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# CHELSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## Our New President

SARAH FARRUGIA



Our new President: John Simpson CBE

We are delighted to announce that John Simpson CBE, the BBC world affairs editor and writer, is to become the Chelsea Society's 13th President, succeeding Lord Salisbury who held the office for six years. John's family has long been part of Chelsea dating back to 1840 when his great-great grandfather ran the Queen's Head public house, which the Society helped save last year.

Damian Greenish, the Chairman said, "We were searching for a new President who could represent the Society at a time of great change, a person who could be a figurehead for the widest range of people locally. John's extraordinary career so far

and his gift for meeting and connecting with people with such a wide spectrum of interests and backgrounds makes him, without question, an outstanding individual for President. We are honoured he has accepted the position with such enthusiasm."

In reply John said, "I am very excited to be part of an organisation with such great associations and to contribute to modern life in Chelsea. I take such pleasure in walking around locally enjoying the quieter spots as well as the daily bustle of the King's Road. It will be wonderful to be even more involved. As someone who travels the world and witnesses so many areas of conflict at close quarter, I can see how important it is to maintain a sense of community and purpose in one's personal home town. These invisible qualities can so easily be lost without anyone noticing before it is far too late. This role will help me play my part whilst enjoying myself at the same time."

John's first duty will be to chair the AGM at 6.30pm on 25th November in the Large Hall at Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road. We will be delighted to see as many members as possible to welcome John.

The AGM is always a convivial event where members have a chance to quiz the Council, meet each other, buy some of the excellent cards and books we publish, as well as make general suggestions for the forthcoming year.

### – STOP PRESS –

After a long wait the news is bad – the Planning Inspector has decided to allow 20 of the 25 appeals against JC Decaux/BT's proposed advert panels with a phone on the back. Six out of the seven in the King's Road were allowed after all the Council's effort to clear out all the clutter. We are bitterly disappointed!! *For more see inside.*

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# Thames Water's sewage tunnel

TERENCE BENDIXSON

With a mega-public inquiry in progress, and due to run until March, the Borough Council and Thames Water are in negotiations about work sites at Cremorne Wharf and on the Embankment opposite the Royal Hospital's Bull Ring.

The Borough is, for instance, requiring Thames Water to train and employ residents, use barges to carry away spoil and schedule its lorries outside rush hours.

At both sites the work will involve digging vertical shafts on the river bank and horizontal ones linking them to the huge tunnel to be excavated under the middle of the river. Then the outfalls, by which rainwater and sewage sometimes overflow from Bazalgette's sewers into the Thames, will be connected to the new shafts. Ventilation pipes will remain at both sites, as will overflows in case torrential storms exceed the capacity of the new shafts.

Near Chelsea Bridge the works will leave behind a very noticeable semi-circular bulge in the embankment wall that will correspond to the Bull Ring. It will be paved to the design of a landscape architect and create a new belvedere from which to enjoy river views, but neither Thames Water nor Transport for London will agree to maintain it.

At Cremorne residents may be faced by both Thames Water's construction site and the building of new flats at Lots Road Power Station. There is anxiety about legions of lorries and unease about smells from the future ventilation shafts.

[www.thamestidewaytunnel.co.uk/](http://www.thamestidewaytunnel.co.uk/)



Picture: Thames Water

**Thames Tunnel Chelsea Embankment Foreshore opposite the Bull Ring**

## Old postal sorting office

Various proposals to turn the Chelsea Manor Street postal sorting office into flats have come and gone. Now one is in prospect that could well be built. Look how it is both modern in design but

relates to Bloomfield's beautiful bank on the corner. The windows form a vertical pattern, pink brick gives warmth, bays mark the two entrances, and cornices run along the top of the walls.

**Housing scheme on the site of the former Sorting Office in Chelsea Manor Street**



Picture: Madigan Browne

# The Carlyle School car park, Hortensia Road

TERENCE BENDIXSON

A mix of privately-rented houses and flats will be built by Grainger plc, in collaboration with the Borough Council, on the school car park at the corner of Hortensia Road and King's Road. A unit of 435sqm (4,700 sqft) of shops or offices will front the King's Road. The development will be partly five and partly seven storeys in height.

This scheme is part of a package of two properties – the other being Young Street car park in Kensington – that the Council is selling on a 125-year lease, with a share in the rental growth to generate future income for the Council.

While the Society fears that the Council may be making a mistake in allowing yet more education land to go to housing, the mix of 25 small flats and 6 houses, of which 12 would be affordable, may be welcome. All will be rented and managed by Grainger, a private company that owns or manages



New housing scheme on Carlyle School Car park, Hortensia

35,000 homes in Britain and Germany.

Much time and effort has been devoted by Grainger's architects (Assael) to the massing, colour and details of the row of houses and the two blocks of flats. Their aim was to fit in with their surroundings

and be modern. The difference between their approach and that of Madigan Browne at the Old Postal Sorting office is worth debating. Grainger has also taken public consultation seriously, and has responded to feedback. [www.hortensiaroadsouth.co.uk/](http://www.hortensiaroadsouth.co.uk/)

## Curzon Cinema

TERENCE BENDIXSON

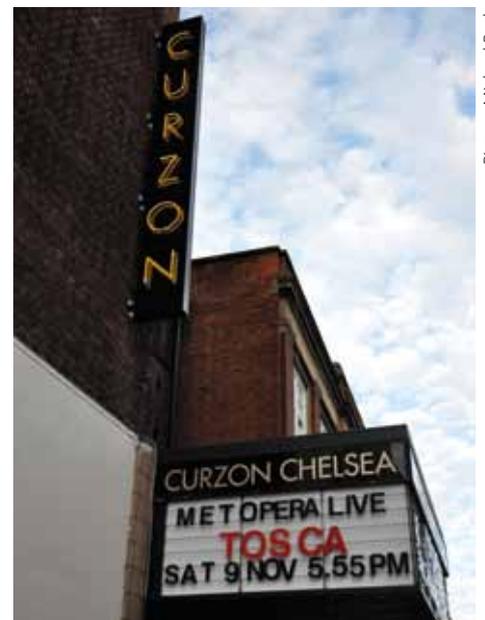
The Curzon cinema story is drawing to a close. Residents have repeatedly said they want Cadogan to keep a big screen. (There is also support for keeping the Trafalgar pub.) But Cadogan, who want to make room for more and bigger shops on the King's Road frontage, argue that the number of cinema seats should be cut from 687 to 198.

