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CHELSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Council refuses Cadogan’s proposals for King’s Road scheme

MICHAEL BACH

The Council’s Planning Committee has refused the Cadogan Estate’s proposals for 196-222 King’s Road, which would have seen the loss of two King’s Road landmarks – the Curzon cinema and the Trafalgar pub.

In the packed Small Hall in Kensington Town Hall the audience experienced a piece of theatre as six objectors laid out the community’s concerns, Hugh Seaborn, Chief Executive of Cadogan, explained the proposals, and the eleven-member Planning Committee debated the issues at length. Finally, after three hours the Committee decided by 8 votes to 3, to refuse to grant permission.

The objectors, four from the Chelsea community including Terence Bendixson making his swan-song appearance, and two cinema experts set out the concerns:

- **the loss of the Trafalgar** – one of only three pubs left in the King’s Road – for which a side-street basement pub and a roof-top bar were not suitable substitutes;
- **the loss of a large cinema** that can take audience of 700+ for large-scale, live events and its replacement by three small basement cinemas with only 300 seats; and
- **the scale of plant** on the roof of Waitrose for which plans were unavailable. ▶



Picture: Michael Bach

The Curzon - no adequate replacement

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Hugh Seaborn presented the proposals and dealt systematically with the criticisms, explaining the choices made following extensive consultation.

The Planning Committee, whilst acknowledging Cadogan's consultation efforts, were highly sceptical in their questions about the retail, cinema, pub, roof bar, affordable housing and the absence of details about the roof plant. The mood of the Committee changed markedly during the questioning and it became clear that opinion was running against the scheme.

Despite interventions by the Executive Director, the majority of the Committee were minded to refuse the scheme. After exploring the grounds for refusal, the Committee voted 8:3 for refusal, because:

- the cinema provision was not the equivalent or better than the existing cinema;
- the loss of the Trafalgar pub, was not offset by a suitable replacement;
- the inadequate information about the plant on the roof of Waitrose.

After the event Terence Bendixson said "initially we thought we had a 25% chance of success, but our hopes fell until the mood of the Committee changed dramatically. The Society now hopes that Cadogan will adopt a more conciliatory approach which responds to the concerns expressed by the Planning Committee."

Following the decision, Hugh Seaborn indicated that Cadogan would consider whether to appeal.

Latest Developments

MICHAEL BACH

Crossrail 2

The results from TfL's August consultation on Options for a station in Chelsea were as follows:

- Among the 4,008 respondents who selected a preference:
- 32% of respondents supported the 2013 Crossrail 2 option of the King's Road location;
 - 24% of respondents supported Crossrail 2 not stopping in the Chelsea area

- 21% of respondents supported the 2014 Crossrail 2 option of the Chelsea West area location.

There was also notable opposition to Crossrail 2 bypassing the Chelsea area (27% of respondents) and to serving the Chelsea West area (26% of respondents).

Source: TfL



Announcement: King's Road chosen

At the end of October TfL announced the preferred route. The Mayor said that the Treasury is prepared to meet half of the £20 billion costs of the 22 miles of new tunnels for Crossrail 2, which would follow the safeguarded route, with stops at King's Road and Clapham Junction. This will now go to further consultation.

Technical work on Crossrail 2 continues and proposed redevelopment of the Curzon cinema/Habitat block, which sits on the route protected for the old Chelsea Hackney Line, will have to have foundations that do not obstruct tunnels in such a location.

Meanwhile the developers of Battersea Power Station, and its surroundings, made a bid for the new line to be routed to their vast site – which will soon include a station on a branch of the Northern Line.

Curzon Cinema

The planning officers recommended that Councillors approve the Cadogan Estate's plans for transforming the Habitat, Curzon Cinema and Trafalgar Arms site.

Although public discussion of this project had focussed on the loss of a 700-seat cinema operated by the Curzon Group, the moving of the Trafalgar Arms off the King's Road, and on the possibility that the shops would be filled by boring fashion chains (all of which fears were countered by Hugh Seaborn, Cadogan's chief executive), this was in effect a housing scheme. The space devoted to cinema, shops and a pub were all set to decline, but residential space (for the market and affordable flats) would have grown by 6,700 square metres.

