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CHELSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Shaping the Future of Chelsea

DAMIAN GREENISH

Chelsea has absorbed many changes during its long history but arguably it has never faced the scale of challenges it faces today. But change and development need to be managed and the Society must play a proactive role in helping that process.

The new Chairman of our Planning Committee, Michael Stephen, sets out in his Planning Report brief details of the major developments likely to have a significant impact, each significant in itself, together they present a huge challenge to the future of Chelsea.

The Royal Brompton Hospital's desire to develop its facilities on Dovehouse Street to create a hospital fit for the twenty-first century is easy to support in principle, but what sacrifices need to be made to achieve it and are they worth it? Failure by the Royal Brompton and the Royal Marsden to find common ground in developing new facilities was deeply lamented, but pressure from the Chelsea community supported by the Society ensured that the original misguided Supplementary Planning Document was withdrawn. As a result of pressure applied, the hospitals are at least now talking to each other with a view to creating a world-class medical centre to meet both of their needs and those of the renowned Institute of Cancer Research.

Affinity Sutton's proposal to demolish and reconstruct their Chelsea Estate has also proved highly controversial. Like the Royal Brompton Hospital, the landowner sees the opportunity to realise substantial proceeds from the sale of part of their sites



Picture: Michael Bach

Downstream view to Vauxhall from Battersea Bridge: Is this the future?

for high-end residential development. Understandably these organisations wish to make best use of their assets but that cannot be wholly at the expense of the community. Those who live and work in Chelsea are entitled to question the impact of such proposals. If Chelsea is to remain not only vibrant but also a unique place to live and work, we need to support both the retention of local businesses and of housing, not simply for investment, but as places in which people can afford to live.

Crossrail 2 is another controversial project. Some believe that a Crossrail station in the middle of the King's Road with the development pressures it would bring would destroy the traditional character of Chelsea. But the creation of a world-class medical hub in Chelsea and the desire to retain (and create additional) low-cost housing so that people can afford both to live and work in Chelsea can only realistically be achieved in conjunction ▶

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▶ with a substantial improvement in the transport facilities.

To face these challenges the Society must play a leading role. The Society's principal Object is "... to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea..." to retain what is best about Chelsea, resist change where it is adverse to Chelsea and encourage and support improvement where needed.

Later this year TfL will again consult on the route and siting of stations for Crossrail 2, and there will be proposals from both Affinity Sutton and the residents of Sutton Dwellings on the future of that site. We await the NHS England report on the future of Chelsea's hospitals followed by a new draft SPD. We will host a public meeting on hospitals issue so that local residents, businesses, landowners and other stakeholders can express their views. The Society's Council believes that we should now go further.

Fifteen years ago, the Society held a public a debate on the Future of Chelsea. In light of the challenges we face, we propose to organise a similar event later this year so that we can produce a new vision for Chelsea against which we can judge these proposals.

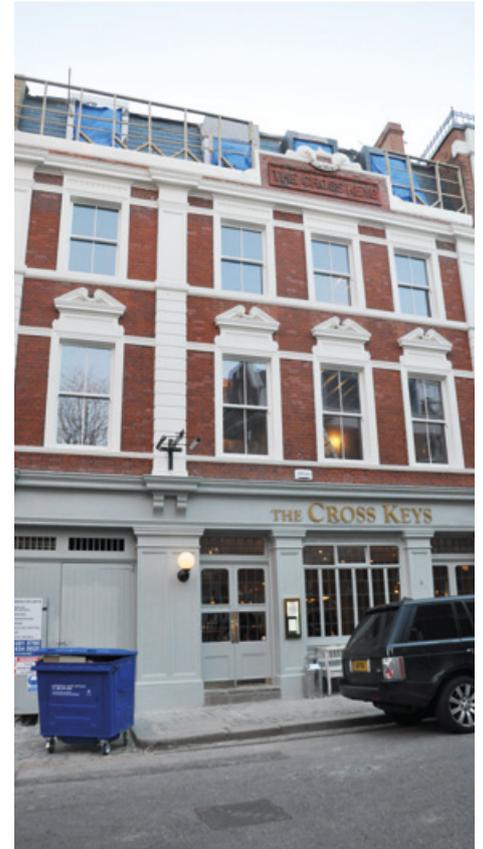
Pubs: Progress Report

MICHAEL BACH

Cross Keys, 1 Lawrence Street, SW10

This has got to be one of the main good news stories of the year – the reopening of the Cross Keys on 5 March. The pub, on the ground floor and basement only, now has the obligatory light grey colour scheme. The intention is to serve a cross section of the Chelsea community, rather than a Made in Chelsea market, with a good selection of craft beers and reasonably-priced food.

In the run-up to the official opening, the pub welcomed the local community and the team who organised the campaign to save the pub, including local residents Penny Pocock, Richard Sarll and Paul Miller, Dale Ingram (our pub expert), Michael Johnson (manager of the Duke of Wellington) and Michael Bach for the Chelsea Society. Missing from the photo line up was Tonya and, in particular, John Bodenham, who organised the petition website and his team of helpers who leafleted the area and collected signatures.

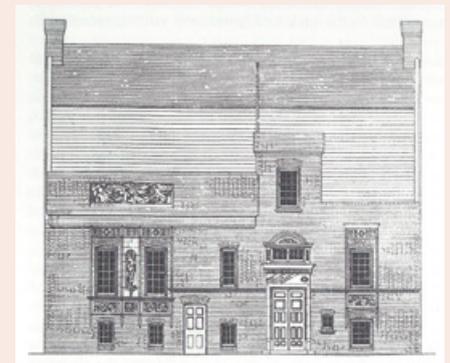


The Cross Keys

Correction to the Annual Report

In the 2014 Annual Report of the Society an illustration of 4 Cheyne Walk appeared on p. 69 as part of an article by David Le Lay on the forming of the Whistler Society. The caption to the illustration erroneously claimed that it was of the White House built for Whistler in Tite Street in 1878. This illustration and its caption were inserted without the consent of the author. The Society wishes unreservedly to apologise to David Le Lay for this editorial error. An engraving of E.W. Godwin's design for the White House in Tite Street is shown right.

In addition, due to a production error, pictures were reproduced in the Annual Report without any credits. The Society sincerely apologises for that and wishes to acknowledge the following persons and bodies for their generous permissions to allow reproduction of their pictures and/or work:
Don Grant
London Irish Rifles Association
London Metropolitan Archive
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



An engraving of Godwin's design for the White House

Pubs: Progress Report

MICHAEL BACH

Six Bells/Henry J Beans/The Ivy Chelsea Garden

195-197 King's Road, SW3

The former Six Bells pub is a Grade II listed building, which although the pub was established in 1722, was rebuilt in 1900. It was famous for its bowling green, which later became the pub garden. In the 1960s and 1970s it was famous for its first floor jazz club and was a player in the swinging sixties. The pub has traded as Henry J Beans for the last 35 years with a clientele who particularly liked the large garden – an unusual survival in Chelsea. The pub closed in 2014 following planning permission to convert the upper floors to flats.