If such a cut were allowed, the Curzon company would be replaced by a small-screen operator. Opera 'Live from the Met' and theatre live from the National Theatre would probably go too.

The Curzon has worked hard to get its message across - that it wants to stay in Chelsea and wants a big screen. It has organised a petition and is working

on a pamphlet which the Society has endorsed. Cadogan, meanwhile, is planning to consult residents once more before submitting a planning application in the following month. The exhibition will be from Noon to 8 pm on 27, 28, 29 November at 172 King's Road (formerly Choy's Restaurant that has just closed after 61 years!).

The Society has always been a strong friend of the big screen. It is just as valued as the Cadogan Hall which, thanks to the family, was saved from conversion into a house. If the existing auditorium is in the way, what about moving it elsewhere in the site? Surely a way can be found to retain a big screen in a spacious auditorium? The Society will be campaigning for it to the last.



Curzon Cinema, King's Road

# Brompton Hospital

TERENCE BENDIXSON

The Brompton Hospital has decided to stay in Chelsea and to build and rebuild on its existing Sydney Street site. This means that Chelsea will continue to have four major hospitals - if one includes the most famous of all - the Royal Hospital.

The Brompton's plan is to sell off the north and south parts of its huge land-holding and invest the proceeds in the central block bounded by Sydney and Dovehouse streets. Paul Davis, the architects of Duke of York's Square, are working on plans for the sites that are due to be sold and on a new hospital building on Dovehouse Street. Once the Brompton has got planning permission for its unwanted sites, it will sell them to the highest bidder.

All this points to very significant changes in the appearance of central Chelsea, and to prepare for this Tim Coleridge, the Councillor responsible for planning policy, has set up a working group (the Chelsea Society is on it) to advise on the shape of the new buildings. Council planners will use this advice in preparing guidance for the hospital.

Some things are already clear. Paul Davis proposes to retain the old vestry building on the corner of Sydney Street and King's Road, and the other Edwardian building adjacent to it, and create a new square to the north of them. This square is likely to be devoted to cafes and could include a link to Dovehouse Green. To the north of the square, the architects propose a block of flats and, beyond that, a terrace of houses fronting Sydney Street with a mews behind them.

The future hospital will consist of the existing 1970s building opposite St Luke's Church, perhaps with a new central entrance lined up with St Luke's, and behind it a very large new building. Designing this voluminous hospital so that

it is not a monster and sits comfortably with Dovehouse Street will be challenging.

The tall red brick buildings that front South Parade, including the former fire station, and the hospital on Fulham Road are likely to have their facades retained and be converted into flats. The flats looking southwards over Chelsea Square will be the most expensive.

Robert Bell, the Brompton's chief executive, is keen to get all this under way as quickly as possible. To underline the need for urgency he observes that some patients are housed in shipping containers!

## Next Steps:

**November 2013**

Issues and Options consultation (see dates for diary)

**February 2014**

Consultation on Draft Planning Brief

**June 2014**

Key Decision for Planning Brief

**July 2014**

Submission of Planning Applications

**January 2015**

Determine Planning Applications

*More information see report to the Council's Public Realm Scrutiny Committee:*

<http://tinyurl.com/bromptonhospital>

## New buses for the Number 11 route

TERENCE BENDIXSON

Number 11 buses with open rear platforms were an unforgettable part of my London school days. Oh what joy it was to race behind one, feel the accelerating draw of the slipstream and then, wait, get the timing right, the exhilaration of a final leap to grab the handrail and pull oneself aboard. Even now, sixty years on, I can relive the pleasure of those leaps and, of course, jumping off at speed too.

So far I have not seen a rider do a runner at one of Boris's new Number 11s in the King's Road. Was it a good idea to revive and renew the Routemaster? Will we get used to Thomas Heatherwick's rear stairway styling - even though it cleverly recalls the outside stair of a yet earlier design? Can it really make sense to add the wages of a second crew member to the already high cost of bus travel? What about the double stair layout? And finally, should

we worry if passengers using the new buses have falls? Answer...only if they are more per mile than on conventional buses.



New Number 11 Boris Routemaster bus outside Peter Jones

Picture: Michael Bach

# Cadogan Estate

The architectural competition for the café at the Duke of York's Square was won by NEX last December, who have been working up the details of the scheme following discussions with the Council. Cadogan propose carrying out further local consultation once they have an acceptable design. Photo

With regards to Liscartan and Granville Houses in Sloane Street, Cadogan provide a regular newsletter to people who live and work in the area to keep them up to date with what is happening. Whilst there has been some delay Cadogan now expect completion in mid-2015.

Christmas is coming to Duke of York's Square – more particularly – Father Christmas will be in his grotto every Saturday and Sunday in November and then every day until Christmas Eve.

To make bookings visit:  
<http://tinyurl.com/cadoganestate>



Picture: NEX

Design for new café on Duke of York's Square

# Changes to Ward Boundaries

MICHAEL BACH

From time to time Local Government Boundary Commission reviews ward boundaries with the intention of ensuring that the number of electors per Councillor is about the same to take account of changing electoral rolls.