Housing apart, the commercial logic of creating a continuous row of shops between Waitrose and Chelsea Manor Street was unassailable. Shoppers are timid animals and frightened away if the streets along which they amble are not filled, wall-to-wall, with reassuring windows full of handbags and other delights. Poor limp things, they also like the presence of bigger shops which retailers call 'magnets.'



Picture: Michael Bach

Habitat along with the Curzon and Trafalgar arms is in the development area

The Society has, accordingly always supported much of what was proposed – particularly the repair and restoration of the fine art deco façade of the old Gaumont Palace. It was not, of course, for planners to tell landlords who their tenants should be and so, sad though it may be to see the back of Habitat and the Curzon, that's life.

But that 700-seat cinema, the gallery of the old Gaumont and its big screen, is a cultural asset. Just as Cadogan Hall behind Sloane Square, brings classical music concerts to Chelsea, so the 'Curzon' brings outstanding filmed singing and acting from the Met, the National Theatre, Stratford and so on. Indeed the National Theatre has written to say how they value a big King's Road venue. We have always urged the Council to protect that asset.

The other disappointment was the design of the facades on either side of the cinema. They would have been dull, dull,

dull! The King's Road cries out, not for glass and steel, but for something original and lively. Think of the Michelin Building in Fulham Road.

Ed: This was written before the Planning Committee's decision – see front page.

The Thames Tideway Tunnel

The Government has given approval to Thames Water's, cross-London sewage tunnel. Along Chelsea Reach it will be big enough, in theory, for two double decker buses to race along it side by side. Its function is to bring to an end the regular tipping into the river of tons of mixed storm water and sewage and provide a hidden reservoir for those same fluids so that the huge treatment works at Beckton is never overwhelmed.

Some say that the tunnel's cost could be avoided by clever works designed

to soak up heavy rains and slow their progress into the sewers. Meanwhile the European Commission is pressing the government to act and the government likes the idea of a huge job-creation scheme and is relaxed about the expense because it is we residents who will be paying the costs.

In Chelsea itself Cremorne Gardens has been saved from spoliation, Cremorne Wharf will be used for the construction of a vertical tunnel linking Bazalgette's Victorian sewers to the tunnel – as will another site opposite the Royal Hospital's Bull Ring.

Most of the spoil from the tunnels will go out by river but Lots Road will see, at worst, 24 lorry trips per day while the Embankment will see the road past the site narrowed to two lanes. Will this worsen congestion? It shouldn't because the pinch points are at the bridge heads and their capacity will be unchanged.

The Brompton and Marsden hospitals

The next step will be the publication, probably at the end of the year, of NHS England's forecasts of demand for services from the two hospitals. (Most of the income of the two hospitals comes from the NHS in the form of the purchase of treatments.)

This will clear the way for the Borough Council to publish revised 'supplementary planning guidance' setting out the mix of demolition and construction and reuse of buildings it would like to see. The scope of the document will be widened to look at the needs of a world-class medical cluster in Chelsea – the Chelsea Medical Quarter.

The Brompton seems as set as ever on financing, from the sale of its outlying sites, the building of a single new hospital on its central site between Sydney and Dovehouse Streets. The Marsden is as fixed as ever on buying the Brompton's Fulham Road block at a medical rather than residential cost.

Meanwhile the Mayor of London, concerned to capitalise on the city's reputation for medical excellence, has a committee looking at 'med-city', a campus



The Brompton - awaiting NHS report

of medical research, patient-treatment, and drug development laboratories that would lead to 'exports'. Might there be a med-city in Chelsea? Some think so.

Then there is the role of the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. Though little discussed so far, it may turn out to be all important. The Trust, based behind St Mary's Paddington, manages St Mary's, the Western Eye, Charing Cross, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea and is a very important player in West London.

The Sutton Estate, Cale Street

This huge, early 20th century, collection of philanthropic dwellings is an architectural landmark and a chapter in the history of London's struggle to provide houses for the poor. It is also somewhat dense, dark and unfriendly. Now Affinity Sutton, the housing association which owns it, wants to demolish and rebuild it.

Some Sutton residents, led by Ian Henderson (who stood unsuccessfully for election to the Borough Council earlier this year), believe that demolition is unnecessary and accuse Affinity Sutton and the Council of colluding to frustrate the reasonable demands of residents. Affinity say that the old buildings are very hard to reuse, that far better 'affordable' flats could be provided in a new estate and that, thanks to Chelsea's high land values, this can be delivered by devoting part of the site to flats for sale.