The building has now been changed from a pub, with a first-floor function room, offices and flats above to a large restaurant with 275 covers, including a bar, lounge and garden, with six studio or one-bedroom flats on the upper floors. Changing a pub into a restaurant does not require planning consent, so the proposed change from a pub to restaurant was not apparent when permission was granted.

The Society was concerned about the loss of the pub and the first-floor function room, as there has been a major “thinning out” of King’s Road pubs over the last 15 years.

The new restaurant, owned by Caprice Holdings, opened on 30 March.



The Six Bells in the 1970's

The Hour Glass

279-283 Brompton Road, SW3

The Hour Glass on Brompton Road is under threat – the landlord has given notice to the publican to leave on 7 April. The owner proposes to change the style of the pub from a traditional free house pub with real ale and food and deliberately not a gastropub, to one with a greater emphasis on providing food.

The landlady, who has managed the pub for nearly 25 years, is understandably upset.



The Hour Glass

How we saved three pubs – looking back to 2012

MICHAEL BACH

In 2005 the Society held a very successful exhibition called “Last Orders: The Rise and Fall of Chelsea’s Pubs”, to record the growth of pubs from Chelsea Village, the riverside, around the Royal Hospital (a high concentration of drinkers) and a few along the main roads, followed by the impact of urban development in the 19th century. Apart from a few lost in the War, it was not until the last 25 years that pressure for changes of use and development have grown, mainly to change to restaurants and then, more recently, to turn them into mansions or flats.

Unfortunately the Council did not accept that there was a problem and the 2010 Local Plan provided no protection. The flood of applications to change pubs to housing led to a campaign to get the Council to change their policy – we lobbied all our Chelsea councillors and within a year of the 2010 plan being adopted the Council unanimously resolved to review the policy and started, with the Society’s strong support, to refuse every planning application starting at the beginning of 2012. Our job then was to support the Council at any Planning appeal.

At the Society’s 2012 Exhibition on Gardening in Chelsea, I met John Bodenham, who, although interested in the exhibition, was more excited by our campaign to save the Cross Keys and the Phene, and immediately committed to providing the finance for our campaign, to pay for websites for the two pubs to host a petition to save them www.savethecrosskeys.co.uk and www.savethephene.co.uk, and to organise a team of people to print and distribute leaflets and to canvas for signatures. This impetus and the ability to get our message across and get so many signatures (2,303 for the Cross Keys website + almost 3,000 on paper petitions and some 1,700 for the Phene), meant



Cross Keys Team celebrate reopening: Penny, Paul, Richard, Michael, Dale and Michael

that John Bodenham’s team played a critical in our campaign – developing the support base, while the Society focused on coordinating the planning case.

For the Cross Keys, in parallel with the social media campaign and canvassing, the Society formed a small team of highly-committed local residents, recruited experts, such as Dale Ingram, a pub heritage consultant, and Michael Johnson, a local publican. We also secured support from the Cabinet Member for Planning and our ward councillors, and when it came to the planning appeal hearing we had a formidable team who convinced the Planning Inspector that the pub was essential to the life of the community and was a viable business. We won, but the pub was squatted in autumn 2012 and, even after they were evicted, it took more than a year to find a buyer. It reopened for business last month. (see report above)

The Phene was different, as some local people supported the loss of the pub. Nevertheless, as before the Society (Terence Bendixson and Michael Bach) pulled together an excellent team of local residents, led by Tim Nodder, and the same experts, and coordinated the planning case, but this time it was for a full-blown planning appeal for which we had to play a full role as one of the parties. No one anticipated that the inquiry would take six days, but despite the filibustering by the

appellant’s team, we stayed the course and our arguments won the day, especially on the issue of viability, where the Council used expert advice. The Phene soon changed hands and reopened.

Finally, there was the **Queen’s Head**. In this case the pub set up a petition and developed support amongst its diverse customer base – the pub not only serves the local community, especially the local Trust housing, but also for decades has been a focus for the gay community. The Society’s role was more one of providing support, advice and ensuring that the Cabinet Member and ward councillor, Tim Coleridge, came to support and explain the Council’s change in policy. The Queen’s Head is still in business.

In summer 2013 nearly 18 months after the decision to introduce a policy to resist the loss of pubs, the new policy came into force. Since then we have had fewer direct challenges, but we have managed to resist changes to former pubs (former Princess of Wales and the Water Rat), resist redevelopment (The Trafalgar), but unfortunately changes in use to restaurants, and even estate agents and shops, do not need consent. Changes to restaurants are likely to be threat, such as the recent conversion of the Six Bells/ Henry J Beans. We still need to be vigilant, but at least we have the Council’s full support on this issue.

Planning Report

MICHAEL STEPHEN

On 26th January I joined the Council of the Society and was appointed Chairman of a new Planning Committee on the retirement of Terence Bendixson as Planning Secretary. I am very grateful to Terence for the firm foundations which he has established.

I have now met with most of the members of Council individually, and hope to meet with the remaining members soon. I have also met with KRACR and Vanguard and briefly with the Leader of RBKC, and will be meeting with other residents' associations and interest groups and with other key personnel at RBKC.

I have written a new introductory page for the planning function of the Society on its website, and am currently recruiting members for the Planning Committee.

Sloane-Stanley Conservation Area

I have reviewed the draft Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) issued by RBKC in February 2015 <http://bit.ly/1DZKRnr> and have commented on behalf of the Society. See <http://bit.ly/1Fi6LPj> The draft CAA is an impressive document, and was presumably written to evaluate, 46 years later, whether the original 1969 Conservation Area Proposals Statement is still valid or whether as a result of physical or policy changes the designation as a conservation area needs to be amended or repealed. There is however no such evaluation in the 2015 draft Appraisal. It is merely a snap shot.

In our view a useful section would be an evaluation of how the conservation area policies had operated in practice in the Sloane-Stanley Conservation Area since 1969, drawing attention to any controversial applications or appeals in which one or more of those policies have been relevant (or stating that there were none).

We also commented on whether there is a need for listing particular buildings

or streets in this conservation area under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in order to prevent the kind of negative development referred to in Section 6 of the draft Appraisal. It should also be stated whether any of these negative developments were carried out since the conservation area was established in 1969.

Garden Squares

I commented on the Society's website on 13 February welcoming the recent decision of the High Court not to allow encroachment by development into communal open-space at Courtfield Gardens.