The Commission has just completed their review and submitted their final recommendations. The main changes for Chelsea are:

- Brompton and Hans Town wards have been merged, but part of the former

Hans Town ward has been ceded to an enlarged Royal Hospital ward. The new ward will probably maintain the current Hans Town councillors – Nicholas Paget-Brown, Tim Coleridge and Mary Weale who are all members of the Cabinet – whilst the relative new Councillors in the current Brompton ward will be looking for new seats;

- Royal Hospital will gain the area south of Whitehead's Grove and Cadogan Street.
- Cremorne will in future be called Chelsea Riverside and will gain a small chunk

from Royal Hospital

- Stanley ward will remain much the same, but extend its boundary to Elystan Street.

Following approval of an order by Parliament, these boundaries will be used in the local elections next May.

The Local Government Boundary Commission's full report and an interactive map of the final recommendations are available at:

<http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

# Advertphone Appeals – a bad result for the King’s Road:

MICHAEL BACH

Over the last 15 years the Council has pursued a policy of driving up the quality of our streetscape. In the late 1990s, following an initiative by the Society, the Council agreed to makeover of the King’s Road, with a single type of pavement (York stone) and side-road “tables” to create a level surface for pedestrians from Sloane Square to the Fulham boundary. In 2009/10 the Council revisited the King’s Road and put in new lighting columns, removed nearly all the signs and railings, and apart from the bollards, totally cleaned up the streetscape.

In 2007 BT and JC Decaux tried to get a small programme of advert panels with a coin-operated payphone on the back. All eleven applications, including three in the King’s Road were refused by the Council and the subsequent appeals all dismissed. The “deal” was to take out several BT phone boxes in exchange for each advertising column.

In 2012 BT/JC Decaux approached the Cabinet Member for Planning with a much more ambitious programme. Council officers were asked to help them find suitable sites – an initial list of 60 was cut down to 41 and these were submitted as applications, again offering to remove several phone boxes for each advertisement panel. The planning officer recommended 25 of these be allowed and 16 refused, but following a strong campaign from the Chelsea and Kensington Societies, councillors and residents’ associations, the Planning Committee refused all of the applications on the grounds of their impact on local amenity. BT and JC Decaux appealed in earlier this year.

The Inspector’s report has now arrived, allowing 20 out of the 25 appeals. The result was particularly bad for the King’s

Road – 6 out of 7 were allowed. This could not have happened without the initial encouragement of the Council. What a mistake to think that the public would think it was a good “deal”!!



Pictures: Michael Bach



Advertphones, front and back

## Private Member’s Basements Bill

TERENCE BENDIXSON

Karen Buck, MP for Westminster North, has introduced a Private Member’s Bill to Parliament that is designed to strengthen the ability of local councils to resist basement development. The Permitted Development (Basements) Bill 2013-14 had its first and second readings on 13th and 22nd November. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, MP for Kensington is among its presenters. The Bill would limit basement construction to a single storey and half the extent of any garden and stop it altogether under listed buildings and their gardens - as is proposed by Kensington & Chelsea’s revised policy (and that of Westminster). It would also require planning applications to show how contractors proposed to transport earth and materials without blocking people on foot and vehicles - a key issue in narrow streets.

Ms Buck made a strong case for action in the House but, given the failure of a previous Bill, the small geographical extent of the problem (a few London Boroughs), and the Coalition’s understandable wish to support investment and jobs in construction, it is hard to see the Government supporting it. That means doom.

Write to Greg Hands to indicate your support:

[mail@greghands.com](mailto:mail@greghands.com)

# Broadband Cabinets: Planted with care?

TERENCE BENDIXSON

BT has been given permission to plonk an ugly steel broadband cabinet in front of the Arts and Crafts railings of J D Sedding's Grade 1 listed Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street. No one, including this Society, objected to the proposal. (Mea culpa. I failed to spot it. TB)

Until recently, in conservation areas telecoms cabinets like this were subject to a "prior approval" procedure whereby BT automatically got consent for it unless the Council objected to the siting and appearance of what was proposed. This enabled the Council to do what it is required to do by law - to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and not harm the setting of a listed building such as Holy Trinity.

This is no longer the case, but this application was handled under the previous rules and the Council went correctly through its bureaucratic motions, noting that the cabinet was small, would be a modest obstruction and that, seen from the distance, it would be dwarfed by Sedding's fine brick gable. But the Council report also said that, as an existing cabinet would be replaced, and that other cabinets already obscured the railings, the 'impact' of the new one would be acceptable. This is shocking. No cabinets should ever have been allowed on the pavement in front of Sedding's railings. To anyone walking past, the four mid-green cabinets stick out like sore thumbs and obstruct views of decorated ironwork of exceptional interest and quality – though posters advertising charity Christmas cards are, at

present, an added ugliness. This is almost certainly the worst example of street clutter in Chelsea. Can anything be done? We shall see.



New broadband cabinet Grade II listed Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street

Pictures: Paul Aitkenhead

## Involving People in Planning

MICHAEL BACH

For most residents getting to grips with planning appears to be very difficult – it shouldn't be.

The Council is currently rewriting its Statement of Community Involvement which is designed to set out in plain English what residents should be able to expect from the Council to help us get involved with planning, whether in drawing up changes to planning policy or getting involved in preparing a development brief for sites (eg the current on for the Brompton Hospital sites), as well as how to get to grips with planning applications.