The Society reckons that, on balance, Affinity's plan to give the state a good long term future is hard to oppose – particularly as all remaining tenants will, with just one move, be offered flats in the new buildings. Furthermore, the retention of the existing flats above the shops in and adjacent to Chelsea Green, will be a visual reminder of Henry Sutton's philanthropy.

HLM, architects for the new buildings, propose to locate as many as possible of the new flats in buildings around the edges of the site but to open up a new shared pedestrian and vehicle route across it. They propose red bricks with some stone dressings and no high buildings. The present 462 flats would be replaced by 422, of which 100 will be sold – a reduction in the number of affordable units of 140 flats.

And because the market flats will be more spacious than the affordable ones, they will occupy some 40% of the future liveable space. All this is highly controversial but Affinity say that, without selling some of the estate, they could not afford to rebuild and no grants would be available from the Council.

The proposed facades raise questions of another kind. The architects say that in designing them they lost no opportunity to take clues from nearby buildings. As David Cafferty of HLM architects put it, his firm's design was 'totally contextually driven'. They were 'not creating a style'.

But the facades they propose are a

Jonathan Bore is retiring:

Jonathan Bore, head of the Borough Council's planning service, is to retire. He will be a hard act to follow. Under his leadership the planning department has been reorganised and strengthened. Enforcement has been given teeth, prosecutions undertaken and the surveillance of contractors stepped up.

On the conservation area side, the policy statements that give details of what needs to be protected and why, are being updated. Some are 30 years old and very rusty.

The planning website has been overhauled and made easier to use – though I know this is of little consolation to those who long to pore over paper plans. And reports to the Council's Planning Committee, though few residents may see them, are a lesson in logic and clarity – even though one may sometimes not like their recommendations.

Above all Jonathan Bore has guided the Councillors, in the face



of strong opposition from the contractors, towards a new and much more restrictive policy on basement excavation. This note is not a panegyric, there are anomalies in the planning service, but it is an account of some of the solid achievements of a man who has worked long and hard in the Council's service and, in the course of it, always managed to respond to seriously based emails from residents and bodies like the Chelsea Society. He deserves our thanks.

bold, simple, repetitive, double-storey-high, grid. This may tell of the buildings' structure but it does not relate to anything else in Chelsea – above all a place of lightness, details, decoration and, above all, cosiness. Let us hope that the final design will move in such direction.

Policy on basements

The great struggle between the basement contractors, who want more scope to dig, and bodies like the Chelsea Society who, representing residents, want less, is nearly over. An Inspector appointed to examine the 'soundness' of the reductions in basement size proposed by the Borough, has gone back to Bristol. The contractors, especially Cranbrook Basements and Basement

Force, who spent lavishly on two lawyers and a firm of planning consultants, Savills, have little to show for their money. Amenity societies who had hoped that the Inspector might just push the Council to be more restrictive have, likewise, nothing to show. He barely listened to them.

The Examination-in-Public was slow, tedious and technical, but also professional and thorough. Its role in the bureaucratic procedures of town planning was to ensure that the new basement policy proposed by the Borough was neither extreme nor outlandish, but fair – the test was whether it was "sound".

Will the limit on new basement permissions to a single storey and half the garden make a difference? Yes. But having one excavated next door to you will still be a curse.

Chelsea's Pubs

MICHAEL BACH

Cross Keys



Picture: Michael Bach

Cross Keys: Consultation Event 14 May

Almost exactly two years after the Cross Keys was closed in May 2012, just before the Diamond Jubilee, the developer and the prospective publican held an open evening for the local community to see their plans. It proved to be a fruitful evening, as residents were encouraged by the prospect of the pub reopening and the Society was able to convince the developer that if they were really serious about maintaining the pub long term, then they should offer to agree to a condition that would effectively mean they would forego their rights to convert the pub to a range of other uses without planning consent.

The Society supported the application on the condition that the future of the pub would be safeguarded by such a condition. The Council, however, made heavy weather of accepting this condition when it was formally offered by the developer at the Planning Committee, following the Society's proposal. It was the good sense of the Committee which prevailed in the end, which might set a precedent for future cases where the scale of the pub is reduced – in this case the loss of the first floor dining/function room and

the community needs a strong expression of commitment to retain the pub. The Cross Keys will reopen...