The London Squares Preservation Act of 1931, though little used in court, is still an important safeguard which prohibits building on or under community-owned gardens. Kensington and Chelsea is such a densely-populated area that our remaining open spaces are precious, and even a small loss is important.

We have to preserve the places in the centre of London where it is still possible to enjoy trees and flowers, to allow children to play, to listen to birdsong, and to see the sky.

Royal Brompton and Royal Marsden Hospitals

We are fortunate to have in Chelsea two hospitals providing world-class tertiary medical services in different specialisations. Both hospitals have identified a genuine need for new buildings in which to provide those services in Chelsea. The Royal Brompton wishes to change the use of its building fronting the Fulham Road to residential and to sell or lease it to enable the construction of a 21st century facility, for which sufficient funds would not otherwise be available. However, the Royal Marsden wishes to expand its own

facilities into the same building. There is an excellent working relationship between the medical staff of the two hospitals, but there is currently no agreement on this important property issue.

From the point of view of the Chelsea Society we do of course wish to maintain and enhance the services provided by both hospitals, and their associated institutes in Chelsea. At the same time we wish to ensure so far as possible that any new land-use and buildings will maintain and enhance the character, the style, and the charm of Chelsea, and employment or business opportunities for local people.

I have therefore visited both hospitals and received briefings from them, and will read the report on this complex issue expected shortly from NHS England, before forming a view on what position the Society should take.

Basement Development

The developers receive substantial benefit from creating basements (otherwise they would not do it), but local residents receive nothing but damage to their quality of life for months and sometimes years. Some way needs to be found to redress this balance.

The Society therefore welcomes the adoption by RBKC of a new Policy (CL7), which restricts basement development to one storey, and limits the area of the property which can be occupied by a basement, specifically that it cannot exceed more than half of each garden. This will reduce the scale of works and the time they take, as two or three basement floors are much more difficult to construct than one and involve a good deal more excavation and construction work.

RBKC has now issued a draft Supplementary Planning Document: <http://bit.ly/1yaEm0o> containing detailed guidance for the preparation and execution of basement works. The Society welcomes this document, but is 

Planning Report (continued)

▶ concerned that the rules will be no more than a piece of paper unless RBKC has the will and the resources to monitor compliance with the rules and to enforce them where necessary. Many basement developers are responsible people who maintain proper control of their workforce but some are not.

Local residents should not be left to enforce their legal rights (if they have any) under the Party Wall Act 1996 or in tort, because litigation is too expensive and time-consuming, and involves too much risk for all but the richest.

I have drafted a response to the SPD and have sent a copy to all members of the Council of the Society. Helpful comments have been received and the response will be submitted to RBKC and published on the Society's website.

Affinity-Sutton Estate

This large estate was built in the early 20th century to provide housing for people with very limited incomes, and the owner is now a Housing Association called Affinity-Sutton, which is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency. They are responsible for managing all their assets to provide affordable housing not only in Chelsea, but also in many other parts of England.

The Chelsea Society believes that Chelsea should continue to be a place where people of all income groups can live, and is very conscious of the pressures on housing generated by the influx of foreign money and the consequent increases in the capital and rental values of dwellings of all kinds. This pressure is being felt not only by people whose incomes are very limited, but also by the middle-income groups whose parents and grandparents have lived in Chelsea for many years but can no longer afford to live here themselves. The Society is concerned for the future of both of these groups, and it is also concerned that the future land-use within the estate and the design of any new buildings should be compatible with

the character, the style and the charm of Chelsea.

Consistent with these objectives the Society will carefully examine any planning application which Affinity-Sutton may make for its estate in Chelsea, together with any alternative proposals

from interested parties. As these are not yet available it would be premature for the Society to take or to campaign for any particular position. The Society is not for the tenants nor against Affinity Sutton or vice versa.

Borough gets tough with construction projects to reduce their impact

In order to deliver improved living conditions for residents faced with major construction projects next door to them, RBKC has decided to tighten up their policy toward the management of construction sites and to managing the traffic they generate.

Code of Practice

To reduce the nuisance that construction sites cause to residents, RBKC proposes to adopt a new code of practice which will:

- reduce working hours for noisy work from 8am to 6.30pm to 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, but more importantly to forbid any noisy work on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays – at present they can do such work from 8am to 1pm on Saturdays;
- require better communication with neighbours before and through the development;
- prohibit generators, except where there is no permanent electrical source, and prohibit compressors;
- set maximum noise and vibration levels on a site-by-site basis;
- require noise monitoring; and
- require the adoption of noise insulation and provide alternative solutions for residents where

specific noise levels cannot be avoided.

Construction Traffic Management Plans (CTMPs)

To reduce and manage the impacts of construction traffic on neighbours, the Council has tightened up their requirements of contractors, including:

- Council officers meeting neighbouring residents, especially in sensitive locations to understand their views;
- residents meeting developers to influence the draft CTMP submitted at the planning application stage;
- making sure that the contractors understand the Council's policy and design their CTMP accordingly when filling in their application; and
- ensuring that the Council's policy of avoiding anything (ie skips, materials or equipment) being stored on the street is met, in order to limit the number, extent and duration of any suspensions.

For more detail see the Council's Pro Forma for CTMPs as part of the Draft SPD on Basements.

Progress Reports: Long-running sagas

MARTYN BAKER

Lots Road Power Station Development Site – A Long Running Saga

Just over nine years ago, John Prescott (then Deputy Prime Minister) over-ruled the Planning Inspector and approved the developer's application to develop both the Chelsea and the Fulham sides of this strategic site. Apart from taking off most of the roof of the Power Station, stripping out its interior and knocking down ancillary buildings, the developers have yet to start any visible construction work on the Chelsea side. So the 420 planned residential units, of which nearly 40% is to be affordable housing (98 rented, 46 Shared Equity and 21 Entry Level units for key workers), remain on the drawing board, together with modest amounts of office and retail space.

By contrast, work on the Fulham side across Chelsea Creek has been under way for well over a year following approval from Hammersmith & Fulham Council in March 2012 to vary considerably the 2006 planning permission for 169 private residential and 213 affordable units. This was on grounds they could not afford to create so many affordable units because there are no longer the same Government grants available to support building social housing. Now there will be only 110 affordable and 187 private units. While the objectionable 37-storey skyscraper will still be built, two other residential blocks will not, and another has been reduced in height, giving more open space.

Construction vehicles, denied direct access via Chelsea Harbour Drive, have to reach the Fulham side via the A3220/ Embankment, Lots Road East, and then a temporary bridge from the Chelsea side of the Creek.

By contrast in January 2011 (despite the lack of visible construction work) RBKC deemed the 2006 planning permission to have been implemented because the extent of the demolition work "was considered to constitute a material operation". There was subsequent talk about some changes to elevations of the Power Station shell, some reconfiguration of the proposed uses of the site and alterations to servicing arrangements, but it took until 2014 for the developers to apply for "minor material amendments" to the 2006 approved scheme.

