourning for her father when she was elected so she couldn't wear a white dress as planned. For the official photo her black dress was covered by a white shawl. When he received a copy of the picture Ruskin rather ungraciously remarked that she looked closer to 38 than 20. Ellen's reaction to that is not recorded. But the first queen had unwittingly provided a human interest story. The magazine *Leisure Hour*, in 1886, tells that the students idolised Ruskin ('the Master') and says about Ellen. "The choice fell on the only girl present in black. She was mourning a dead father. The trembling maiden required some persuasion before she would consent to don the May Queen's shining attire; and her first act after doffing it was to send off the pure white lilies that had surrounded her, to lie on her father's new-made grave." By suggestion the author of this piece links the festival with virginity and death. So, a good start.

The next year a special robe had been made for the Queen. Her maidens and chamberlains all wore white dresses (the College paid for these). Her chamberlains formed a guard of honour carrying ceremonial staves. There was a maypole dancing, a hall decorated with flowers and leaves, and usually a masque along with the processions and chapel ceremony. There was an abdication ceremony for the outgoing queen and a coronation for the new one.



Queens Mildred, Florence and Evelyn
© Royal Borough of Kensington
and Chelsea.

Ruskin commissioned his friend and protégé Kate Greenaway to design a new cross and a robe for the queen but the robe was only passed on between queens for a few years. The Festival evolved so that former queens were part of the ceremony, so it made sense for each new queen to have her own dress which she could wear when she came back. The new dress became a central part of the Festival, and the pageantry attracted attention.

Local dignitaries and celebrities would attend the Festival. Oscar Wilde and his wife Constance were guests in 1888 to see Queen Annie I crowned. Constance attended on three other occasions and one of their sons presented a bouquet to Queen Emma in 1894. Oddly, though Ruskin visited the College on many occasions he never attended the Festival. Perhaps he preferred to hang onto an idealised version.

The Festival had a momentum of its own now. In fact it was after Ruskin's death in 1900, in the first decade of the 20th century, that the ceremonies and performances were at their most elaborate and were taken most seriously by the

Queen Mildred and her entourage. © Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.



Assembled queens at the Festival in 1909. © Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

participants. In 1906 there were three queens present, Queen Florence and her predecessors. Queen Evelyn and Queen Mildred can be seen together in a group photograph which captures the sense of pagan ritual combined with religious ceremony. And perhaps a touch of Hammer film glamour.

The presence of three queens inspired the College. In the *Whitelminds Annual* that year an anonymous author wrote: "May Day has come and gone, that brightest happiest day of all the glad new year. It heralded in the Spring, the time of flowers, of the singing of birds, of a renewal of fresh life and hope to everything on this fair earth. It brought us Florence, a Queen with a name of happy meaning, and a charm of gentle grace - a real queen of hearts."

"The procession round the old world garden.... Cloistered and secluded, the white-robed maidens chanting in slow and stately array under the fresh budding lime trees, the warm sunlight dappling all their fairness, it seemed a picture of far off medieval days, when the sun went slowly and there was time and will and opportunity to rejoice in youth and joy and hope, and in sunshine and flowers."

After Queen Evelyn's abdication speech, while Queen Florence was "engaged upon State affairs", Queen Mildred's followers presented a masque in her honour in which the maidens took the parts of trees and flowers. Primrose, Laurel, Bluebell, Ivy, Violet, Moss, Oak, Daffodil, Woodbine, Hawthorne and Rose all

THE RITES OF SPRING

paid tribute in prose, verse and song. The whole masque is transcribed in the *Annual*. Reading the account from a 21st-century perspective the impression I get is of complete earnestness and certainty. Given that the participants were completely serious, it's not stretching credulity to allow all the pagan and magical overtones to creep in and make the event into a grand ritual. This was something the students would carry with them for the rest of their lives.

A photograph of the assembled queens at the 1909 festival shows how the Festival had formed a kind of fellowship of the queens. Here is a group of twelve women, most of them in their queen's robes (although the ones who had shared the Greenaway dress had to improvise), at the centre the new Queen Agnes II with Ellen I, now called the Mother Queen, at her shoulder. (Behind them is a painting of the 1902 procession.) This was a year after the Chelsea Historical Pageant which had been held near the College in the grounds of the Royal Hospital. The Pageant had been another example of the desire to create events which celebrated history and inhabit the past. A group of performers from the Pageant who had dressed as nuns for one of its episodes returned to take part in this Anglican ceremony.

A final photograph from the pre-war period also exemplifies the seriousness with which the Festival was taken. It shows Queen Elsie III kneeling before her successor Queen Alice in a studio with a mock medieval backdrop.

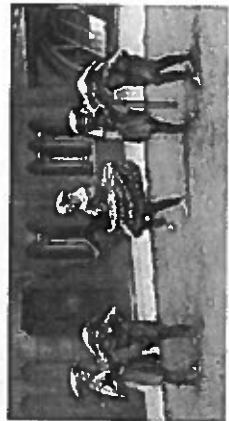
The zeitgeist was changing as World War 1 approached. It wasn't quite time to put the costumes back in the dressing up box but the queens and their attendants were turning on the one hand towards charitable work and on the other to just fooling around. Perhaps the spell had been broken. One photograph from the revels of 1915 (see below) demonstrates this, as well as being deliberately amusing in itself.

© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

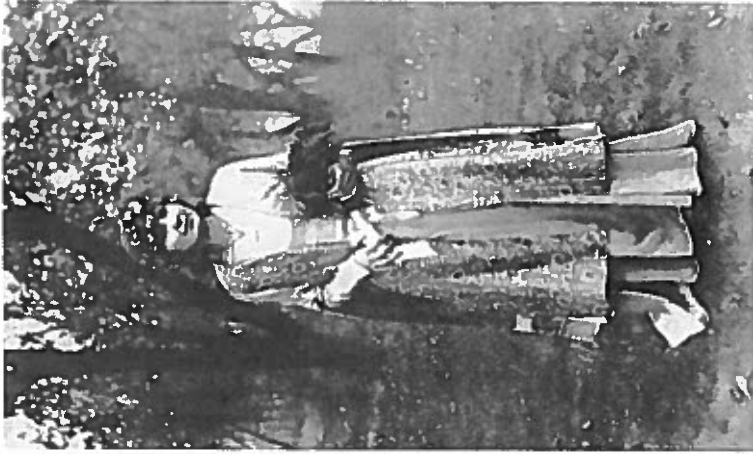


Left: Queen Elsie III kneeling before her successor Alice, at the Festival just before WW1

Below: The revels of 1915.



THE RITES OF SPRING



Queen Joan in 1931.

© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Although the students remained behind the College walls they were affected by the War not least when a Zeppelin raid caused some damage to one of the College buildings.

By 1930 the College had become too large for the King's Road premises and moved to a specially designed building in Putney. Rather ironically, the College buildings were purchased by Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. The quadrangle which had formed a background for the innocent and picturesque May Queen festivities can now be seen in archive photos of Mosley and his strutting henchmen. The building was renamed Black House with a surely unconscious symbolism – from white robes to black shirts.