The Water Rat

The former Water Rat – Osteria dell'Orancio

The former Water Rat pub occupied a very prominent position on the King's Road kink, with a frontage on King's Road and Milman's Street. This had been a very fashionable pub in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 2004 this had been an Italian restaurant, but at the end of a 10-year lease the restaurant had closed. A developer had done the usual thing – proposed a change of use to a house – stripping away all the life that a pub or restaurant contributes to the King's Road.

This application was refused in August and in September a new application was received to change the first floor over to residential, whilst basement and ground floor would remain. The Society is concerned that this is just another case of squeezing the remaining pubs/restaurants so that what remains is not viable and can then be "released" for housing. The prominent location and the need to maintain the footfall on the King's Road makes it particularly important to keep this building in use as a restaurant or a pub.

Picture: Michael Bach

Trafalgar

This is part of Cadogan's proposals to shift The Trafalgar from being a King's Road pub attracting passing trade to a smaller, side-street basement pub which would not generate the footfall and would be neither a high-road pub nor a genuinely "neighbourhood pub". The fate of The Trafalgar is bound up with the future development of this major site.



Picture: Michael Bach

The Trafalgar - dependent on future development

Closure of the Post Office in King's Walk

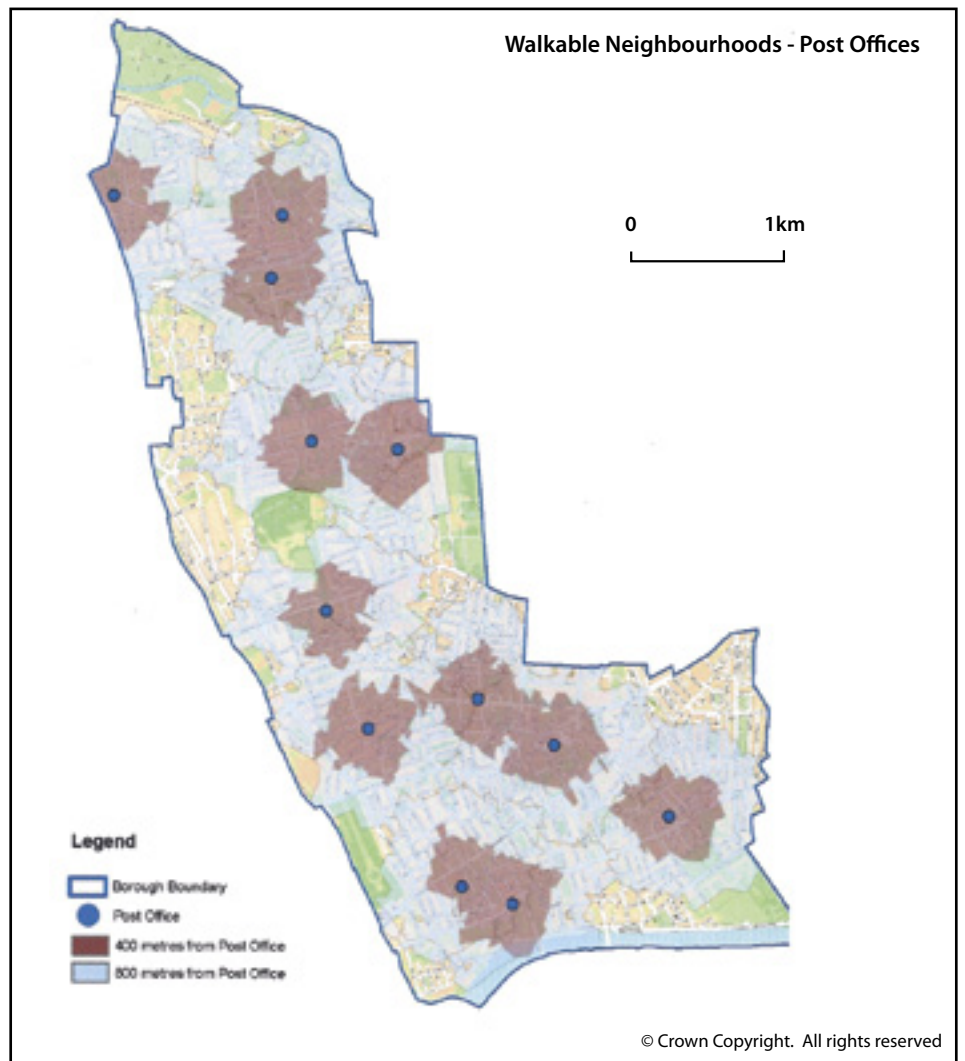
MICHAEL BACH

The Borough's network of post offices has been thinning out. The post office at 232 King's Road closed in the last 10 years, leaving the sub-post office in King's Walk at 122 King's Road, which opened in the late 1960s. Now the Post Office is consulting about a proposal to close this sub-post office as the lease is due to run out in February and the site will be redeveloped.