The document should not only be a clear description of the process and give a clear indication of how residents can make an input, but also a clear statement of our "rights". These "rights" take several forms:

### legal requirements under the Planning Acts and the Access to Information Acts for the Council:

- to consult residents when preparing plans or documents about specific sites, usually for a minimum of a 6-week period;
- to consult on a wide range of planning applications, for a minimum of 21 days;
- to give residents access to information, including all documents that were used in preparing reports, such as those on planning applications, which means access to the case file; and
- to give access to a range of environmental information.

### "rights" set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 2, Article 3 and Part 4 C1), including rights to:

- information (see above) attend all Committee meetings, including the Cabinet;
- be given notice of meetings and access to agendas and reports at least 5 clear working days before the meeting and the minutes of the meeting;
- inspect background papers (see above); and
- address any Committee, subject to the chairman's agreement: see <http://tinyurl.com/peopleplanning>

Since these rights are not at present set out in one place, the Council's forthcoming document – Involving People in Planning – will need to set this out very clearly. Access to planning should open to everyone and how to do it should be much clearer than it is at present. The document will be available by the New Year.

# Progress on the Local Plan

MICHAEL BACH

In the last edition we were looking forward to an early change in the Council's Local Plan policies for basements and housing, as well as consolidation of the conservation and design policies saved from the UDP and the 2010 Core Strategy. The Council has deferred submitting these changes to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

## Basements

The Society has been pushing hard for a change to the inadequate basement policy since before the ink dried on the 2010 plan, as it allows basements of any size and depth anywhere in Chelsea, except under listed buildings. There was nothing in the plan that limited the number of levels or the extent of the site coverage, regardless of the size of the garden. In revising the 2010 policy, the Council commissioned consultants to research the issue, conducted surveys of both applicants and neighbours and held several rounds of detailed consultation with residents, applicants, architects and contractors. The Council consulted extensively on their final version of the revised analysis and policies between July and September, after which the intention was to send this version to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in the New Year.

Both before and during the consultation period the basement contractors ran a campaign both to drum up applications to get them in before the shutters came down and to generate objections to the Council's revised policy.

The Society supported the Council's revised policy which would limit the number of basement storeys to one, reduced the size of basements to cover no more than 50% of the garden, except for listed buildings where no basements would be allowed under the gardens – meaning no basements as existing policy rules out basements under listed buildings. Greater emphasis would be put on retaining trees and on reducing the impact

of the construction process on residents by reducing the scale of basements. The main point of difference between the Society and the Council, however, was that we object to any basements under gardens, as most gardens in Chelsea are small yet make a large contribution to the amenity of the area.

The Society's experience of working with the residents of Markham Square on a neighbourhood plan has convinced us of the inappropriateness of basements and basement developments in Chelsea. The Council has decided to defer the Examination of the basement policy pending further work which will strengthen their case. The Examination could now be put off to next summer. Whilst this should enable the Council to enhance its case, it does mean that there will be no change from the current policy until the end of 2014 at the earliest. Meanwhile the applications are still pouring in at an alarming rate including some multi-storey basements – the horses may well all have bolted before we can close the stable door!

## Housing

The Society's main concern is the mix of types and sizes of housing being produced – or rather the lack of it, even though the declared aim of the Council is to achieve "a diversity of housing in mixed communities, to reduce the potential of further polarisation". The Council's planning policy for market housing is heavily skewed (80%) toward large units (3, 4 or more bedrooms) and has produced ever larger so-called "super-prime" housing, such as flats with as much floorspace as a mansion. For example, the huge Jamahiriya School (former LCC Board School) building off Old Church Street is to be greatly enlarged and converted to just 6 flats each about 600sqm (6,500sqft) when it could have produced a range of sizes and many more flats that might even have been "first"

homes for people, rather than investments that would lie empty for most of the year. Our few housing sites should provide housing for Londoners rather than "second" (perhaps fifth) homes for people trying to find a home for their money rather than to live in.

The Council was proposing to secure a better mix of size and types of new housing that would better meet the needs of people who want to live in Chelsea. We strongly support this. Again, the examination of this new policy has been deferred.

## Conservation

The detailed conservation policies from the previous plan had been saved and are operated in tandem with those in the 2010 Core Strategy. The proposed changes seek to consolidate the two documents, but also to strengthen the Council's approach to such as issues as advertisements. It is very disappointing that the introduction of all these changes has been set back by six months, but the Society will be supporting the Council to secure greater control over basements and to achieve a better mix of housing at the Examination in Public next year.

## Pubs – nearly there

MICHAEL BACH

As an indication of how long it takes to get new policies through the process, the Council formally resolved to adopt the pubs policy on 16 October and only after the six-week period to allow a High Court challenge is over – on 5 December – will it at last have the full weight it deserves. It will have been almost two years to the day that the Full Council meeting decided to change the policy!

# Crossrail 2 Debate: 30 September

TERENCE BENDIXSON

The Society's meeting on Crossrail 2 on 30th September was packed. Richard De Cani from Transport for London (TfL) said that London needed a new north-east to south-west underground to cope with population growth and overcrowding on older lines (Piccadilly, District and Circle Lines). A Metro, with small trains, linking Central to Outer London, was one option. A regional railway carrying full-size, suburban trains to and from Surrey and Hertfordshire was another. Both could involve tunnels under Chelsea and have a station in the King's Road next to Dovehouse Green.

Other possibilities included a station in Chelsea but further west, or no station at all between Clapham Junction and Victoria, or alternatively re-routing the line via Battersea Power Station. TfL, having consulted widely, was currently examining the 'safeguarded' route of the old Chelsea-Hackney Line (this would include a construction site under Dovehouse Green and the adjacent 1960s Fire Station) to see how it needed to be changed to accommodate either a Metro or a regional railway. Next Spring a revised route would be recommended by TfL and the Mayor to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Assuming a line is built, work would start in about 2017 and take up to ten years to complete. One third of the cost, £4 billion, would come from Government, one third from borrowing and the rest from increased business rates.