The post war queens had adopted more modern dresses but at the new building which was set in larger, more rural grounds, Queen Joan of 1931, adopted the long robes of her Victorian and Edwardian predecessors.

THE RITES OF SPRING

In time the College moved on from Putney and became part of Roehampton University. Oddly its current home is a partly 18th-century building called Manresa House, a pleasing coincidence for Chelsea residents (particularly librarians). The May Queen Festival goes on, now called the May Monarch Festival. Since 1986 there have been May Kings as well. The first was King Gary.



Old May Queen dresses stored in the archive wardrobe at Whitelands College.
© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

I attended the 2015 Festival where the first Muslim May Monarch King Qusai was crowned by the Bishop and spoke passionately about his chosen charity, War Child.

Within the College there is an archive room containing scrapbooks and records. They also have many of the May Queen dresses. Those which belong to the living queens hang up in protective bags, but those of the dead queens sit in archive boxes wrapped in tissue, never to be worn again. Ruskin and Faunthorpe's odd notion has lasted well over a hundred years and shows no sign of ending.

At the Local Studies collection in Kensington Library I have collected copies of photographs from the Whitelands College archives along with College Annuals and magazine articles related to the May Queen Festival assembled by my predecessors. Thanks to Gilly King, Archivist at Whitelands College for her help over the years.

Mrs Miniver of Wellington Square, Chelsea

By Sarah Farrugia and Melanie Backe-Hansen

The fictional stories of Mrs Miniver, an 'ordinary' British woman, are claimed to have had a direct impact on Americans entering the Second World War. Winston Churchill said that "Mrs. Miniver had done more for the Allies than a flotilla of battleships". However, when the stories of Mrs Miniver by Jan Struther first appeared in *The Times* in 1937 they simply aspired to create light diversion between the notices of society events and court announcements. Mrs Miniver not only developed into a literary weapon for the Allies, but had a life-changing impact on the author, Jan Struther of Wellington Square, Chelsea.

In 1937, Peter Fleming (brother of Ian) at *The Times* asked writer and friend, Joyce Maxtone Graham (pen name Jan Struther), to write something with 'a

Jan Struther (Joyce Austruther, later Placzek)
© Fritz Reichl/National Portrait Gallery



MRS MINIVER OF WELLINGTON SQUARE

light and feminine touch' suggesting a story about 'an ordinary sort of woman, who leads an ordinary sort of life'. The result was *Mrs Miniver*, with the first story, *Mrs Miniver Comes Home*, appearing on 6 October 1937. Regular short stories soon became a hit with the readers. Mrs Miniver lived in a garden square in Chelsea and the accounts of her life described the daily events of a happily married woman with three children living a well-heeled Chelsea existence. Although Chelsea was far less salubrious during the 1920s and 30s, the Minivers were an upper middle class family, who holidayed in Scotland, had servants, and visited their country house 'Starlings' on the weekend. Mrs Miniver helps us look through the curtains into the lives of Chelsea in the 1930s.

The lifestyle was both relaxed and entertaining, but the author created a character that beautifully avoided the smugness that too often accompanies such a way of life. She is a wonderful bundle of inconsistencies, all set in Chelsea. Her home is the perfect backdrop for the variety of adventures she undertakes, the visit to Oxford Street for Christmas shopping, the helping out at charities, and entertaining dull friends for the sake of appearances.

The stories were first attributed to 'a correspondent', but soon the name 'Jan Struther' appeared – taken from Joyce's maiden name 'J. Anstruther' – and for the next two years the adventures and daily life of Mrs Miniver featured regularly in the *Court Page*. This was the beginning of Jan Struther's life-long relationship as another woman.

Joyce Anstruther was born in 1901, the daughter of Henry Torrens Anstruther, MP for St. Andrews, and the Hon. Eva Isabella Henrietta Hanbury-Tracy, both of whom descended from aristocratic families. Joyce's mother was created Dame Commander, Order of the British Empire (DBE) in 1918 for her work providing books to the troops during the First World War (and was nicknamed 'the dame' by the family). Joyce married Anthony Maxtone Graham in July 1923, later 16th of Coltoquhey in 1940, inheriting an estate in Scotland, but when Anthony and Joyce married he was a Lloyds broker and their first home was a small Georgian house in Walpole Street, Chelsea. Having previously lived in Mayfair, it was socially a step down, but it suited Joyce, who "loved the vibrancy of Chelsea: the street musicians on the King's Road, and the cheap restaurants...". Despite her upbringing, including attending Miss Wolff's in South Audley Street with Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, (where she dipped the future Queen Mother's pigtails into an ink pot), Joyce revelled in the creative atmosphere of Chelsea during the 1920s and '30s.

In that period, Chelsea was a very popular area for artists, as well as writers, actors, and musicians. From the 19th century Chelsea had established a reputation for its artistic residents (The Chelsea Arts Club was established in 1891) and by the 1920s it was described as retaining 'its late-Victorian reputation

MRS MINIVER OF WELLINGTON SQUARE



Wellington Square.

as a bohemia of writers, theatrical people and especially painters... 'Chelsea had been described as 'literally infested with artists'. The history of the Maxtone Graham's home at No.16 Wellington Square (*see page 66*) clearly illustrates this density of artistic residents in Chelsea in the early 20th century.

However, Chelsea was not without its challenges during this period, with growing conflict between building developers and residents. The redevelopment of land had begun in the late 19th century, but by the inter-war period there was greater demand for new houses. However, at the same time, the value of land was increasing, which had a direct impact on the demolition of houses for redevelopment and rebuilding. This approach provoked growing opposition to large-scale demolition of old houses simply for the sake of maximising profits and the potential detriment to the area. Significantly, The Chelsea Society was founded at this time, in 1927, to 'protect and enhance the amenities of Chelsea'.

Part of the reason for Jan Struther's struggle to separate from her fictional character, Mrs Miniver, was the many similarities to the Maxtone Graham family. Anthony and Jan purchased No.16 Wellington Square in 1930 and regularly took trips abroad, while also having weekends away in Sussex and

Mrs Miniver impacted America's involvement in the war, with Franklin D. Roosevelt believed to have said it 'considerably hastened America's entry into the war'.

At the same time as the book's release, not only was the world about to change through the effects of war, but Jan Struther's own life was to be transformed. Her lover, Dolf, was only in England temporarily and by May 1940 he was on a ship to America. However, the timing with the US release of *Mrs Miniver* was fortuitous, and the combination of a promotional tour for the book, along with an added request from the Ministry of Information to undertake a lecture tour as a form of propaganda for Britain, meant Jan Struther was soon to follow Dolf to America. Anthony also convinced her to take their two youngest children for safety, so only a few weeks after Dolf, Jan was on her way to New York.