This closure is going to leave a large part of eastern Chelsea a long walk from a post office. The nearest main post offices will be at World's End (0.7 miles from King's Walk), Eccleston Street in Victoria (0.9 miles) and South Kensington (0.7 miles). The map below shows that much of South East Chelsea is 15-20 minute walk from one of these post offices – the contours show 400m and 800m walk – King's Walk is the one in south east corner.

The Post Office is undertaking a consultation, which started on 8 October and runs until 31 December. For more information go to:

https://www.postofficeviews.co.uk/images/pdf/kings_walk_sw34tr_letter.pdf



Picture: RBKC

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From Hovel to Penthouse

GILLIAN BEST

A rainbow phrase that neatly encompasses the state of social housing in Chelsea from the turn of the last century, and the transition from the awful slums that had grown up as a result of the mass migration of people from country to towns as a result of the industrial revolution, to the latest social housing of the present day.

A contemporary account in 1900 in "The Chelsea Pick and Shovel" – the "Private Eye" of its time - railed against unhygienic and inhumane conditions the authorities allowed to persist, noting that the occupation of a typical house in that little grid of Victorian houses in the shadow of Lots Road Power Station to be between fifteen and twenty individuals, with large numbers of families living in just one room.

Compare and contrast that to Kingsgate House (PIC 2), the newest state-of-the-art, social housing block, which opened just across the King's Road from those Victorian terraces in May 2014. As Laura Johnson, the Director of Housing for the RBKC, so cogently put it: "The top floor with two four-bedroom flats is set back with glass all the way round, and a balcony, at a social rent for a fantastic 4-bedroom penthouse on the King's Road. It's bloody brilliant".

This report, commissioned by the Chelsea Society, traces the evolution of social housing in Chelsea. It starts by reviewing the role of the four major philanthropic organisations, Peabody, Guinness, Sutton and Lewis.

All four were acutely aware of the problem before either national or local government came to terms, let alone dealt with the enormous social upheaval of the mass migration from country to town. The four far-sighted individual entrepreneurs set out to alleviate the suffering of the working classes of Chelsea as best they could. In all four cases, early on in their endeavours, they built estates in Chelsea over a forty-five year period from 1870-



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THE CHELSEA PICK AND SHOVEL.

The Pick and Shovel, the Private Eye of its day



Kingsgate House - 'bloody brilliant'!

Picture: Michael Bach

Chelsea Society Project: Social Housing In Chelsea

1915, which still exist and thrive to the present day. Chelsea Metropolitan Borough (set up in 1901) was one of the earliest boroughs to provide social housing.

Moving on from there comes the provision of housing by the local authority, RBKC, which is now the biggest social housing property owner in the Borough. It works within the guidelines of both national government and City Hall. RBKC have contracted out the umbrella management of their properties to the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Association (TMO) which is unique in that it is the only borough-wide tenant management organisation in the UK. It administers some ten thousand of the 23,000 social housing properties in the RBKC, four thousand of which are in Chelsea. In addition to the philanthropic estates, there are some 28 Housing Associations with properties in the Borough and they all work closely with the TMO. Currently some 23.5% of all housing in the Borough is social housing of one sort or another.

The Chelsea Society was formed "to protect and amplify the amenities of Chelsea for all classes of people".

But amenities do not form the character of one of the most historic districts of London. People determine this, so it seemed appropriate that the report should profile the local residents of social housing flats in Chelsea who have, and continue to, materially contribute to the fabric of this vibrant and varied community. To this end interviews with residents from all the social housing establishments featured in the report are included, including two individuals who've bought their flats under the "right to buy" legislation.

The report will be available in the New Year.



