



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity 276264

Founded in 1927 to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea for the public benefit.

Members of the Council of The Society

as at the first AGM on 16th May 1928

Mr. C.H. St. John Hornby (1867-1946) - Chairman



1923 - National Portrait Gallery, London

Charles Harold St John Hornby was born on 25 June 1867 at Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, the eldest son of the Reverend Charles Edward Hornby, then a curate, and his wife, Harriet, daughter of the Revd Henry Turton, who was the vicar of Betley, Staffordshire. He was educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford, where he received a bachelor's degree in classics.

In 1892, Hornby was called to the bar, but his friend Freddy Smith offered him a partnership in WH Smith, the family business. He was quickly given increasing responsibility for handling the firm's external relations. This included dealing with the new breed of newspaper and magazine proprietors, such as Alfred Harmsworth, whose brashness was antipathetic to the older partners. It also included negotiating the contracts with railway companies for the operation of bookstalls on stations and the sale of advertising spaces which at that time constituted the bulk of the firm's business.

This most dramatic episode in the firm's history pointed the way to the future structure of its business, centred on shops rather than stalls on stations, and established Hornby's position as the strategist of the firm. During the First World War he bore even more responsibility, as four of the six partners left on military service. He continued to be the dominant figure in W. H. Smith, which became a private company in 1929 following the death of Freddy Smith, Viscount Hambleden.

For many years Hornby's major relaxation outside business was his private press, the Ashdene Press. He first set up a hand press at his father's house in Ashdene, Hertfordshire, in 1895. In 1899, the year after his marriage, he moved his press to his new home, Shelley House on Chelsea Embankment, and continued to produce highly regarded limited editions from there until 1935. He had two typefaces specially designed for his press, Subiaco and Ptolemy. His passion for fine printing and bookbinding was reflected in his attitude to the printing department of W. H. Smith.

Hornby was High Sheriff of the County of London from 1906-07.

Charles Harold St John Hornby died at his home, Chantmarle, Cattistock, Dorchester, on 26 April 1946. His clear and perceptive mind, his energetic, decisive, and determined character, and shrewd business sense, had made him the most influential figure in W. H. Smith in the twentieth century.

One of his sons, Michael (1899-1987), also became a director of W. H. Smith. Michael's son, Sir Simon Hornby, who died in 2010 aged 75, was President of the Chelsea Society – and chaired our first “Vision for Chelsea” in 1998. He too was a director of WH Smith, and led the company during a phase of expansion and diversification. He was also a sometimes controversial chairman of the Royal Horticultural Society and the Design Council.

His other son, Sir Roger Hornby (1904-1987), was senior partner at the stockbrokers Cazenove.

His daughter, Dame Rosamund Holland-Martin (1914-2001), led the NSPCC from (1969-1988), and was married to Admiral Sir Deric Holland-Martin

Rt. Hon. Mary Caroline Milbanke (née Stuart-Wortley), Countess of Lovelace (1848-1941)



Mary photographed in 1890 (the V&A Collection)

She was the daughter of Jane Stuart-Wortley and Sir Reginald Talbot, and was the second wife of Ralph, 2nd Earl of Lovelace; She was an architect, and friend of Charles Voysey, the well-known architect of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Her husband Ralph was the son of Ada Byron, the poet's only legitimate child, who married the first Lord Lovelace in 1834 and died in 1852. Ralph was brought up by his grandmother, the poet's widow, and was an enthusiastic Alpine climber. The family lived at Ockham Park, at Ockham, Surrey, and in 1920 Mary published a biography of her husband.

Ralph's mother, Ada, is recognised as the very first computer-programmer. In 1833, her mentor, the scientist and polymath Mary Somerville*, introduced her to Charles Babbage, the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics who had already attained celebrity for his visionary plans for gigantic clockwork calculating machines.

Ada was deeply intrigued by Babbage's plans for an even more complicated device he called the Analytical Engine, which was to combine an array of gears with his earlier Difference Engine, and with an elaborate punch-card operating system. It was never built, but the design had all the essential elements of a modern computer.

*Mary Fairfax Somerville was a Scottish scientist and polymath. She studied mathematics and astronomy, and was nominated to be jointly the first female member of the Royal Astronomical Society. Somerville College, Oxford was named after her.

Lord Ernle MVO PC (1851-1937)

Rowland Edmund Prothero, 1st Baron Ernle lived at 3 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, and was President of the MCC in 1924/1925. He was an agricultural expert, administrator, journalist, author and Conservative politician. He was the son of the Reverend Canon George Prothero, Rector of St. Mildred's Church, Whippingham, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, and his wife, Emma. He was the brother of Sir George Prothero and Admiral Arthur Prothero. He was educated at Marlborough College and Balliol College, Oxford, where he gained a 1st class honours degree in Modern History in 1875. He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1878.

He was a Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford between 1875 and 1891, and was Proctor between 1883 and 1884. He played first-class cricket for Hampshire. He edited the Quarterly Review between 1893 and 1899, and from 1898 to 1918, he was chief agent for the 11th Duke of Bedford.

He was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament for Oxford University at a by-election in 1914, holding the seat until 1919. He held office under David Lloyd George as President of the Board of Agriculture, with a seat in the cabinet, between December 1916 and 1919, in which role he introduced a guaranteed price for wheat. He became a member of the Privy Council in 1916, and in 1919 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Ernle, of Chelsea in the County of London.

The barony became extinct upon his death, as his only son, Rowland John Prothero (1894–1918), had died from wounds suffered in the First World War.

Sir Albert Gray KC, of Catherine Lodge, Trafalgar Square, Chelsea.