However, while Britain was suffering on all sides for the war effort, Jan had her own war effort. The American public were convinced Jan Struther was Mrs Miniver and it almost became her responsibility as a representative of all that was good about Britain, and in essence what Britain was fighting for, that she maintain the façade of a faithful happy wife whose husband was fighting for King and Country. Meanwhile, the real woman, Jan Struther, was far removed from this life and while undertaking an exhausting schedule of talks and media appearances across America, she continued her secret relationship with Dolf.

America's affection for Mrs Miniver escalated with the release of the film starring Greer Garson in June 1942. Although the story had been completely altered by the time of the release, the film, which won five Oscars, further promoted the book and its author. Jan Struther continued in the States throughout the duration of the war, giving talks about Mrs Miniver and regular radio appearances, and it was only in May 1945 that she and her two younger children returned to a war-weary Britain.

Jan and her husband Anthony attempted to rebuild their marriage after years of separation, and they returned to No.16 Wellington Square in 1945. It was soon evident that it was not possible to recapture what they once had and they separated in 1946. Jan married Dolf on 1 March 1948, but only a few years later she was diagnosed with cancer and soon afterwards a brain tumour. Jan Struther, by then Joyce Placzek, died at the age of 52 on 20 July 1953.

In her short life, Jan Struther invented a fictional woman who confronted daily life delicately, who asked slightly awkward questions and who pricked a number of pompous balloons. With her delightful turn of phrase and her delicate choice of words that stick like pins, she created a character during a period of extraordinary social change, who gives the reader a gentle nudge to reflect on Chelsea, society, and the rest of the world.

spending the summer in a large house in Perthshire in Scotland, much like the fictional Miniver family. Mrs Miniver also had three children heavily inspired by Joyce's own children: James, Janet, and Robert.

However, when Jan Struther was writing the Mrs Miniver stories in the late 1930s her circumstances were not like the worry-free world of Mrs Miniver. Due to reduced circumstances, the Maxtone Grahams had to move from Wellington Square in 1936, and at the same time her marriage was far from happy. Jan's talent for writing, in what the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* called a 'lightly comic tone [while also] beautifully judged, timelessly observant, and full of quiet realism' brought about a world that perhaps most Londoners, including Jan Struther, longed for, especially at a time of unease with the threat of war looming.

It has been said that Mrs Miniver was Jan Struther's attempt to capture a life that no longer existed, perhaps a little rose-tinted, but a way of recapturing what she once had. Her granddaughter, Ysenda Maxtone Graham, states in her book *The Real Mrs Miniver*, that she was 're-creating a lost paradise' as a way of coping with her present circumstances, but also as a way of recognising that she didn't want that anymore and it was 'a cage to which she was ready to say good riddance'. While the life of Mrs Miniver was perfectly laid out like an afternoon tea – Jan Struther's was not. She was poised to turn over the whole tray and let all the pretty things fall where they may and let the devil take them. It was at this time that Jan Struther fell in love with a Jewish refugee from Vienna, Adolf Placzek, nicknamed Dolf, with whom she started a love affair that would continue until they were able to marry years later.

While Jan Struther was writing *Mrs Miniver* in the late 1930s war clouds were once again gathering over Europe. The stories capture the experience of the coming war through the eyes of a mother and wife in Chelsea and the horror of mundanely organising for what was to become a terrifying period of history, where nothing would ever be the same. Her visit with the children to collect gas masks from Chelsea Town Hall is a snippet of social history that cannot fail to catch a local's breath. She gives us an insight into the Chelsea psyche at a time of social upheaval and cultural change. The stories continued in *The Times* until the autumn of 1939, and in October that year, just a month after the outbreak of the Second World War, the stories were collected together and published as a book, entitled simply *Mrs Miniver*.

Mrs Miniver, published in the United States in July 1940, was an instant success, becoming number one in the bestsellers list by September. The American people fell in love with the idea of Mrs Miniver and the stories of this 'ordinary British family affected by the war'. This sense of fighting for a nation of families like the Minivers had a powerful effect and it has been said the propaganda value of

The history of 16 Wellington Square

Jan Struther

by Melanie Backe-Hansen

Today, we think of Wellington Square, just off the King's Road, as a highly desirable address in the heart of exclusive Chelsea, but when Anthony Maxtone Graham and his wife Joyce (Jan Struther) moved in, Chelsea was still a little rough around the edges and was known more for its artists and creative communities than for its designer shops and Sloane Rangers.

No.16 Wellington Square, situated in the south-east corner of the square, was one of the earliest houses completed and was recorded in the 1851 census as the home of young couple, Samuel Blencowe, a government clerk, and his wife, Mary and their one-year-old daughter. At the rear is a mews house, along Woodfall Street (originally Little Smith Street), which became a part of No.16, and for a time was known as The Studio. Throughout the mid 19th century the house was occupied by a mixture of residents, including a solicitor's clerk and a surveyor, but by the 1880s it had become a lodging house, along with a number of homes in Wellington Square, including neighbouring Nos.15 and 17.

The 1901 census reveals No.16 had become the home of Professor of Music and organist, Ernest William Trafford-Taunton, and his wife, author Emily Winifrede. The Trafford-Taunton family also rented rooms to landscape artist, Robert Scott-Temple and his wife Maggie. In 1904, No.16 was acquired by actor, Ernest Thesiger, the son of Sir Edward Peirson [sic] Thesiger, a clerk in the House of Lords. His grandfather, Frederick Thesiger, first Baron Chelmsford, had been Lord Chancellor in 1858-59 and again in 1866-68. Ernest



16 Wellington Square

16 WELLINGTON SQUARE

Thesiger worked with a number of celebrated playwrights, including George Bernard Shaw, but he is most often remembered for his role in the film *The Bride of Frankenstein* in 1935. He worked with many famous names, including John Gielgud, Alec Guinness, and Katharine Hepburn.

In 1909, No. 16 was the home of artist and illustrator, John Jackson Cameron, while Ernest Frederic Graham Thesiger was in the 'studio'. Within weeks of the declaration of war in 1914, Cameron enlisted and quickly climbed the ranks, becoming a Commanding Officer in September 1917. He was awarded the Military Cross in January 1918 and later that month was promoted to acting Lieutenant-Colonel and awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO). After the war, Cameron had a successful career as an artist and illustrator, and he continued at No.16 Wellington Square until it was purchased by Anthony Maxtone Graham in 1930.

During the 1920s, alongside Cameron, another resident was caricaturist and artist, Sir Leslie Ward, the celebrated illustrator of over 1300 portraits published in *Vanity Fair* under the pseudonym 'Spy'. In 1918, the same year he was knighted, he moved into the house with his wife, society hostess Judith Mary Topham-Watney, and their daughter, Sylvia. He lived in the house for only a few years before he died in May 1922. Later that year his daughter married Canadian actor, Elystan Owen Evan-Thomas, who then moved into the house. In 1916, Evan-Thomas appeared in *Lady Windermere's Fan* and from that time continued to work on stage and film in both Hollywood and England.

Shortly before the house was acquired by the Maxtone Grahams, No.16 was the home of Sir Michael William Selby Bruce, 11th Baronet. He served with distinction during the First World War, while also becoming a noted writer and traveller, predominately in Africa and South America.