Peabody Trust in Chelsea 1870



The Guinness Trust in Chelsea 1891



Sutton in Chelsea 1912



Lewis in Chelsea 1915



Local resident contributors

Exhibition: Chelsea in the Great War

SARAH FARRUGIA

2-15 JUNE 2014



Picture: Michael Bach

Exhibition: Full Team Photo

On the first evening of the exhibition we invited a wide range of local dignitaries and those connected with the theme of the First World War to see the extraordinary contribution local residents had made to the war effort both here and at the Front.

Damian Greenish welcomed our guests and Kate Adie who spoke poignantly about the effect of war and how it changed us all and brought us closer together. Our president, John Simpson,

followed by congratulating the Society on the tremendous achievement in creating such a comprehensive study of the times.

We were fortunate that the evening remained dry throughout which meant that the 'Unshrinkables' from The Chelsea Arts Club could parade around Duke of York Square in their usual fashion.

Later in the week we were delighted to greet over 300 children from local schools to view the Loos Football and other items on display including gas masks and even

a 100-year-old campaign biscuit. John Hollins, ex-Chelsea footballer, discussed the importance of football to soldiers serving their country Alex Shooter of the London Irish Rifles Association regaled them with tales of life at the Front. The children watched the short film and saw the interactive display of over 1,000 poppies marking local homes where those soldiers who had fallen had lived. We were grateful to the choirmaster at Holy Trinity who brought along their school choir in the afternoon to sing a range of First World War songs – there was not a dry eye in the house.

The 2014 Exhibition was a wonderful opportunity for the local community to gather, remember and reflect on life as it was then and as it is today.

We welcomed over 2,000 visitors during the two-week period of the exhibition and we thank all those members who were able to join us.

Planning for the 2016 exhibition will begin in the next few weeks, volunteers are welcome to put their name forward to join the organising team. Email Athina Kafetsiou on volunteers@chelseasociety.org.uk for more information.



Picture: Michael Bach

Core Exhibition Team: Carrie, Patricia, Sarah and Camilla

Summer Events 2014:

The Summer Meeting

29 MAY 2014

Once again we were very fortunate to be able to hold our Summer Meeting in the wonderful State Apartments at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. It was a lovely evening which many members attended with their guests. We were joined by the Mayor and Mayoress who were at the end of a very busy year.



The Mayor and Chelsea Pensioner Marjorie Cole at Doggett's

Whistler Guided Walk

19 JUNE 2014

Former Chairman David Le Lay is renowned for his Guided Walks. He has an amazing amount of local knowledge, which is always as enjoyable as it is informative. This walk was to look at the various houses in which Whistler lived and to talk about numerous incidents in his life - it was fascinating.

Doggett's Coat and Badge Race

15 JULY 2014

At this year's event the Fishmongers Company had HRH The Duke of Edinburgh as their guest who presented the bottles of champagne to the contestants. The race

was won by Henry McCarthy who comes from a family of Watermen so we were all delighted when he won the prize.

Thames River Police Museum Visit

18 & 30 SEPTEMBER

In September, the intrepid amongst us ventured over to Wapping to the Thames River Police Museum to learn more about the more unusual goings-on up and down the Thames. Mr Robert Jeffries runs the museum and is a long-serving Police Officer himself. His presentation was informative and hugely entertaining.

The river police were founded in 1798 and were originally funded by the

East India Trading Company to help prevent theft from their cargos. It was at a time that many buildings on the riverfront were public houses, catering for the less salubrious activities of the sailors and haulage workers and Irish coal heavers.

The expression the police use when they patrol their 'beat' comes originally from 'beating' up river against the tide. The term 'Police Station' also came from this era. The marine police needed to stop at various fixed points on the river, so they used old naval vessels as extra floating police offices. When a naval ship is lying at anchor it is said to be On Station.....thus they became floating police stations.

We learnt about the Princess Alice pleasure boat disaster in 1865 when a collision resulted in 640 deaths, not necessarily from drowning but from poisoning because of the putrid river sewage prevalent at that time, motivating Bazalgette's great engineering feat.

The whole event was wonderfully organised by Paulette. Thanks again from all of us!

CHARLES CHAMPION



The Doggett's Coat & Badge Race winner Henry McCarthy with Watermen

Autumn Lecture: London's Changing Skyline

MICHAEL BACH

20 OCTOBER 2014



Picture: Hayes Davidson

Our autumn lecture is about development – this year it was given by Peter Murray, Director of New London Architecture, which is based in Store Street just off Tottenham Court Road.