- more traffic congestion arising from nearly 400 underground parking spaces on site; and
- half the new dwellings still being permitted one or more on-street parking permits despite already strong demand for existing parking spaces in Lots Village.

The Committee, in approving the "minor material amendments" nonetheless required the submission of a Service Management Plan to come back to the Committee for final decision, together with details of the proposed refuse storage and collection arrangements.



Picture: Michael Bach

Lots Road Power Station – lots happening in Fulham, roof open to the sky in Chelsea

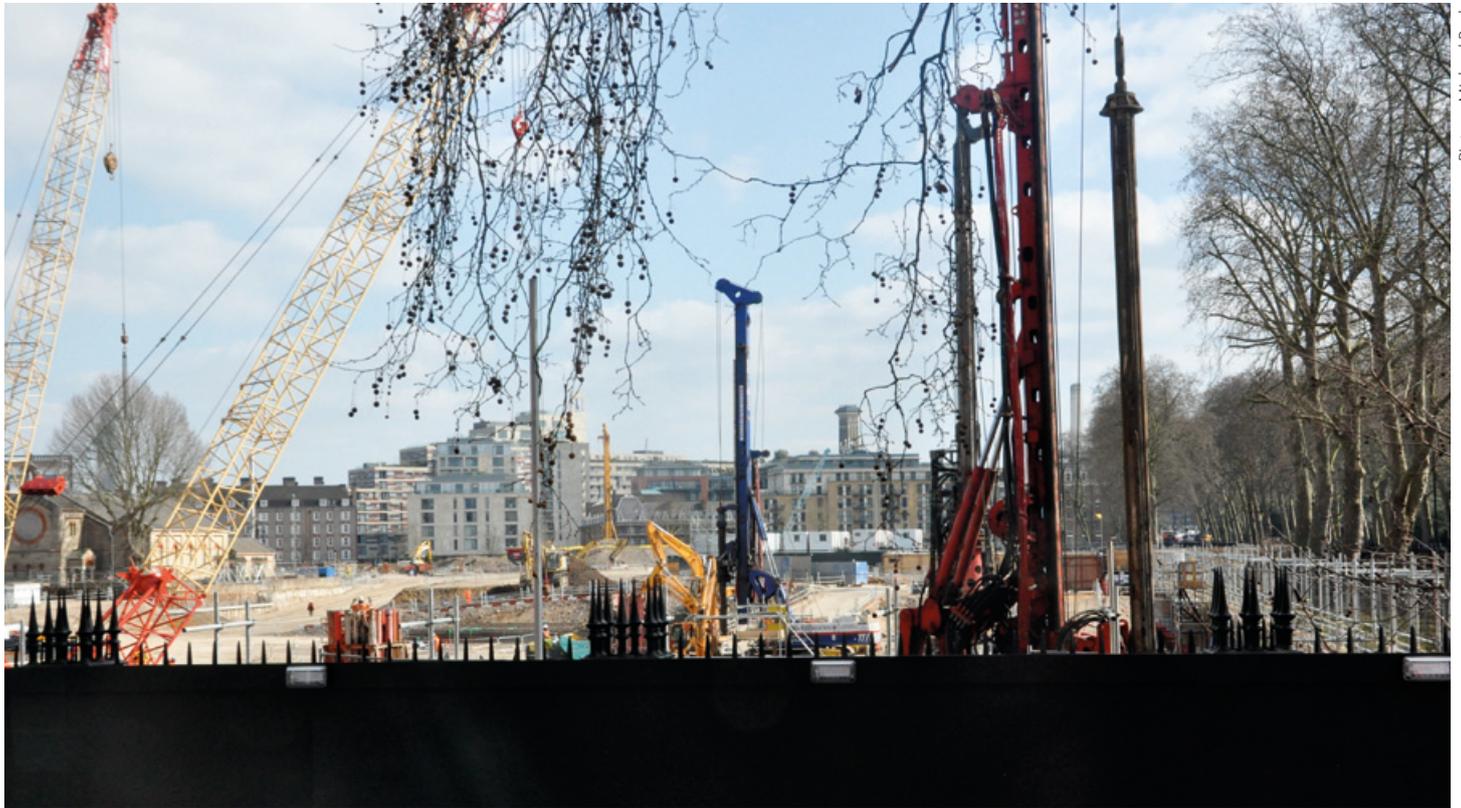
These were approved by RBKC's Planning Applications Committee last May despite local objections centred on the cumulative impacts on the infrastructure and amenity of Lots Village resulting from:

- more than doubling the population in the area;
- generating substantial volumes of commercial traffic to service the site;
- producing 86,000 litres of waste a week to be collected from a roadside loading bay right opposite homes in Lots Road;

Nine months later these have yet to be submitted, and a marketing suite to attract buyers to "Chelsea Waterfront" remains closed to the public. In the meantime the site has been included in the newly-designated Lots Village Conservation Area, and local residents are discussing with Council officers various ways of improving the public realm, streetscape and infrastructure, utilising funds due from the developers under the S106 agreement once at least half of the planned residential units have been completed.

Project Updates

MICHAEL BACH



Picture: Michael Bach

Works at Chelsea Barracks

Work begins on Chelsea Barracks project

Eight years ago the site was Qatari Diar bought the Chelsea Barracks site for £1 billion. For the last year or so the site-wide basement storeys have been being excavated. Now at last, on 16 March, work began on site on the first phase of three 8-storey blocks containing just 74 flats, priced between £2 million and £50 million, will be completed by 2018.

Westminster City Council granted outline planning consent in 2011, but there were concerns that the scheme had stalled after the site lay idle for two years. When completed the £3 billion development will have up to 448 homes, including 123 affordable units, as well as gardens, open spaces and a public sports centre, shops and a children's playground. A £78 million contribution will be made to fund the affordable housing.

Consultation outcome Crossrail 2: safeguarding directions

CROSSRAIL 2 is a proposal for new underground railway running from Wimbledon to New Southgate and Tottenham Hale, via Central London, including Chelsea.

"Safeguarding" is an early part of the planning process. The Government issues a Direction to local planning authorities asking that TfL is notified of any proposed development along the safeguarded route that might impact upon the plans for Crossrail 2.

Parts of the proposed Crossrail 2 route have been covered by safeguarding since 1991, but TfL have carried out a number of planning and design studies, which have led to a new Direction to safeguard the updated route. The consultation on

this proposed Direction ran from 20 November 2014 to 29 January 2015.

The Department for Transport has now published its response to the consultation, and has published revised maps of the safeguarded areas at <http://bit.ly/1DZMQYY> the sheets relevant to Chelsea are 15-18A. These show the safeguarded area for the underground works.