After the Maxtone Grahams purchased the house they set about renovating and updating it to create a new family house, which became the fictional home for the stories of Mrs Miniver and her family in Chelsea.

Chelsea in the war

by Melanie Backe-Hansen

Today, nearly 77 years since the start of the Second World War, it is difficult to fully comprehend the significance of the war on life in London. We see the pictures, we may read the books, but we can't really understand what it was like to have the daily threat of bombs falling, or the constant news of death and tragedy from all fields of war. With its location by the river near Westminster, along with nearby Lots Road and Battersea power stations, Chelsea suffered terribly during the war.

* The population of Chelsea

1911 - 66,000

1931 - 59,000

1942 - 27,000 (and during the worst of the air-raids it was estimated at

only 16,000)

2011 - 28,500

* Some of the first areas in Chelsea hit by bombs were shelters where many were killed. These included Cadogan shelter, under a block of flats in Beaufort Street; Manor Buildings shelter in Flood Street; and a shelter under The Church of the Holy Redeemer in Upper Cheyne Row.

* The worst night of bombing, which came to be known as 'the Wednesday', was 16 April 1941, when 450 German bombers attacked London for 8 hours. Bombs and incendiaries fell across Chelsea, including Chelsea Square, Cale Street, the Royal Hospital infirmary, Cheyne Walk, and the most devastating was a direct hit of the historic Chelsea Old Church, which was almost completely destroyed.

* There were many other incidents of bombing in Chelsea, but some major events included:

12 November 1940 - Sloane Square tube station completely destroyed

3 January 1944 - Royal Hospital Chelsea hit by V2

23 February 1944 - Guinness Trust buildings (on the corner of Edith Grove and King's Road) hit, killing 76 people

* Between the first bomb hitting Chelsea on 27 August 1940 through to 3 January 1945:

Chelsea was hit by 321 missiles plus thousands of incendiary bombs

534 people killed - 457 civilians and 77 military personnel

1,565,842 people injured

The Poet Laureate's Love of Christ Church

by Leonard Holdsworth

It is eye-opening what combing through long-forgotten archives of Christ Church can reveal!

John Betjeman, Britain's Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death in 1984, was very fond of the church (his own words) as well as all things Victorian, and had a fascinating correspondence with Francois Piachaud, vicar of Christ Church for more than thirty years. Betjeman, of course, ended his life in Radnor Walk, a stone's throw from the church.

Asked to make suggestions for improving the church building, he replied as follows:

'Dear Vicar

I was very honoured to be asked about Christ Church, of which I am fond, having worshipped there and whose interior is surprisingly more dignified and spacious than you would judge from the exterior.

I was glad to learn Mr Michael Tapper was your architect. I am sure you can leave structural and decorative matter in his hands. Indeed on no account go to one of those church decorators, thinking you will be able to dispense with the services of an architect. These firms charge you through the nose and you pay far more to them than you would pay in architect's fee and the work will not be so well done.

To put first things first, if as you and Sir Albert [probably Sir Alfred Napier - older parishioners would know] mentioned the roof is in want of repair. That must be done before anything else. It is a maddening thing to have to do as nothing shews for the money, but if you do not do it, all you spend on decoration will have been wasted.

THE EXTERIOR

The yellow stock brick of which the church is built would look far better cleaned than whitewashed. Whitewashed, the church would look like a barn and the stone dressing would be awkward. With the brick back to its original yellow, the stonework (which should be washed too) would harmonise.

THE POET LAUREATE'S LOVE OF CHRIST CHURCH

THE INTERIOR

I like the present colour scheme and do not think it could be improved upon. The prevailing off-white with the red bases to the pillars and the red altar hangings look light and dignified. The stone columns in the sanctuary round the east window and the west end on the floor level could all be cleaned.

I like the plain east wall and the slightly darker shade of it below the level of the east windows, and think this would not be improved by hangings. It is possible that an artist of genius might be able to design a decorative scheme for the whole east wall, but I think even the greatest genius would be hard put to it to make his paintings fit in with the existing east windows. So I should leave well alone and just clean all the interior stonework and painting.

John Betjeman at home, August 1983.

© Stephen Hyde/National Portrait Gallery.



THE POET LAUREATE'S LOVE OF CHRIST CHURCH

I like the panel painting in the sanctuary galleries but I fear that if any painting were done along the panels of the gallery in the nave this would take people's eyes from the East End to which their attention should be directed. The East End is of rather fine proportions and it would be a pity to do this.

As to the side chapel on the north and the really splendid 18th-century organ case at the end of the south aisle – I think both of these are unnecessarily obscured by the galleries and it would be a good idea to take away the galleries one bay westward on each side.

This would definitely turn the N side chapel into a chapel, instead of a sort of bedstead hidden in a corner and the south side would reveal more fully that organ case. The gallery stairs on that side would look better at the west end of the S aisle where they would mask the too prominent switches.

An alternative to this scheme would be to get Mr Tapper to design a large open screen across the front of the chancel arch with a gallery for the choir above it. This would be a beautiful thing which would partly obscure the rather dull stained glass in the east window and would also enable the chancel to be cleared of its present stall and provide a spacious sanctuary. But this may be too ambitious. Such a screen would of course be related to the lines of the galleries.

I do not think the church would be improved by the total removal of the galleries. It was designed for them and it would look as though something were missing without them.

Yours sincerely,
John Betjeman.

Pretty radical stuff from Britain's most loved 20th-century poet, but what a lot of energy, thought and time he spent on Christ Church. Of course, not many of Betjeman's recommendations were implemented (indeed very few of them!), but thanks to generous local benefactors and much increased income from sources like the Hall of Remembrance, the church has never looked better, or sounded better with its magnificent new organ.

It is with great sadness that the Council reports the death of Leonard Holdsworth, while this Annual Report was going to press. He was a member of the Council for 20 years: as such he never held back in expressing his heartfelt views about Chelsea. His contribution to the Society, not just through his membership of the Council, but his unflinching support of our activities and as a tireless fundraiser, will be long remembered.



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13th - 26th June 2016
11am - 7pm - daily

Duke of York Square,
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From Hovel to Penthouse

by Gillian Best

The Chelsea Society's founder, Reginald Blunt, determined that its role was to protect the interests of all who live and work here and to preserve and enhance the unique character of Chelsea. To put one aspect of this into perspective and see its relevance today, the Society's Chairman, Damian Greenish, felt that the Society should commission a report about the history of social housing in the Borough.

Covering nearly two hundred years the account provides an engrossing journey, starting just after the Industrial Revolution with the huge migration of population from country to town to work in new and burgeoning industries. With the influx of these workers and their families - the population of Chelsea grew from 11,604 in 1801 to 74,000 a hundred years later - came an urgent need for housing to relieve the slums that were inevitably created.

Charles Dickens wrote and campaigned extensively about the hideous living conditions. As a junior reporter he described London slums, "wretched houses with broken windows patched with rags and paper...filth everywhere...a gutter before the houses and a drain behind....men and women lounging...slops emptying from the windows."