Councillor Nick Paget Brown, Leader of the Council, spoke next and said that they were in favour of the new line, but wanted to see the station located further west - beyond Beaufort Street.

Terence Bendixson, the Society's Hon. Sec. Planning, urged TfL and the Council not to destroy the trees and memorials

of historic Dovehouse Green, and warned against big, ungainly commercial development on top of the station.

Many points were made from the floor of the meeting. They included:

1. Given the nearness of South Kensington Station, Crossrail2 is unnecessary.
2. A station further west in Chelsea would be preferable to a Fire Station location.
3. All Underground stations tend to be associated with tacky down-market shops and cafes.
4. The disruption of construction would be long and unwelcome.
5. Congestion due to lorries in the King's Road due to construction work would be unacceptable.
6. Improved access would further increase already sky-high house prices which exclude from Chelsea all but the super-rich.
7. The use of Dovehouse Green as a construction site is unacceptable.
8. The new buildings associated with a Crossrail Station will be out of character with Chelsea and the King's Road.
9. Rising retail rents have almost eliminated food shops such as butchers and greengrocers from Chelsea.
10. Nine Elms needs underground connections far more than Chelsea.
11. The construction of running tunnels threatens the fabric of 19th century houses.

12. Noise from trains in running tunnels is feared.

13. Ventilation shafts, as shown on safeguarding maps, would be unwelcome.

Cllr Paget Brown gave a partial assurance that Dovehouse Green would be protected and Mr De Cani explained that lessons being learned from the construction of other lines would be applied to Crossrail 2. Modern practice, for instance, involved fewer ventilation shafts and was reducing vibration. And the depth of the tunnelling would reduce risk to old houses above.

Moving the station westwards was not out of the question, but he suggested that engineering problems would arise from moving it as far west as Imperial Wharf. Swinging the line around from there to connect it with Clapham Junction would necessitate impractical curves.

Mr De Cani acknowledged that construction of a station in the King's Road would be disruptive but, with part of the excavation for it being done from below, some lorry-loads of spoil would be avoided. On the surface a completed station would have a single entrance and the Borough Council would be in a position to control the scale of the buildings replacing the Fire Station.

Opinion on whether house prices would be driven up or down seemed divided though it was clear that construction of a station would deflate those nearby it.

The meeting made one thing clear. Residents are resolutely opposed to the excavation of Dovehouse Green. Opposition to a station next to it was more muted.

# Meeting of Chelsea Residents' Associations

4 NOVEMBER

MICHAEL BACH

This annual event, held as usual in Chelsea Old Town Hall, provided an opportunity for residents' associations to meet the new Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Transport and the Arts, Councillor Tim Coleridge, supported by Graham Stallwood, Head of Development Management.

The main subjects were:

- **Basements** – the Council is seeking to limit the scale of basements, but the policy is challenged by the contractors, especially Cranbrook Basements. Residents offered support for Council's tougher policy and want Council to do

- more, such as a ban on Saturday working.
- **Construction traffic management plans** – need for these to be part of the application, for the Council to apply their own policy and be tougher with regard to parking suspensions.
- **Brompton Hospital** – consultation arrangements (see above)
- **Cycling** – Council received award for two-way cycling in one-way streets, more suggestions sought.
- **20 mph zones** – Council sceptical as average traffic speeds are 15mph – but it was pointed out that is not average speed that matters but highest speeds, which were often in excess of 30mph.

- **Enforcement** - more enforcement have been hired to increase activity
- **Conservation Areas** – a new rolling programme for updating the proposals statements has been agreed.
- **Thames Tideway Tunnel** – get Thames Water to take all waste by barge down the river.
- **Lots Road Power Station** – concern that Council failed to make the housing permit-free.
- **Curzon cinema** – concern about loss of large screen cinema (see above)
- **Affinity Sutton** – concern that development could result in a loss of social housing.

# Chelsea Society visit to Fishmongers' Hall

CHRISTIAN DEWAR-DURIE

The Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, which ranks fourth in precedence of the twelve great Livery Companies of the City of London, is amongst the oldest with an unbroken heritage of more than 700 years. The Fishmongers of London were in existence long before Edward I granted them their first charter in 1272 for control of fish sales, markets and quality. Later charters incorporated the Company and the rules for its governance and regulation of the trade. Unlike many livery companies it still continues its original trade duties, having strong links with the fishing industry. We were impressed by the continuing charitable work with conservation, youth and education being the main objects.

There have been several halls, the present hall designed and built in 1831-35, is the only survivor of a programme of town planning for the area around London Bridge. The design of today's building, in 'English Greek Revival' followed a competition won by Henry Roberts (1803-76) is free-standing and largely unaltered.

A young George Gilbert Scott, working in Roberts' office, prepared the working drawings. Built by Cubitts, Roberts then supervised the fixtures and furnishings for Cubitts' interior decoration work which was completed in 1840. Kept from the previous building was part of the 1741 handsome marble chimneypiece now in the Court Room. Since completion there have been various alterations reflecting changes in taste and function, including the installation of electricity in 1898. During World War II bombs fell all around and it caught fire, suffering great damage, however most of the original structure survived and most of the records and treasures had been moved to safety. Post-war restoration took fourteen years and was completed by H. Austen Hall.