Was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Society for Comparative Legislation & International Law

In 1889 he wrote a paper on the Local Government Act and future reform

He was President of the Hakluyt Society (a text-publication society, founded in 1846 which published scholarly editions of primary records of historic voyages, travels and other geographical material).

Aubrey T. Lawrence OBE KC

Lawrence was born 15 January 1875, the son of Sir Trevor Lawrence, 2nd Baronet and his wife Elizabeth, Lady Lawrence. He was educated at Shrewsbury and at Christ Church, Oxford where he took a first class degree in Greats. When he left university he was called to the Bar.

Lawrence was a member of Inner Temple. He shared his chambers – Essex Court Chambers – with a young Stafford Cripps (his second cousin) and was appointed King's Counsel in 1927. Lawrence was appointed as a member of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his legal work. He was also the author of numerous books, such as 'A practical treatise on the law relating to the church and clergy', a work he wrote with Cripps.

Alongside his legal work, Lawrence was a successful local politician. He was Chancellor of the Dioceses of: Sheffield in 1914, Worcester in 1920, Peterborough in 1922, Southwell in 1922, Winchester in 1924, Leicester in 1927 and Portsmouth in 1927. He was also a governor of Shrewsbury School.

Percy Lovell

Organising Secretary of The London Society. Was secretary to the London Survey Committee, and prepared the two first volumes of the historical Survey of St. Pancras. He died at Leicester in 1950

Graham Petrie R.I. (1858-1940)

Represented the Chelsea Arts Club on the Council. The brother of the watercolour landscape painter Elizabeth PETRIE, Graham Petrie was widely travelled. He was an active exhibitor, showing in London at the Royal Academy, Royal Institute of Oil Painters, Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Fine Art Society, Dowdeswell Galleries, Grosvenor Gallery, New Gallery, New English Art Club and Society of British Artists, a society that appointed James Abbot McNeil WHISTLER its President in 1886.

Petrie was among those invited to attend a dinner organised by William Christian SYMONDS to congratulate Whistler on being made an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Munich, a dinner held at the Criterion in Piccadilly on 1 May 1889.

Emslie J. Horniman (1863-1932)



was an anthropologist, philanthropist and Liberal Party politician.

The son of Frederick Horniman, sometime Liberal member of parliament for Penryn and Falmouth, Horniman was educated privately and at the Slade School of Fine Art. He spent his youth travelling widely, visiting Egypt, Morocco, Central Africa, India, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina, China, Japan, and the United States. Like his father, the founder of the Horniman Museum, he was an enthusiastic collector of arts and "curiosities."

In 1898 he was elected to the London County Council to represent Chelsea and was re-elected in 1901 and 1904.

At the 1906 general election Horniman was chosen to contest the parliamentary constituency of Chelsea by the Liberals. There was a large swing to the party, and he was elected, unseating the Conservative MP, Charles Whitmore. He served only one term in the Commons, losing the seat to his Conservative opponent, Samuel Hoare, in January 1910.

In 1911 he laid out and donated a public park in north Kensington to the London County Council, since known as Emslie Horniman's Pleasance.

Horniman inherited the Horniman's Tea company founded by his grandfather, and in 1912 purchased Burford Priory, Oxfordshire. He sold the Horniman's Tea company in 1918 to their rivals, J. Lyons & Co.

He married Laura Isabel Plomer, and they had three children. He died at his London residence "Garden Corner" on Chelsea Embankment in July 1932. He left an estate of over

£300,000 and a number of artworks, most of which he bequeathed to the National Art Collections Fund. £10,000 was given to the London County Council to build an extension to the Horniman Museum, based in Forest Hill. In 1944 the Royal Anthropological Institute established the Emslie Horniman Anthropological Scholarship Fund in his memory to "promote the study of the growth of civilisations, habits and customs, religious and physical characteristics of the non-European peoples and of prehistoric and non-industrial man in Europe."

E.J. Chapman FRSA

Vice-President, Chelsea Chamber of Commerce

Reginald Blunt (1857-1944) – Hon. Secretary



Portrait by Walter Greaves (RBKC collection)

Reginald Blunt was the son of the Rector of Chelsea Old Church. He founded the Chelsea Society in 1927 to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea for the public benefit, by protecting the historic fabric, history and traditions of Chelsea and influencing future environmental changes. He lived at 12 Carlyle Mansions. The first meeting of the Society was in 1927 at Wentworth House, Swan Walk, at the Chelsea Embankment.

Blunt was a conservation pioneer and his work in Chelsea in the 1920s and 1930s led to the foundation in 1957 of the Civic Trust, the creation of Conservation Areas under the Civic Amenities Act 1967, and the movement from 1960 onwards to use town planning laws to save Britain's historic towns and cities from being irretrievably changed by the post-war enthusiasm for 'comprehensive redevelopment' and modernisation.

Reginald Blunt's publications include:

An illustrated historical handbook to the parish of Chelsea, 1900

The Carlyles' Chelsea home: being some account of No. 5, Cheyne Row

Paradise Row, or a broken piece of Old Chelsea, 1906

The Wonderful Village, Mills and Boon, 1918

By Chelsea Reach: Some Riverside Records, 1921

The lure of old Chelsea, with 9 illustrations, 1922

The Cheyne book of Chelsea china and pottery, edited by Reginald Blunt - Chelsea china and pottery exhibition Chelsea, England, 1924

The Crown & anchor: a Chelsea quarto, 1925

In Cheyne Walk and thereabout: containing short accounts of some ingenious people and famous places that were by the riverside at Chelsea.

(See http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/1596040.Reginald_Blunt)

W.H. Maer – Hon. Treasurer

Manager of Barclays Bank Ltd. 348 King's Road