He was married at St Luke's in Chelsea, but his knowledge of Chelsea was limited to when he was courting his wife and lived for three months in Selwood Terrace just off the King's Road and a few hundred metres away from the notorious Chelsea Common slum now occupied by the up-market Brompton Cross. Ironically, in 2015 two former council flats above the Stella McCartney boutique went on the market for a million pounds each!

Residents in Camera Place.
© Royal Borough of
Kensington and Chelsea.



In those early days he was not alone in publicising the problem. *The Chelsea Pick and Shovel* - the *Private Eye* of its day - took politicians and authorities to task with information such as: "The estimate of eight to a house in Chelsea is enormously below the number, five to six to a room is no uncommon figure and it is doubtful if any of the *bona fide* working class ever have less than three to a room



**THE CHELSEA
PICK AND SHOVEL.**

© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

... large numbers of families live in one room. "The campaign initially fell on deaf ears. Government took a *laissez faire* attitude and it took until after the First World War for them to take responsibility for provision of working class housing.

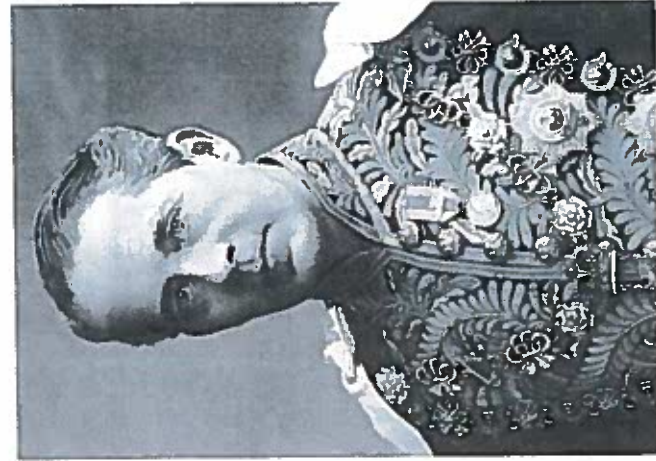
Fortunately before that, over a 45-year span between 1870 and 1915, came partial solution in Chelsea by four enlightened philanthropists – George Peabody, Sir Edward Guinness, William Sutton and Samuel Lewis. Through their trusts they all built estates for working people and their families in Chelsea which are still part of the Chelsea we know today. The full report on the Chelsea Society website gives a profile and fuller account of these very worthy men and their



Philanthropists from left to right: George Peabody, Sir Edwin Guinness, William Sutton, Samuel Lewis. (Pictures courtesy of The Peabody Trust, The Guinness Partnership, Affinity Sutton and Southern Housing Group)

organisations together with interviews from some current residents. Closer to home, Chelsea produced its own native philanthropist, the 5th Earl Cadogan, who not only gifted significant land for the good of the local community, like the Chelsea Town Hall, Fire Station, Holy Trinity church and various schools and hospitals, but also sold land at well below market rate for artisan dwellings in Beaufort Street – the Sir Thomas More Estate, and land in Marlborough Road which became Guinness Court. Like the estates of the philanthropists, they also continue to thrive as part of Chelsea's current housing stock.

The full Chelsea Society report traces the evolution of political responsibility

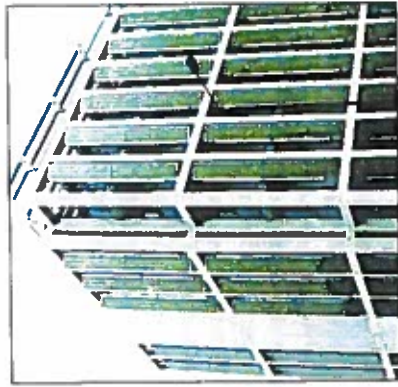


The 5th Earl Cadogan
© Cadogan Estate

The main report contains a fuller account of Council plans and policy with interviews with a local councillor, Tim Coleridge and the director of Housing, Laura Johnson, who firmly champions social housing in the Borough.

As Laura Johnson said: "The flats are absolutely fantastic. The top floor with two four-bedroom flats is set back, with glass all the way round, and a balcony, and the rent is less than £170 per week for a fantastic penthouse on King's Road. It's bloody brilliant."

In this brief journey we have covered the progression from the stum hovels created by the Industrial Revolution and have arrived at the penthouse of the title of this article in Kingsgate House on the King's Road. This opened in 2014 and is one of the very few purpose-built, state-of-the-art new builds in the Borough.
(Photo: Gillian Best)



This was still the situation not many years before I produced my first *Chelsea Report* for the year 1999. I can remember the editor at the time, the late Tom Pocock, laboriously cutting up galleys and pasting them up on blank pages, trying to make each article complete within the space he had allocated.

Nowadays, few items are printed by letterpress. Indeed, the only letterpress printer I have been into in the last twenty years was a tiny one in the back streets of King's Cross, which partly survived on a good number of orders from Buckingham Palace for invitations, menus etc, which the Palace preferred because they had the 'feel' of letterpress. Most printing is now done by lithography which leaves no indentation on the paper.

The introduction of computers brought many changes in the production of this *Report*. We do not now send typed or hand-written copy to the printer to begin the process. Most authors now begin the production themselves by typing their contribution on a computer and saving it onto a disc or flash drive (memory stick) or attaching it to an email. This is then sent to the editor, who forwards it to the producer of the *Report*, who then incorporates it into a page make-up system, choosing size and font etc. If it is necessary to change the size of the type, then a click of the mouse is sufficient – previously a compositor would have had to start again. This year's *Report* includes a new *serif* font called Effra, to match that of our publicity material, as well as the usual Book Antiqua.

Illustrations are sent in as files from cameras or archives. They are scanned by the producer, and sized to fit into the available space. The articles and illustrations are arranged on page grids within a computer programme. First proofs are produced as complete pages, with illustrations. Amendments are made and a further proof produced. None of this work now involves galleys or pasting up. Once ready to go, the producer puts the whole lot on a flash drive and gives it to the printer who makes plates for the printing machine.

Your *Report* includes a good many advertisements. These are supplied direct to the Society and forwarded to the producer – all by email. Until recently the *Report* was stitched in the spine, but it became too thick to do that. It is now 'perfect bound' which has the advantage of providing a flat spine, sufficiently wide to take a title. Some images or features are held by the printer on computer and can be used the following year if there are no alterations. This applies to the Accounts and the List of Members, after amendments.

Some organisations now publish their publications online, so that no paper or printing is necessary. This saves money of course, not to mention the postage costs, but I still think that people generally prefer an actual document, and future members and researchers would not be pleased that the computer files had long disappeared!

The Making of the Chelsea Annual Report

by John Richardson.