Safeguarding entitles those who own property in the safeguarded area and who meet the qualifying criteria to compel TfL to purchase their property from them, if they wish. General information about this is available at: <http://bit.ly/1H1VgQD>

There are also three "Areas of Surface Interest" in Chelsea shown on sheet 16 – the Fire Station, Dovehouse Green and land in Sydney Street. The Government says that TfL have committed to review a number of AOSIs following more detailed consultation, but have not specifically

mentioned the sites in Chelsea. The Chelsea Society will investigate this.

RBKC had commented in the consultation that:

- 1 They support the Crossrail 2 scheme and welcome the proposed station (near Dovehouse Green) in Chelsea. Reference to a station at World's End should be removed from future documents as it is not the preferred route for either RBKC or TfL.
- 2 They have concerns regarding the AOSI at Dovehouse Green. The site is a former burial ground and provides valuable public green space for local residents. The impact on Dovehouse Green and the surrounding historic townscape need to be carefully considered to minimise disruption to these valuable locations.
- 3 The AOSI at the existing Chelsea Farmers' Market is included within development plans for the Royal Brompton Hospital. Proposed redevelopment at the Royal Brompton Hospital conflicts with the site being contained within the Area of Surface Interest for Crossrail 2. (The Royal Brompton itself made a similar comment).

The Department for Transport has responded to the consultation in relation to Chelsea as follows:

"A Crossrail 2 station in Chelsea would improve rail-based public transport. The station would also improve connectivity to the Royal Brompton and Royal Marsden [and Chelsea and Westminster] hospitals, and provide access to the existing retail and commercial developments along King's Road. Crossrail 2 would offer improved journey times for those travelling to or from King's Road.

The current station location is supported by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea over the options of a station further west on the King's Road, or not having a station in Chelsea. However, more analysis is required before a final decision is taken. Any station built in Chelsea will need

to provide good value for money; this will be looked at as part of the business case for Crossrail 2, to be completed later this year.

The Chelsea Society will be participating in this process.

The summary of responses and the Government's Response to the Consultation on updating the Safeguarding for Crossrail 2 was published on 24 March. See: <http://bit.ly/1BOmtk0> (pdf)

MICHAEL STEPHEN

Mayor's London Infrastructure Plan 2050: Tolled tunnels

The Mayor of London in his bid for major infrastructure for London by 2050 floated the idea of a new inner orbital tolled road tunnel that could reduce congestion by 20 per cent in Central London while freeing up space on the surface to vastly improve the public realm and significantly improve conditions for the most space efficient and healthy surface transport modes of walking, cycling and bus. The "illustrative route" in our area would run from Westway (A40) parallel to the Earl's Court One-Way System going under the Thames with entry/exit points at Westway, Cromwell Road and Battersea. The estimated cost would be £30 billion, as much as the cost of Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2 put together.

Major road-building in London has proved to be a political graveyard. The 1973 GLC election was lost because of Ringway 1 – on much the same route as this scheme – and the 1990 London Borough elections brought about the end of the Department of Transport corridor studies, which included the so-called Western Environmental Relief Road. Should we really see the latest proposal as a "runner"?

MICHAEL BACH

RBKC Transport Work Programme 2015/16

Sloane Street – a scheme to develop and improve the streetscape of the corridor and adjacent roads by reducing street clutter.

Quietway cycle routes – including back street routes from Albert Bridge towards Holbein Place and north towards South Kensington. For a map of the routes see: <http://bit.ly/1ahOWII>

Chelsea Bridge - painting and lighting refurbishment.

Crossrail 2 station - continue to work closely with TfL through the station design process, with a view to ensuring the optimum station design in this sensitive and important part of the King's Road.

Garden Waste

The Council proposes to stop the garden waste collection service on 1 April. The Council sent out 7,600 survey forms and got a 20% response (very high for anything in this Borough), but when asked whether people would be prepared to pay an "annual subscription fee" of £35-50, half said "yes" and half said "no". The Council is considering whether to have a second consultation.

If you would like the Council to maintain this service you can sign a petition on the Council's website: <http://bit.ly/1xxLDH8>

Developing Market: 10% of Chelsea buyers are developers

International buyers accounted for 56.5% of Chelsea specialist Russell Simpson's sales last year, while nearly three quarters of new tenants were from overseas. The profile of purchasers was: 9.7% developers, 13.4% buy-to-let, 45.1% owner-occupiers and 31.8% as "second home".

Source: *Prime Resi: Journal of Prime Property*, January 2015

Anniversaries in 2015

Last year we remembered the beginning of the First World War in 1914 in the Society's Summer Exhibition: Chelsea in the Great War. This year we have:

800th anniversary of Magna Carta (15/19 June) with no obvious Chelsea connection this is being celebrated by a special Magna Carta garden at the Chelsea Flower Show (19-23 May)

200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo (18 June) There will be a major exhibition at the Wellington Museum at Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, and at the National Army Museum <http://www.nam.ac.uk/waterloo200/news-and-events/events/waterloo-lives-pop-up-pub/> The iconic picture with a Chelsea connection is, of course, David Wilkie's *The Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Waterloo Dispatch* (1822), which shows them seated in the

road outside the now long-gone pubs. The picture was commissioned by the Duke of Wellington and shows a group of wounded, invalided and elderly soldiers celebrating the British victory at Waterloo. (See picture below) Other Wellingtonian connections in Chelsea include Wellington Square and the former Wellesley Arms, now Sydney Arms in Sydney Street.

100th anniversary of the Women's Institute The Fulham and Chelsea branch meet in the Blanchard Room at the Hollywood Arms, 45 Hollywood Road at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month (2nd if first is a Bank Holiday)

75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain (10 July – 31 October 1940) and the London Blitz (7 October 1940 – 6 June 1941) View the Bomb Map of Chelsea <http://bombsight.org>

70th anniversary of the end of World War II (8 May)

50th anniversary of the creation of RBKC (1 April) No celebrations – but after all the merger was strongly opposed by Chelsea!

John Singer Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends

National Portrait Gallery, until 25 May: This exhibition tells Singer Sargent's life story through the portraits of his friends in Paris, Broadway (Worcestershire), London, Boston, New York and Europe. For a large part of his life, from 1887 to his death in 1925 his base was his studio at 33 Tite Street, expanding into 31 Tite Street in 1900, although for his large-scale work he used The Avenue Studios, in Sydney Close, off Fulham Road.



David Wilkie (1822) *The Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Waterloo Dispatch*

Picture Credit: English Heritage Photo Library

Other News

Council appoints new Executive Director for Planning

Mr Graham Stallwood has been appointed Executive Director for Planning and Borough Development for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. This key post incorporates responsibility for planning policy, planning application decisions, conservation, building control, arboriculture and land charges.