Based on the exhibition held in spring, Peter Murray, presented the message of the exhibition – there are some 250 buildings over 20 storeys with permission or under construction, yet, with the exception of one person at the GLA, most of this had come in under the radar and was a real shock to most people. The iconic animation showing the wall of tall buildings on the other side of the river – front page of the last Newsletter – was, for me one the most striking images of 2014.

Peter gave a very informative and engaging talk about what we can expect from the growth of London over the next decade, and

the changing skyline, which might need more attention in the future. Chelsea may be lucky, having no tall buildings – although we are still waiting for the two at Lots Road Power Station – but most

particularly because we face Battersea Park. But all round us they are closing in – Vauxhall, Nine Elms Battersea to the east, Wandsworth to the west and Earl's Court to the north. Peter's talk was well received.

Picture: Blanka Sadilkova



Peter Murray and Michael Bach

End of an era: Terence Bendixson retires as Planning Secretary

MICHAEL BACH

After 14 years as Planning Secretary, Terence Bendixson has decided to call it a day. Originally Terence and the Planning Committee met every three weeks in Chelsea Library where, after Patricia Burr had identified the cases, we very efficiently dealt with up to 30 cases in one and half hours, much helped by the availability of the plans. As a Committee we were able to come to a decision whether on not to object and noted our ground for concern. Later, when the Council no longer made the plans available, Terence had to scan the applications at home on his laptop and consulted the Planning Committee by email. This lost the advantages of a discussion of the cases.

The Society does not address the Planning Committee frequently, but Lots Road Power Station, the former Jamahiriya School, the pubs and, the latest, King's Road scheme were landmark cases. The first three of these led to public inquiries where we had an excellent track record, only losing Lots Road because of John Prescott's preference for tall buildings. Terence played a major role in coordinating a response to the three pub cases, particularly the public inquiry into The Phene Arms. After the latest success, the refusal of the Cadogan scheme involving the cinema (see lead article), Terence was congratulated by the chairman, Councillor Warwick, as it was Terence's swansong.



Terence Bendixson (right) with Tim Nodder (left) at the the end of the Phene public inquiry.

During Terence's term we had some very controversial cases, particularly the Infirmary for the Royal Hospital, where after a very full discussion in the full Council meeting we decided to oppose the original scheme, losing some key members in the process. But we were proven right, and even though we still objected to the revised scheme as too bulky, the final product was a huge improvement and demonstrated the importance of maintaining opposition to bad schemes.

Other big, long-running cases included Chelsea Barracks and Sloane Lodge, but most of the cases we looked at were small. Terence described it as "the day-to-day slog where from time to time you get a bull's eye".

I will miss Terence as a regular contributor to this Newsletter, not only as reliable correspondent, but also for his particular style of "reporting". I wish Terence all the best for the next, more restful stage of his life.

Farewell to Patricia Burr

JANE DORRELL



Farewell to Patricia Burr – presented by Damian Greenish

Patricia has done yeoman service on the Society's Council for the last 15 years and we were all sorry when she decided it was time to retire. Over the years she has filled many roles starting with helping Samantha Wyndham, then Hon Secretary, with the River Thames Exhibition in 2000. She then worked with Valerie Thomas organising outings and events. She managed to sweet talk volunteers into manning the desk at exhibitions and lectures. She sold our Christmas cards every year, and almost last, but not least, she was Hon Secretary, first when David Le Lay was Chairman, followed by Stuart Corbyn. Patricia also used to assist Terence Bendixson when the Planning Committee reviewed planning applications in Chelsea Reference Library.

Finally, rather than leave us in the lurch when we had difficulty finding a new Secretary, she spent three years in a post I think she may have invented as being less arduous, as Assistant Secretary. Altogether an astonishing record and it's not surprising that at her last Council meeting in June this year she was presented with a large bouquet and the grateful thanks of us all.

Picture: Michael Bach

Picture: Michael Bach

Situation Vacant: Annual Report Editor?

JANE DORRELL

The Annual Report has been published since 1928. The only gap so far was in 1941, but the immediate future faces the threat of a further gap. I have taken on the editorship again - but only for the 2014 edition. Is there anyone among our members who would enjoy doing it? It's not too onerous a task. The 'skeleton' of the Report is always the same: Chairman's Report, Treasurer's Report, Membership List. So the essence of the job is to talk friends and acquaintances with an interest in Chelsea into writing articles.