Reginald Blunt issued the first *Annual Report* of the Chelsea Society for the year 1927. Since then remarkable changes in technology in the printing industry and in the production of the *Report* have occurred. In his day, almost everything was printed by letterpress: that is, from moveable lead type. It was a laborious process. Based on copy supplied in manuscript or typewritten, a compositor retrieved, letter by letter, from large compartmentalised drawers, single pieces of type in the chosen type face and size and collected them in lines and paragraphs. A composing room had many of these drawers, for different fonts and sizes, and for italics and bold as well. A good compositor knew at a glance in which compartment each letter was held and recognised them in their back-to-front form. A small printer that produced items such as the *Report* would have relied very heavily on such compositors. Larger companies might have had a Linotype machine – a noisy and very much larger form of typewriter that delivered complete lines: these were mainly used in newspaper setting rooms.

Proofs were made in galley form and these were sent out to the client and came back with corrections, quite often marked up badly so that the compositor would have to decipher the handwriting and the instructions. At the Chelsea Society, someone would have cut and pasted up these galleys to the format of the *Report* and hope each article fitted.

As to illustrations, a black and white photograph was converted to a half-tone block – a thin piece of metal containing the image, mounted on a wooden block. The printing image was essentially a close assembly of dots, etched into the metal through a half-tone screen. Printing even today is based on that process – it looks like a continuous image when printed but studied closely you will find that it is broken into tiny dots, from large to small. These create an optical illusion of continuity. In the case of colour illustrations – very expensive in those days – colour was produced from four blocks, printed in sequence in magenta, cyan, yellow and black inks to create a reasonably accurate version of the original colour picture. Colour printing of pictures, and indeed of monotone photographs, could only be done satisfactorily by letterpress if a glossy art paper was used, while the text would be printed on a much cheaper and rougher surface. Thus, the illustrations would be printed on sections of art paper, but they were not necessarily adjacent to the articles to which they related.

Nesta Macdonald

On the 16 January 2015 a small group gathered at the West London Crematorium in Kensal Green Cemetery for the funeral of Nesta Macdonald. Afterwards we were given a splendid tea at the nearby Alan Morkill Care Home where Nesta had spent the last 5 years of her life. It was good to recall that Kensal Green was once a detached part of the Parish of Chelsea, for it was in Chelsea that Nesta spent most of her life and it was where she was, in her heyday, very well known if not somewhat notorious.

Nesta had many interests, especially ballet and cats but she was always concerned with the future of Chelsea, including local services such as the Post Office. She was a formidable campaigner and had two principal 'weapons', her typewriter and her telephone. To receive her long letters was one thing but her frequent and lengthy telephone conversations could be very trying. Many is the time when I would be busy at work that I would say to my secretary 'if Nesta rings, I am out'. But at heart, Nesta was a kind and generous person.



NESTA MACDONALD

She was well read and an accomplished writer. In 1975 she published *Dirigible Observed*, by critics in England and the United States 1911-1929. It remains an essential book of reference for all who are interested in the Ballets Russes. She also worked for many years on a biography of the dancer Isadora Duncan but Nesta was such a perfectionist and insisting that things be done her way and no one else's, that her publishers lost all patience and the book was never published. Before moving out of her flat in the Fulham Road, she donated all her papers to various national archives and to the local library.

In 1974 plans were afoot for a major re-development of the Pheasantry in the King's Road. Its associations with the ballet dancer Princess Seraphine Astafieva, who had run a Russian Dancing Academy there from 1916-20, made its future a matter of consuming interest to Nesta. As various plans were produced, it was her *cause célèbre* for a decade. The fact that the building had for many years been the business premises of a family firm of interior decorators called Joubert made it even more interesting for Nesta for she had dealt in antiques herself in former years. She published a small booklet on the history of the building entitled *The History of the Pheasantry Chelsea 1766-1977*, sub-titled *A la recherche du Faïsan perdu*. It was a meticulously researched, elegantly written masterpiece which, by drawing attention to the history of this intriguing building, influenced all subsequent considerations as to its future.

Nesta was born in London on 6 June 1914 as Ernestine Rosse. After school she trained at the Chelsea College of Physical Education to become a teacher of gymnastics. As a young lady she was stunningly attractive and had great style. She married Donald Macdonald, a doctor, in 1940 but they were divorced some 8 years later. There were no children. It was in the 1950s that Nesta took up photography, dabbled in antiques and started writing, living all the while in Chelsea. She joined The Chelsea Society in 1972 and her membership did not lapse until 2008. Until her early nineties she was a loyal and active member of the Society. Her last years at Alan Morkill House were blissfully happy and content, somewhat aided by the onset of Alzheimer's disease. She died on 27 December 2014, aged 100.

David Le Lay

Victoria de Luria Press

No.4 is one of the finest and the least altered of the houses on Chelsea's justly famous Cheyne Walk. It is one of the larger houses erected by Sir Hans Sloane in 1717 on the site of the Tudor Great Garden of Henry VIII's Manor House and it includes a magnificent staircase connecting the two principal floors whose walls and ceiling are completely painted in the Italian manner, similar to the King's Staircase at Hampton Court. The work has been attributed to Sir James Thornhill who painted the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Painted Hall at Greenwich. The novelist George Eliot lived in the house for a brief period in 1880. It was fortunate for this extremely important house that in 1979 it became the home of Victoria de Luria Press who over the ensuing years, until her death on 7 April this year, lovingly preserved its original character and filled it with fine antique furniture, carpets, paintings and numerous decorative objects and fittings of the period in which the house was constructed. What was true for the

Victoria de Luria Press



VICTORIA PRESS

house also applied to its large rear garden where she created a formal garden complete with box parterre. In the smaller front garden is a splendid display of topiary.

Victoria was born in Cleveland in 1927 and studied fashion design, which she practised successfully in New York. She married Sydney Press, a South African tycoon and moved with him to South Africa where she designed several beautiful homes, including a strikingly modern, contemporary house in a dramatic location in the South African landscape. But Victoria considered South Africa a 'cultural desert' and longed to live in Europe, which is what brought her and Sydney to London, first to Belgravia and then to Chelsea and Cheyne Walk.

Victoria became well known in Chelsea and amongst the wider 'artistic' community of London. She joined The Chelsea Society in 1985, shortly after divorcing Sydney Press and she helped the Society when in 1987 it organized a charity auction in aid of Chelsea Physic Garden that raised £31,000. She loved to give dinner parties at Cheyne Walk, usually for at least a dozen people, though she often forgot exactly whom she had invited. She was a generous host and was inevitably the centre of attention. She had a lively and questioning mind and held forthright views on most subjects which she was never shy to express, but this was always done with great humour and wit. Her enthusiasm and busy social schedule was in no way diminished when in later years she became physically frail.

At Christmas 2014, which was to be Victoria's last, no. 4 Cheyne Walk was filled with almost all of her enormous family – she had 7 children and numerous grandchildren. Soon afterwards Victoria was told that she had cancer and, in her pragmatic way, she made arrangements to travel to Venice where she had always said she wished to die. She finally 'let go' on 7 April in the Palazzo Giustinian Persico on the Grand Canal, the *pinnacolo* of which she had bought several years before and where she resided regularly. She loved Venice almost as much as she loved Chelsea.