Currently Head of Development Management and Conservation for the Royal Borough, he will replace Jonathan Bore and take up his new role later this year.



Graham Stallwood - RBKC Executive Director for Planning

General Election

Candidates:

- Simon Bailey *Liberal Democrats*
- Greg Hands *The Conservative Party*
- Adrian Noble *UK Independence Party*
- Guy Rubin *Green Party*
- Alexandra Sanderson *Labour Party*

Local By-election: Stanley Ward

Following the resignation of Sir Merrick Cockell a by-election will be held on 7 May in Stanley Ward.

Candidates:

- Isobel Atkinson *Labour Party*
- Ian Henderson *Independent*
- Kim Taylor-Smith *The Conservative Party*

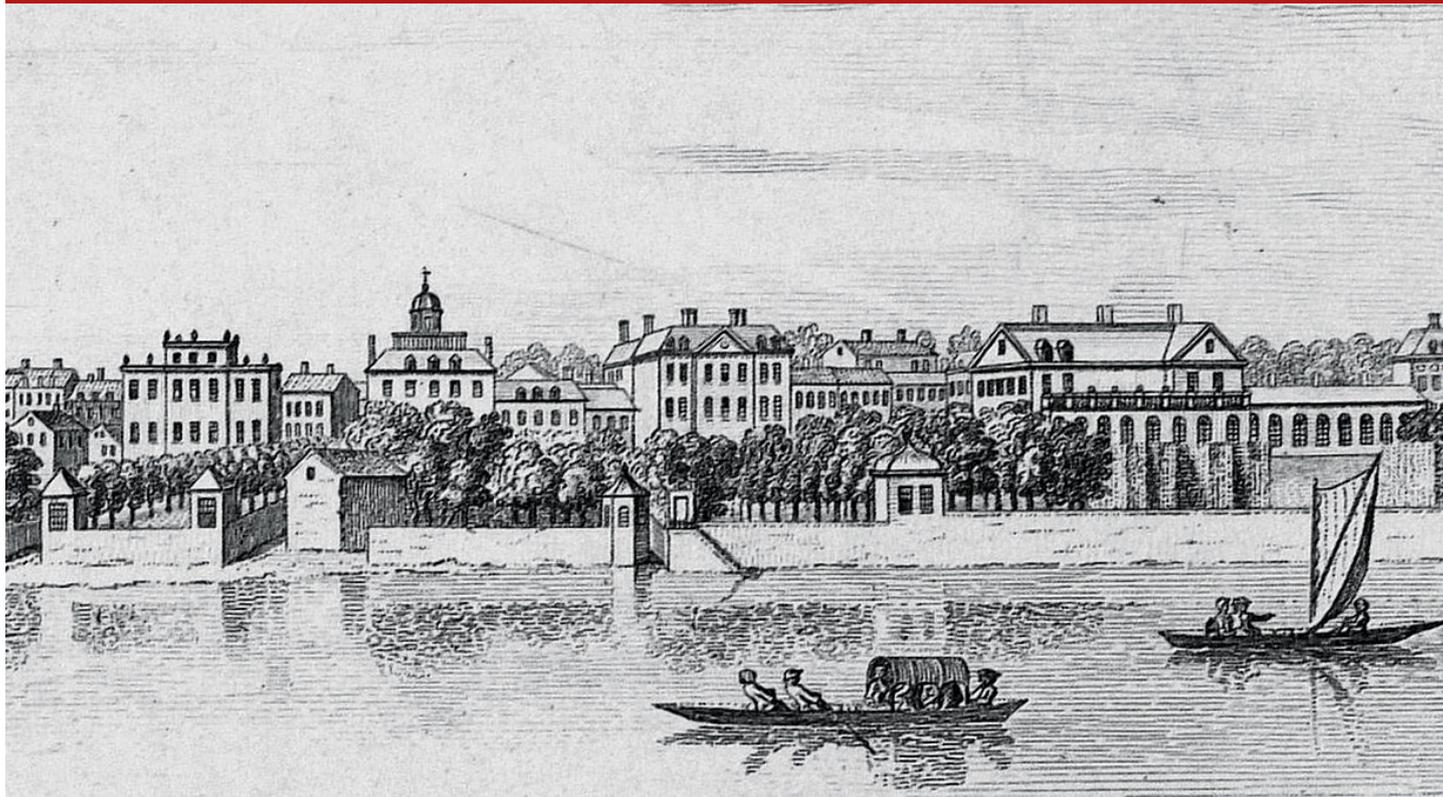
Heal's have closed

Heal's, famous for their beds, furniture and modern design, set up their third shop at 234 King's Road in 1995. Last month, after 20 years, Heal's King's Road store closed. They are downsizing and relocating to The Queen's Building in Westbourne Grove – another former cinema.

The King's Road store will become a Metro Bank. Due to changes introduced by the Government, the loss of a major shopping unit to a bank does not even need planning consent. However, the changes to shopfront, signage and the introduction of ATMs do need consent, and, because of the brashness and scale of the signage the Council has advised the bank that they would not get consent for the applications submitted, which were withdrawn on 9 April. Watch this space!



Brompton Hospital and Marsden Hospital: What direction are they going?



The Riverside Houses of East Chelsea

DAMIAN GREENISH

The theme this year of the Society's season of lectures is 'Celebrate the River'. The season opened on Monday 2 February with a talk by David Le Lay entitled '*The Riverside Houses of East Chelsea*'. It was a bitterly cold evening, but that did not deter the members of the Society from packing the Small Hall at Chelsea Old Town Hall to hear David tell us about four important houses that were built in the eighteenth century on the banks of the Thames (long before the construction of the Embankment) between the Physic Garden and the Royal Hospital.

The Swan Inn, although never formerly identified, was considered to be the mansion close to the Physic Garden as shown on the three panoramic views: paintings by Tillemans and Canaletto and an engraving of a drawing by Maurer. Having been taken through a history

of the building, David reminded us that the Swan was the original destination of Doggett's Coat and Badge Race. The mansion was demolished in 1780 when the Swan was converted into a brewery.

Turret House was thought to have been built in the early eighteenth century. Again we were taken through a history of its owners and occupants. We were reminded that between 1730 and 1756 the building had been a school for boys and the prospectus from that time gave an interesting insight as to the then configuration of the buildings. It included a remarkable arcaded walkway, part of which in Paradise Walk managed to survive until very recently, but sadly is now demolished. Following closure of the school, the house itself reverted to private use before being demolished in 1816.

Gough House was built in about 1704 by the Earl of Carbery and survived until

1966 and so the history of this building is well documented. David took us through a detailed description of the house itself and its colourful owners. We were told that over the years the building had had a number of uses: a private house, a private school for girls and then part of the Victoria Hospital for Children. The building was finally demolished in 1966 to make way for the St Wilfred's Home for the Elderly.