The Chelsea Society group was taken round by the curator who gave us an excellent tour. Among the first of the treasures that we saw was a 1684 carved wooden statue of Sir William Walworth, the famous Fishmonger who in 1381, as Lord Mayor of London, ended the Peasants' Revolt

by stabbing Wat Tyler in the presence of Richard II. The dagger he used was also on show. Wonderful to see - for real - was Pietro Annigoni's well-known first portrait of Her Majesty The Queen, and also his less successful one of The Duke of Edinburgh. We were treated to some lively anecdotes about that sitting and Annigoni by the late Julian Barrow who was in our group. Julian had studied under him in Florence.

We saw the many grand and elegant rooms, with among other outstanding items a collection of 17th- and 18th-century silver, an embroidered 15th-century funeral pall, portraits by George Romney and river scenes by Samuel Scott. Sometimes among the paintings were delightful carved and painted wooden ornaments from barges, ceremonial and workaday and charming silver and gilt fish and shell wall sconces. The last and most imposing room was the Banqueting Hall with its high curved ceiling, glittering with gold and its commanding portraits of royalty and past Prime Wardens, shimmering chandeliers and historic coats of arms.

# Visit to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry

JOHN DONCASTER

Members of the Chelsea Society recently paid a visit to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry at its premises on Whitechapel Road, where it has been located for the past three-and-a-half centuries. It is the oldest continuous manufacturing company in Britain, having been founded in 1570 and probably 150 years before that. Even more remarkably, a bell founder of the 17th century could enter its buildings today and find that the methods and equipment for making bells is virtually unchanged. Every single bell, whether a church bell or a hand bell, is made with the skill and handwork of master craftsmen.

In spite of being the most famous bell foundry in the world, having, among other famous bells, cast Big Ben for London and the Liberty Bell for Philadelphia, the Whitechapel Foundry is still a family-owned and run business. We had the good fortune to be led on our tour by the present inheritors and owners of the foundry, Alan and Kathryn Hughes. Alan Hughes' great-great grandfather, Arthur Hughes, was manager of the factory in 1904 when the then owner decided to sell, and so at that time, over a century ago, the company passed into the hands of the Hughes family, who have been the owners ever since.

Alan Hughes' dedication and enthusiasm showed us how bells are moulded and then cast. Church bells are made of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, and formed in a mould provided by a carefully mixed recipe of sand, clay, goats hair, and horse manure. Once the mould is formed molten bronze is poured into the space between the mould and an outer bell-shaped jacket. This is all done on the Whitechapel floor, using age-old equipment and techniques. Once the bell is formed and the mould removed, a master tuner shaves the bronze on the



Picture: Christian Dewar-Durie

## Peels of bells awaiting repair or collection

inside of the bell until the right harmonic tone is reached, a very delicate operation: the master tuner has been at the foundry for thirty years.

After seeing how the bells themselves are made, we were shown how a steel frame is constructed to carry the bells in the tower of a church or belfry, and we also visited the carpenters' shop where the huge wooden wheels are hand crafted. These wheels, still made of English oak and ash, provide the link between the rope of the

bell ringer and the bell itself.

Around the walls of the office and entrance hall were photographs of many famous events in the life of the foundry: a visit by the Queen; visits by other members of the royal family including Prince Charles who christened the Charles Bell which was part of the new ring of Whitechapel bells which led the Diamond Jubilee Thames Pageant flotilla. A template for Big Ben surrounds the front door and from the outside the entrance must look very much as it did in 1670.

# Doggett's Coat and Badge:

DAMIAN GREENISH

The race for Doggett's Coat and Badge is the longest continuing annual sporting event in the world. It traces its origin back to 1715 when Thomas Doggett - an actor from Dublin - funded the prize in honour of the House of Hanover in commemoration of the succession of King George I to the throne on 1 August 1714. Since 1721 the Fishmongers' Company has organised the race, faithfully complying with the requirements of Doggett's will, and each year presenting the winner of the race with his new Coat and Badge.

The race is rowed by Thames watermen. Traditionally, a waterman is a river worker who transfers passengers across and along the Thames. Originally, newly-qualified watermen had only one attempt at the race, but since the 1980s Thames watermen have been allowed three attempts, which reflect their overall falling numbers.

The Doggett's race is held each July on the Thames, originally between "The Swan" at London Bridge and "The Swan" pub in Chelsea – both pubs have gone and it is now between London Bridge and Cadogan Pier. Up to six watermen who have just finished their apprenticeship row under eleven bridges on the four mile seven furlong course. Currently contemporary single race sculls are used and the scullers take about thirty minutes to race the course.

In recent years (thanks particularly to the hard work of Arnold Stevenson), the Society has welcomed the competitors to Chelsea as they land at Cadogan Pier following the finish of the race. Members of the Society have been able to watch the finish of the race and the celebrations that have followed. As usual the Chelsea Society's involvement was organised immaculately by Paulette Craxford.



HRH Princess Royal presenting Champagne to the winner



Watermen meeting HRH Princess Royal

This year the race was held on 12 July 2013. It was particularly special because HRH The Princess Royal was the guest of the Fishmongers' Company and came ashore at Cadogan Pier. She was greeted by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Charles Williams, who escorted her to the entrance of Cadogan Pier where she presented the bottles of champagne to the six contestants. The current chairman of the Society and Mrs Greenish, together

with the past chairman David Le Lay and also Arnold Stevenson, had the honour of being presented to Her Royal Highness.

We were delighted to have four In Pensioners from the Royal Hospital, Chelsea led by Marjorie Cole Ex-SSGT WRAC, who mounted a Guard of Honour for our Royal Guest. Seeing the Chelsea Pensioners in their famous scarlet uniforms alongside the Doggett's men in their scarlet livery was a wonderful sight.