On 1 June 2015 Christ Church Chelsea was filled with her family and many friends for an uplifting and beautifully planned memorial service of which she would have emphatically approved.

4 Cheyne Walk has now been purchased by Michael Bloomberg, financier, former Mayor of New York City and founder of the Bloomberg Foundation. Victoria would probably have approved; let us hope she would also approve of such alterations as Mr. Bloomberg might have in mind for this important and historic Chelsea house.

David Le Lay

The Treasurer's Report

As Hon. Treasurer for The Chelsea Society, I have pleasure in presenting the Society's financial report and accounts for the year ended 30 June 2015.

The accounts for the previous year were submitted to the Charity Commission in December 2014.

In the year to 30 June 2015, total income was £28,505 and total expenditure was £27,299. The net surplus was therefore £1,206. I am pleased to note that this is a significant change from the previous year, to June 2014, which showed a net deficit of £14,882 with the *Chelsea in the Great War* Exhibition and development of the Society's website as significant reasons for that earlier negative result.

In the year to 30 June 2015, membership income increased by 10% to £14,567. This includes Gift Aid of approximately £1,000. I know that many members have responded to communications from the Hon. Secretary, Membership during the year but I would encourage any member who has not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration to please do so if they are able to do so.

Donations to the Society, which are variable but always gratefully received, were £1,745, more than £6,000 lower than in 2014.

Sales of the Society's excellent range of cards amounted to £2,218, 5% above the previous year. Support through advertising in the Society's *Annual Report* was slightly lower at £6,135. Ticket sales for events was £3,642 which was 25% lower than the previous year – this is principally due to the fact we held fewer of these events than in 2014.

As far as expenditure is concerned, the cost of keeping members informed of activities falls into two main categories – the regular newsletters and the *Annual Report*. Publishing and distributing the newsletters cost a total of £7,491 which was £4,000 lower than the previous year; that year, you will recall, included a special Crossrail III issue. The cost of the Society's *Annual Report* was £6,905, some £1,500 lower than in 2014. The advertising income I mentioned earlier therefore means that the *Annual Report* almost pays for itself.

The lower number of events meant that the cost of these was almost £2,000 less at £2,502 so overall these proved profitable, as well as informative and enjoyable for those members who attended.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

As I said earlier, there was a lot of work in 2014 in designing and developing the Society's website which is now properly representative of the Society's activities and offers opportunities for the public to become a Society member. Ongoing maintenance and update costs for the website in 2015 were £1,880, compared with almost £9,000 in 2014.

The second part of the excellent work by Gillian Best on the social housing history of Chelsea, which forms part of our archive, was completed in the year. The complete work is available through the Society.

At the end of June 2015, the Society's bank and savings deposits were £52,775, a significant increase from the equivalent position 12 months earlier of just over £40,000. Members will not be surprised to hear that interest on these deposits was just £200, a result of the very low interest rates.

As I said last year, the Society has shown its ability to continue its important member contact through its events, talks and visits programme and has shown a strong position through its planning advocacy work. Such matters require funding and the Society remains in a strong position to continue with these activities. I would like to thank all the Society's supporters, be they members, legatees, donors or advertisers and all those who freely give of their time to enable the Society to perform its important work.

The financial report and accounts have been scrutinised by an independent examiner and her unqualified report appears with the accounts. Subject to approval of the meeting, these accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes my report for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Tom Martin
Hon. Treasurer

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY**

I report on the accounts of The Chelsea Society for the year ended 30 June 2015, which are set out on pages 86 and 87

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and the Independent Examiner
The Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that an audit is not required this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- * to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Angela Ktistakis, ACA, FCCA
GMAK, Chartered Accountants, 5/7 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX
16 November, 2015

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
Registered Charity Number 276264
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Constitution and Objects

The Chelsea Society was founded by Reginald Blunt in 1927. The Society's objects are to protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea particularly by:

- * stimulating interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea;
- * encouraging good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees, and the conservation and proper maintenance of open spaces;
- * seeking the abatement of nuisances;
- * making representations to the proper authorities on these subjects.

The full Constitution and Rules of the Society, together with the Annual Accounts, are printed in the Annual Report, published in January each year, a copy of which is sent to every member.

Trustees

The Trustees of the Society are the Council constituted under the Society's Rules, which is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Society. The Council appoints Officers for certain posts. The current Officers and other Members of the Council are:

Officers

- Damian Greenish (Chairman)
- Sarah Farrugia (Vice-Chairman)
- Tom Martin (Hon. Treasurer)
- Lindsay Kennedy (Hon. Secretary) (Appointed August 2014)
- Allan Kelly (Hon. Secretary, Membership)
- Terence Bendixson (Hon. Secretary, Planning) (Resigned November 2014)
- Michael Stephen (Chairman Planning Committee) (Appointed January 2015)
- Paulette Craxford (Hon. Secretary, Events)

Other Members of the Council

- Paul Aitkenhead
- Michael Bach
- Martyn Baker
- Jane Dorrell
- Leonard Holdsworth
- Patrick Baty
- Camilla Mountain
- Fleur De Villiers (appointed November 2014)
- Nigel Stenhouse

Review of the year's activities and achievements
The Chairman's Report, published in the Society's Annual Report, contains a full description of the activities and achievements of the Society during the year.

At 30 June 2015, the Society has total funds of £46,465 (2014 £45,259) comprising £44,265 on the General Fund and £2,200 on the Life Membership Fund. These are considered available and adequate to fulfil the obligations of the Society. The reserve of funds is held to meet a need to fund any particular action required to protect the Society's objects, as thought appropriate by the Council of the Society.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, "Charities and Public Benefit".

Approved by the Council of the Chelsea Society on 16 November 2015.

Damian Greenish
Chairman

**THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	2015	2014
	£	£
Income and expenditure account		
Income		
Incoming resources		
Annual membership subscriptions + Gift Aid	14,567	13,206
Donations received	1,745	7,915
Advertising revenue and annual report	6,135	6,250
Sponsorship of exhibition	---	37,475
Interest received on General Funds	10	14
Interest received on Life Membership Fund	188	224
Lectures, walks and visits	3,642	4,897
Income from sale of Christmas cards and postcards	2,218	2,831
Total incoming resources	28,505	72,812

Resources expended

Direct charitable expenditure:		
Cost of annual report	6,905	8,493
Cost of newsletters	7,491	11,443
Lectures, walks and visits	2,502	4,454
Cost of Christmas cards, postcards and maps	813	1,412
Subscriptions and donations to other organisations	292	520
Advertising	320	218
Exhibition	262	43,905
Website	1,880	8,991
Conference and archive	3,186	3,000
Printing, postage and miscellaneous expenses	1,108	3,220
Insurance	179	179
Sundry	414	465
	<u>25,352</u>	<u>86,300</u>

Governance and administration

Annual General Meeting	874	386
Bank charges	217	190
Independent examiner's fee	856	818
	<u>1,947</u>	<u>1,394</u>
Total resources expended	27,299	87,694