Walpole House, adjoining the Royal Hospital, was designed by Sir John Vanbrugh for Sir Robert Walpole and completed in 1725. Sadly, all that now remains of this fine house is the Orangery and some vaults, both within the grounds of Gordon House. David took us through the mesmerising story of how Sir Robert came to acquire the site, shenanigans which would not disappoint any modern property speculator.

Riverside Houses: The riverside houses of East Chelsea as seen in an engraving of a drawing by J. Maurer published in 1744.

From left to right the houses are: the Swan Inn, Turrett House, Gough House and Walpole House. (Maurer View of Chelsea)

Society Events

David's talk was not only wholly illuminating on the history of these great Chelsea houses, but also brought to life the characters of the people who designed them and lived in them. He drew some interesting parallels with many of the challenges facing Chelsea today; the loss of schools, the destruction of historic buildings by developers, basement excavation, houses being left unoccupied for long periods, to mention but a few. The questions at the end of the talk reflected the depth of knowledge and understanding of the history of Chelsea by the audience. It was a fine start to the Society's lecture season and we are again indebted to David for giving up his time to educate and entertain us on an important part of the history of Chelsea.

For those interested in further information on these houses, there are relevant articles written by David in the Annual Reports for 2010 and 2013.

The evening was as usual impeccably organised by Paulette.



David Le Lay and the Mayor

Lecture in Brompton Cemetery

A Friends of the Brompton Cemetery event

On Saturday 16 May at 2.30 p.m. in the Cemetery Chapel

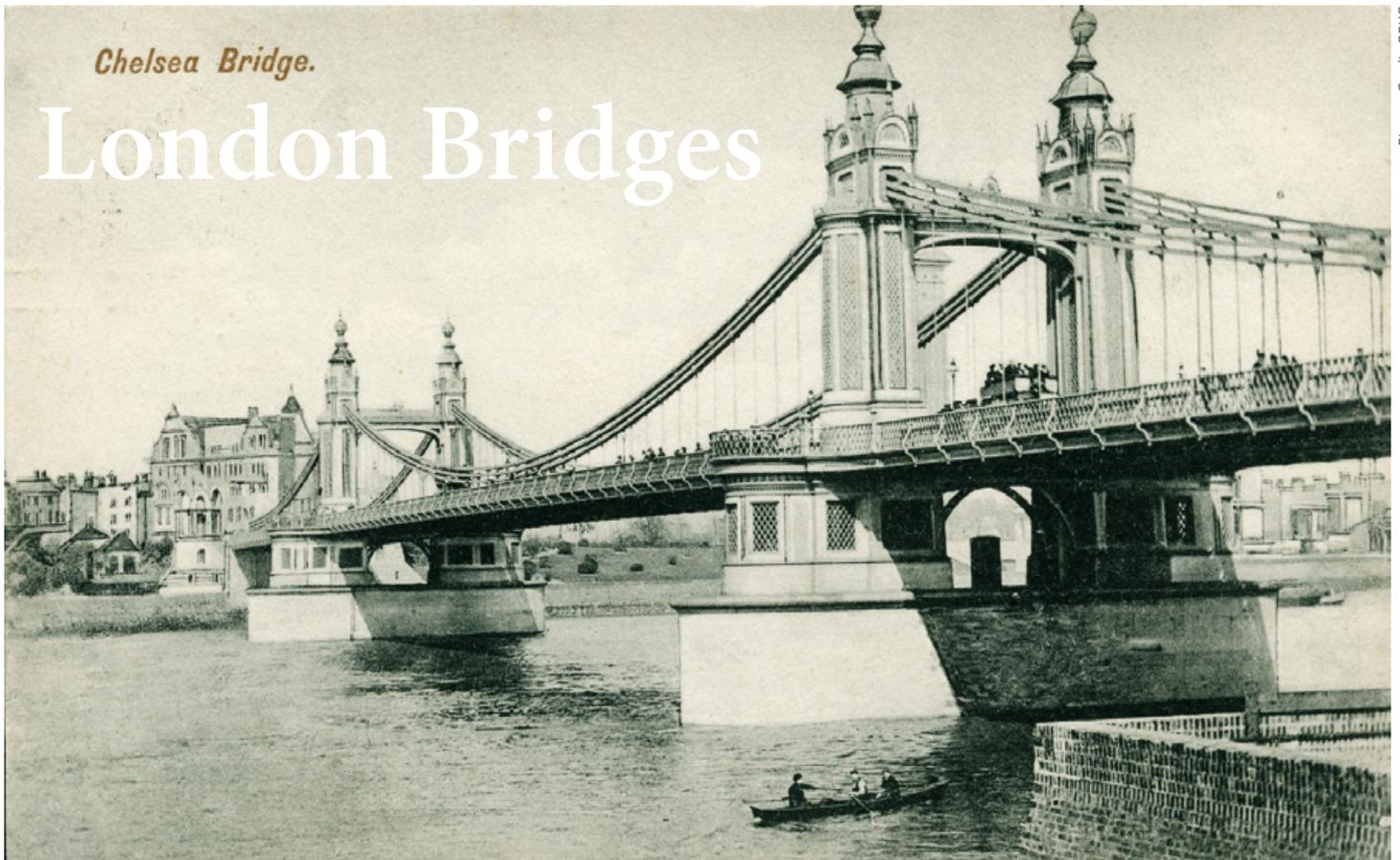
Ann Treneman, the journalist, will talk about her book

100 Graves To Visit Before You Die

Tickets £10

at the Chapel door on the day





How many bridges over the Thames do you think there are in London? Ten? Fifteen? Twenty? Actually there are thirty-three, counting all separate footbridges and railway bridges as well as road bridges, so members of the Chelsea Society learned from Peter Matthews.

It all started with the Romans, who built the first London Bridge around 50 AD, very near its present location, sinking piles into the river bed at low tide to support a wooden structure. It wasn't long before Boadicea destroyed it, so the Romans built a second bridge in 80AD. How long this second bridge lasted we don't know, but after the Romans left around 400AD London Bridge did not survive much longer. But successive waves of invaders destroyed and rebuilt several bridges, and it wasn't until 1209 that the first stone bridge was built, to be followed soon after by a bridge at Kingston.

As London grew, the need for bridges to link the North with the South Bank increased, but it wasn't until the 18th century that other bridges were built - at

Putney, Westminster, Hampton Court, Kew, Blackfriars, Richmond, and Battersea. In the 19th century Vauxhall, Waterloo, Southwark, Hammersmith were all built and opened, along with several railway bridges. It was not until 1858 that the first Chelsea Bridge was opened, to be followed by Chelsea's jewel - the Albert Bridge - in 1873. Joseph Bazalgette - he of the London sewage system fame - designed and built the second Hammersmith Bridge in 1887 and the second Battersea Bridge in 1890.