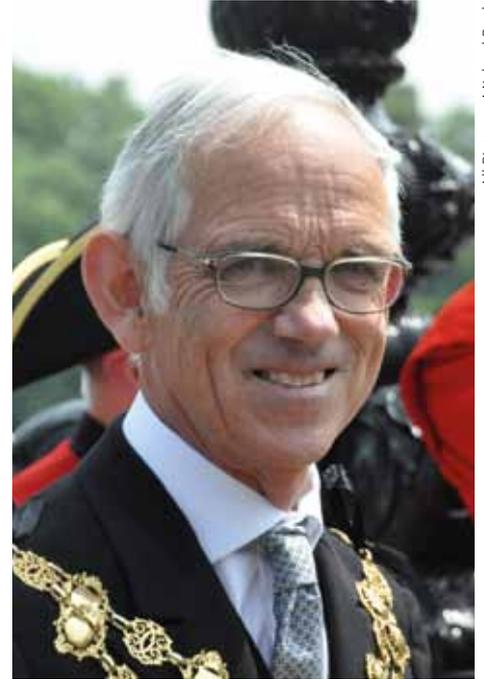
## Society Events



Damian Greenish meeting HRH Princess Royal



Chelsea Pensioners waiting for the prize-giving



Councillor Charles Williams, Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea

All Pictures: Michael Bach

## Our Members

# Chelsea Society Members' Survey – what you said

SARAH FARRUGIA

Many thanks to all those who recently completed our member survey. This is the first time we have asked members their views about the Society and we are delighted with the level of response. We are equally impressed by the number of members offering to volunteer and provide expertise. We are in contact with many and will be in touch with everyone over the next few weeks.

Our members are enthusiastic with over 85% giving us an approval rating of 8 or more when asked if they would recommend us to others. This is excellent news because in 2014, with a new membership team and online access, we are hoping to attract many more members.

Our investment in a more interactive website which can connect with the various social media channels is also

timely as the majority of our members (86%) want to use it regularly, particularly for events, historical resources and lobby information.

We were also interested to learn that nearly half our members support the National Trust and the Chelsea Physic Garden, over half are members of their own residents' association and between a third and a quarter support Cadogan Hall and The Royal Hospital. This shows we are a group of committed individuals and families who are really invested in life here in Chelsea and the values that we hold so dear.

Whilst we were pleased to see such positive remarks, we also know we have some way to go to ensure everyone is catered for. We will be looking at the ideas for new event formats, the need to increase the frequency of our communication with members through

more email activity as well as ensuring the respected publications such as the Annual Report and this Newsletter continue to go from strength to strength.

All in all a good start and strong motivation for us to push forward.

If you did not have the chance to complete the survey, there is still time and you can take part online if it is easier for you [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Chelsoc2013](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Chelsoc2013)

We have social media pages on **twitter @chelseasociety**, **facebook** and **LinkedIn** groups, an easy way to keep in touch with us.

If your details have changed please let us know so we can keep records up to date. We look forward to working ever more closely with our membership over the coming months.

# Building Aeroplanes in Chelsea

CAROLYN STARREN

With the logistics for the 2014 Exhibition in place attention has now turned to the interesting part, the research and making 'new' discoveries of what was happening in Chelsea during the Great War.

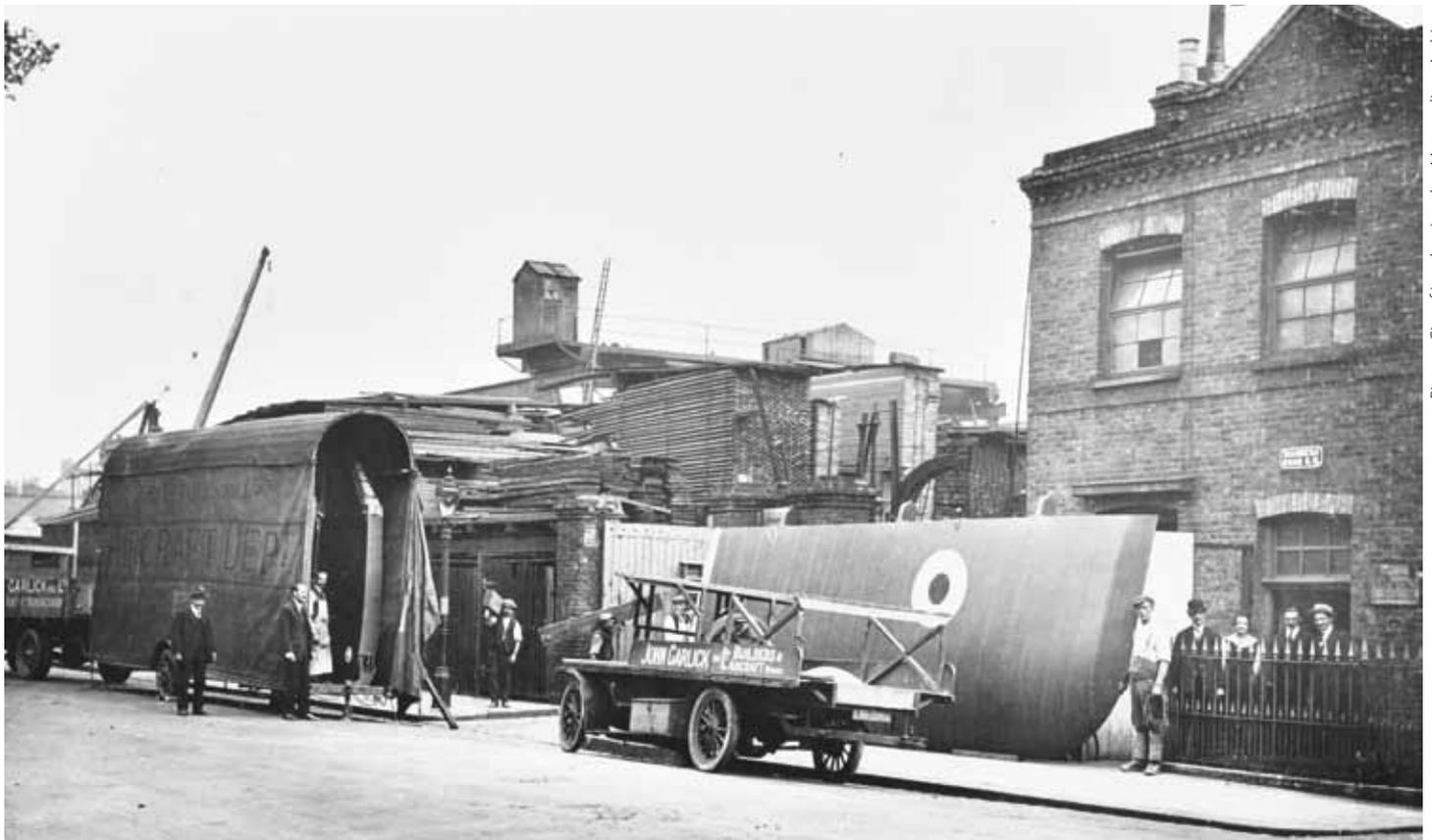
While going through the three First World War scrapbooks, assembled by Mr Quinn the Borough Librarian for Chelsea, a piece of notepaper headed Wells Aviation Ltd of 10A Elystan Street was discovered. Intriguing an aviation company in Chelsea? Then a 1981 newspaper cutting with a picture of women working on aircraft wings appeared, surely this must be Wells Aviation. The only clue to the whereabouts of the photograph was a credit line from *GLC library*.