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year

	1,206	(14,882)
Balance brought forward	45,259	60,141
Balances carried forward at 30 June 2015	46,465	45,259

**THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2015**

	2015	2014
	£	£
Current Assets		
Debtors	3,222	18,195
National Savings Bank account	20,231	30,043
Barclays Bank accounts	32,544	19,068
	<u>55,997</u>	<u>67,306</u>
Current Liabilities:		
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	(9,532)	(22,047)

Net Assets

£46,465 **£45,259**

Funds:

General Fund	44,265	42,709
Life Membership Fund	2,200	2,550

Total Funds

£46,465 **£45,259**

Approved by the Council of The Chelsea Society on
16 November 2015

Damian Greenish, *Chairman*
Tom Martin, *Honorary Treasurer*

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Accounting
The accounts are prepared under the historical cost basis of accounting, and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting & Reporting by Charities, and applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Incoming Resources
Membership subscriptions, advertising revenue, and income from events and the sale of Christmas cards are time-apportioned and credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in respect of which they are receivable
Donations are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which they are received, unless they relate to specific future projects.

Resources Expended
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES

1. The Chelsea Society shall be regulated by the Rules contained in this Constitution.

OBJECTS

2. The Objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea particularly by:-
- (a) stimulating interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea;
 - (b) encouraging good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees, and the conservation and proper 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 further persons to be members of the Council.
- (4) The Officers to be appointed under Rule 5 shall in addition be members of the Council.
- (5) In the choice of persons for membership of the Council, regard shall be had, amongst other things, to the importance of including persons known to have expert knowledge and experience of matters relevant to the 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.
- (11) Casual vacancies 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 re-appointment 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 rescind the appointment of an Officer during the term of office for reasons deemed substantial.

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) Members may pay more than the prescribed minimum, if they wish.
- (4) Members may pay annual subscription by banker's order or by Direct Debit.
- (5) The Society may participate in the direct debiting scheme as an originator for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for any class of membership and/or any other amounts due to the Society. In furtherance of this objective, the Society may enter into an indemnity required by the Banks upon whom direct debits are to be originated. Such an indemnity may be executed on behalf of the Society by officials nominated in an appropriate resolution.

GENERAL MEETINGS

8. (1) In these Rules 'General Meeting' means a meeting of the Society open to all its members.
- (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 it may think fit. Notice of the date of such meetings shall be given not less than 35 days ahead.
- (3) General Meetings, the agenda for which shall be circulated not less than 21 days in advance of the meeting, shall take place at such times and places as the Council shall specify.
- (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.
- (5) Any election to the Council shall be held at a General Meeting.
- (6) No person shall be eligible of 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 28 days 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 raise any matters not mentioned in the Report, if it is within the Objects of the Society.
- (10) The President or Chairman of the meeting may limit the duration of speeches.
- (11) Resolutions by members may be made only at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special Meeting as permitted under sub-section (12) of this Section of the Constitution. Any member who wishes to make a Resolution shall give notice of such Resolution by sending it to the Society to reach the Honorary Secretary at least 28 days before the date of the meeting. The Resolution, if seconded at the meeting by another member, will be put to the vote.
- (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.

AMENDMENTS

9. (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 28 days before such a 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 21 days before the General Meeting.

WINDING-UP

10. (1) The winding-up of the Society shall be subject to a Resolution proposed by the Council and approved by a two-thirds majority present at a Special General Meeting.
- (2) 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 current rate is £15 annually payable on the 1st January. The annual husband-and-wife rate is £20.

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.

RICHARD ABBOTT
 MRS SUSAN ABBOTT
 *MRS. A. ABELS
 GRAHAM ADAMS
 MRS GRAHAM ADAMS
 NICK ADAMS
 MRS SARAH ADAMS
 NATALIE AGAPIOU
 SIR RANDOLPH AND LADY AGNEW
 MISS INESSA AIREY
 PAUL V. AITKENHEAD
 CHRIS AKERS
 MRS. ANNE MARIE AKERS
 ANTONIO ALBERT
 MRS. LETTY SUE ALBERT
 ANTONY ALBERTI
 MRS FLEUR ALBERTI
 MRS. JUDY ALEXANDER
 R. ALEXANDER
 MRS. R. ALEXANDER
 MRS. ROSEMARY ALEXANDER
 MISS AVA AMANDE
 MRS. ELIZABETH AMATI
 C. C. ANDREAE
 *THE MARQUESS OF ANGLESEY
 JOHN ARMITAGE
 MRS JOHN ARMITAGE
 MRS. M. ASHE
 MISS VICTORIA ASHE
 MRS. ROMA ASHWORTH BRIGGS
 GREGORY ASIANKEN
 MISS C. ASSHETON
 J. ROBERT ATKINSON
 MRS CYNTHIA AYER
 MICHAEL BACH
 MISS ANGELA BAIGNERES
 ANDREW BAILEY
 MARTYN BAKER
 MRS. MARTYN BAKER
 MRS BAKHTIAR BAKHTIARI
 RICHARD BALLERAND
 MISS URMILA BANERJEE
 ROBERT BARHAM
 MRS LOUISA BARHAM
 THE HON. VIVIAN BARING
 MRS LAVINIA BARING
 MRS. MICHAEL BARKER
 DR. R. BARKER
 ROGER BARKER
 LADY BARRAN
 MRS CLAUDIO BARRIOS
 MRS. JULIAN BARROW
 SIMON BARROW
 *MRS. DEREK BARTON

JOHN BASSETT
 MRS JEAN BASSETT
 DAVID BATCHELOR
 G. N. BATTMAN
 MRS. G. N. BATTMAN
 PATRICK BATY
 SIR PETER BAXENDELL
 LADY BAXENDELL.#
 MRS. MICHAEL HICKS BEACH
 GERALD BEALE
 ROBERT BEALE
 MRS ROBERT BEALE
 MRS. A. E. BEAUMONT-DODD
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LIST OF MEMBERS

An Endpiece for Horrorphiles



Bram Stoker

Many artists have lived in Chelsea. They include Bram Stoker, famous for his book called *Dracula*, which has inspired many horror stories. Another is the actor, Christopher Lee (1922-2015), who later defined the Dracula character. Small world!

Bram Stoker (1847-1912) lived in 27 Cheyne Walk in the 1870s and 1880s, and at 17 St Leonard's Terrace from 1885-96 and then in no. 18 until 1906.

In contrast to their work both men were reputed to be mild mannered. Perhaps this is why Stoker, while theatre manager for Sir Henry Irving, is reputed to have instituted the now orderly custom of numbering theatre seats.

Sir Christopher Frank Carandini Lee, CBE, was a versatile actor and singer. He considered his best performance to be that of Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Jinnah in the film *Jinnah* and his best horror film to be *The Wicker Man*, made in 1973. The government of France made him a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in 2011.



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A view of Tite Street, Chelsea, a postcard mailed in 1906.