Most of the bridges you see today are not as originally designed - they have been widened, strengthened, adapted, and in many cases completely rebuilt. Nobody knows quite how many London Bridges there have been; the present London Bridge wasn't opened (by the Queen) until 1973 after its predecessor opened in 1831, was sold off, stone by stone, to Arizona, where it remains today as a tourist attraction.

The most famous of all London bridges, to be seen on all the tourist postcards, is, of course Tower Bridge, the result of a competition to design a bridge

under which commercial sailing ships could pass into the Pool of London, that stretch of the Thames between the Tower and London Bridge, which was then the hub of shipping and warehousing.

Inspired painters, such as Canaletto, Turner, Manet and Whistler, have lived on the banks of the Thames. In fact Whistler, our own Chelsea painter, has a statue at the northwest end of Battersea Bridge, and from his house nearby painted his celebrated Nocturnes.

There are always new bridges planned. The one causing the most comment at the moment is Thomas Heatherwick's Garden Bridge, to run from The Embankment at Temple to the South Bank. It will cost £165 million - the most expensive footbridge ever constructed, mainly because of the long-lasting materials of which it is to be built, and partly because of the extravagance and whimsicality of its design.

While a few of London's bridges may be considered as aesthetically sterile and unpleasing, most may be said to be works of art, reflecting the times and pride with which they were built.

JOHN DONCASTER

We need volunteers!

Volunteering is an essential part of the smooth running of local civic groups like ours. In the last few months we have successfully attracted new volunteers to take on a variety of initiatives and activities. To give you an idea of the opportunities here are some examples:

Communication

Adam, originally from New York, has made Chelsea his home. He first got in touch with the Society over a local planning development that concerned him, now he is heading up the communications side of the Society. There are more opportunities to become part of a small group who ensure our work is communicated more frequently, to members and to the wider community.

Social Media

Sally was born in Chelsea and has spent most of her life here and now keeps the social media (aka Twitter, Instagram and Facebook) up to date and can train others to help – so we can cover a variety of interests from architecture, art, history, local enterprise, making us even more appealing and relevant to members and local visitors. We have an excellent following now and a brilliant Instagram page!

Environment

Ergem is a local environmental specialist who is helping us look at this issue locally. We are not as good as we could be on this front and there are many ways to make a difference in the neighbourhood.

Digital

James contacted us to help with the website updates. There are other opportunities to support different areas on the website including planning updates, event information and historical material.

Events

Charlie offered to volunteer and soon began liaising with the Totally Thames to organise a new river event on 1st September. We are often asked to help

promote and publicise local activities – could you help in this way?

Membership

Michael, a long-time member, has helped the Membership Secretary at lectures and will begin getting out and about to deliver leaflets and marketing materials to attract new members. This is an ideal way to get to know the area, get out and about and keen fit all at the same time!

Exhibition

Next year we have the Exhibition which **Camilla** is heading which will provide many opportunities to support the work we do.

Historians

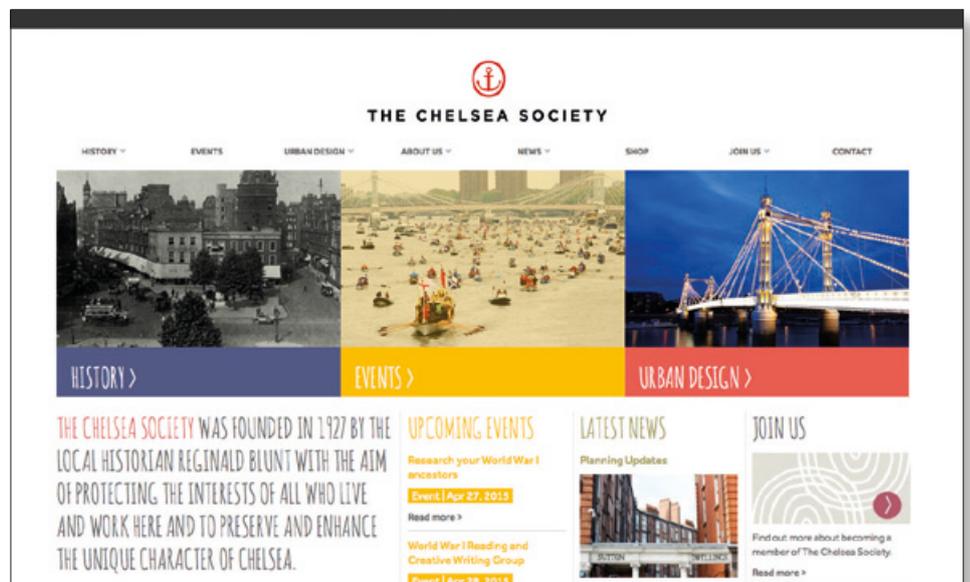
We are looking for a small team of local enthusiasts who can answer public enquiries on local historical matters and ensure the archive materials are brought to a wider audience.

Volunteering

Athina started volunteering a few months ago – she first contacted the Society regarding the Cross Keys and wanted to get more involved in local community initiatives. Now she is heading up volunteering and regularly meets those who are keen to support activities. There is a page on the website with a list of current opportunities and a form to complete which Athina will match with members' interests and experience. She is looking for locals who want to run regular member get-togethers – which will allow people to find out about the different activities where they can lend a hand.

On 28th April we are holding a drinks event for those who volunteer their time to the Society – to thank them for the kind support.

So there really is no better time to get in touch with Athina and get involved locally. Whatever your interests and however much time you can offer we'd like to hear from you, email volunteers@chelseasociety.org.uk



Dates for your Diary

Dates:

Visit to Merchant Taylors Hall	21 April - CANCELLED
Rescheduled Visit to Merchant Taylor Hall	21 July at 11.30am
General Election and Local Election in Stanley Ward	7 May
Chelsea Flower Show: Royal Hospital South Grounds	19-23 May
Visit to 18 Stafford Terrace	21 May - FULL
Summer Meeting	30 June at 6.30pm
Doggett's Coat & Badge Race: Cadogan Pier	1 August at 12.00 noon
Thames Festival Event	1 September at 11.00 am
Extra Visit to Merchant Taylors Hall	14 Sept at 11.30am
Lecture	26 October at 6.30pm at Chelsea Old Town Hall
Future of Chelsea	Date and place to be confirmed

Membership 2015

Membership fees for the current year were due on the 1st January. If you have not yet paid please do so as the Membership Secretary is about to remove non-payers from our database. Contact: membership@chelseasociety.org.uk

Get in Touch

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

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

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

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

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