In a former life I had worked at the London Metropolitan Library and remembered their excellent photographic collection. A quick e-mail to a former colleague and finally after an extensive hunt a set of 20 photographs were located. With great anticipation a trip was made to 40 Northampton Row and I was not disappointed by the photos, but I was perplexed. Indeed a magnificent set of 20 photographs all dated July 1918 and in excellent condition were placed in front of me but they showed exterior and interior views of the aircraft department of John Garlick (1910) Ltd based at the Cadogan Works, Manresa Road. But what about Wells Aviation - surely Chelsea couldn't boast two aviation works? Indeed there

were two as I then found plans for a factory in Sloane Avenue submitted by Wells Aviation and approved in 1916.

Some of the images found have been used to create our first exhibition board; one completed, only another 49 to go! We are still looking for more firsthand accounts of life in Chelsea during the Great War if you can help please contact me either at [Carrie.Starren@chelseasociety.net](mailto:Carrie.Starren@chelseasociety.net) or by letter C/o 36 Walpole Street, London SW3 4QS.

*Chelsea in the Great War*, the Society's 2014 Exhibition, will be held at the Duke of York's Centre from 2 to 15 June 2014, please make a note in your diaries as it promises to be a very interesting show.



The aircraft department of John Garlick (1910) Ltd in Manresa Road (now 26 Chelsea Square and 6 Manresa Road)

Picture: City of London, London Metropolitan Archives

# Julian Barrow (1939 - 2013)

DAMIAN GREENISH



Picture: George Llewellyn

Julian painting off Jersey

The death of Julian Barrow earlier this year was deeply felt by members of the Society. It was as unexpected as it was sad. Although not born in London, Julian lived most of his life here (for almost fifty years) and much of his working life was spent in his famous Chelsea studios in Tite Street. He had been President of the Chelsea Arts Society for many years as well as being a long-standing member of the Society and a wonderful friend and supporter of all things Chelsea.

Earlier this year, on 14 January, he presented one of the Spring lectures to the Society on the life and works of the artists of Tite Street. It was a memorable talk, with Julian as usual catching the imagination of the audience with his stories and

reminiscences and bringing to life many of the great characters who had worked and lived in Tite Street

A Service of Thanksgiving was held on 23 September 2013 at St Luke's Church. With its two galleries, the Church has a capacity of over 1,000 people; it was full. It was a wonderful service with addresses from Julian's brothers Simon and Andrew (each very much reflecting their own characters) and readings by Florence Barrow and Richard Foster. There was a wide range of music and the singing of the final hymn "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" allowed the congregation as a whole not just to display their musical talent, but to do so at the highest volume. It was a rousing finish to allow us to

remember and celebrate the life of a truly great Chelsea resident.

Following the service, Julian's many friends and admirers enjoyed the hospitality of the family at a reception held at the Chelsea Town Hall. A full obituary will appear in the Annual Report; donations in memory of Julian can be made to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, Artists General Benevolent Fund or St Luke's and Christ Church Chelsea.

*Life is mostly froth and bubble  
Two things stand like stone  
KINDNESS in another's trouble,  
COURAGE in your own*

*(Quotation from the service sheet)*

## Dates for your Diary

27-29 November	Consultation on the Curzon Cinema Development at 172 King's Road
25 November - 9 December	Brompton Hospital Exhibition: Chelsea Library
27 November	Brompton Hospital: Workshop: St Luke's Hall (evening)
2 December	Brompton Hospital: Workshop: Old Town Hall (morning)
4 December	Brompton Hospital: Workshop: Old Town Hall (evening)
6 December	Chelsea at Night Photo Shoot with Royal Photographic Society 6.30pm outside Saatchi Gallery <a href="http://www.rps.org/events/view/3302">www.rps.org/events/view/3302</a>
3 February	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
24 February	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
31 March	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
22 May	European and Local Elections



Peter Jones Christmas lights from Sloane Square



Peter Jones Window Christmas window decoration

## In Touch

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

Our website is at:

[www.chelseasociety.org.uk](http://www.chelseasociety.org.uk)

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

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