It would probably appeal to someone who had some journalistic experience – of sub-editing, proof reading, etc. Perhaps someone who has edited a newsletter or, indeed, an established writer. I took over from Tom Pocock in 1999 - the authority on Nelson and the author of several books on Chelsea - and was editor for 8 years. I was followed by Carolyn Starren, who edited the Annual Report for the following 7 years, as well as organising the exhibitions – she has decided to call it a day with the 2013 report.

Whoever takes it on would be co-opted onto the Council of the Chelsea Society - and those meetings are interesting in themselves - and would have the support of those who are now, and have been, involved in producing the Annual Report.

If you are interested please do get in touch with Jane Dorrell
wddw@waitrose.com

Where do our members live?

Most of members live in Chelsea, but a fair number who live outside the former Metropolitan Borough support Chelsea – and not just the football team!



Volunteer? You Must Be Mad!

SARAH FARRUGIA

Volunteering is such a weaselly word – it doesn't quite state the task that's expected – it is very vague – 'OH, would you like to volunteer?' has the ring of being 'landed' with something unpleasant, that everyone else has somehow managed to skirt. What's more the sense of foreboding often seems likely to build as others 'rope' you in more and more by the hour.

There is not a volunteer in the land that hasn't felt a bit of a chump and overwhelmed at some point. It's a difficult balancing act between being self-righteous, martyred, victimised and downright exhausted. Ready to stick your hand up yet and volunteer? Thought not.

However there is a rather brighter side, made even more dazzling because it is so unexpected. It is the level of warmth that you can feel for people you would never intend to meet nor indeed with whom you would often have thought you would have anything in common.

We all tend to seek out those people with whom we see eye to eye – the likeminded. It's lovely to relax with friends who 'share our point of view' or agree that we are quite right' and it's enjoyable to be fascinating company amongst a small clique of long-term friends and acquaintances.

Of course there is no chance of that when you offer to volunteer – so once again you find yourself coming up against people who think differently to you – who see the exact same piece in the local news and come at it from an entirely different perspective. Often quite annoyingly so.

Volunteering rather confounds a quiet life. You find you have to compromise, negotiate, give in, stand up, battle it out, laugh out loud, mutter inside, sometimes



Picture: Michael Bach

One of our regular volunteers hearing about the Loos football

be ruthlessly logical and at others embarrassingly emotional. Often over quite small things.

I have actively volunteered for seven years. The highs and lows have been many and varied. However I can't imagine life without the range of characters and variety of personalities that I have met during those years. I feel far more connected to Chelsea, to people, neighbours, councillors, traders and what's happening 'out there'. I feel I have a right to speak out and say what is on my mind, a chance to influence things and I also get to know before most about what is coming up locally in the near future. Forewarned is forearmed or so they say.

I have also met a great number of people who do share my interests, perspectives and concerns and who want to work to overcome them in small ways.

So I could not recommend volunteering more highly to those of you who are considering getting in touch.

Currently vacancies include being a **member of the planning team, joining the group that produces the Annual Report, helping to update the website, liaising with local schools, supporting the wide range of events we organise, selling cards and publications at our events, joining the development team for the 2016 Exhibition, answering historical enquiries.** I am sure there must be more, but that's quite enough for now.

Why not make 2015 the year when you get more involved in local life?

Get in touch with our new Head of Volunteers – Athina Kafetsiou by emailing volunteers@chelseasociety.org.uk and find out about our forthcoming volunteers drop in sessions.

Editor's Note:

We are 40!

At the 1992 AGM Councillor David Collenette suggested that the Society really should communicate better with its members and secured the agreement of the meeting that the Society should have a newsletter. I was foolish enough to accept the challenge – and before you know it we are at Issue 40.

Things have changed a lot – everything is now electronic – the text, the pictures, the editing, sending it to the designer and to the printers, and we can distribute it by email, although many of our members still value the paper copy that comes through the post.

Now that we have no real competitors for bringing you local news – the local newspaper has essentially gone. It has always been a responsibility and a challenge to bring you Chelsea news that you will not find elsewhere. That responsibility is even greater now that we have few others doing the job.

I really need to know what you like best, what you like least, what you want more or less of. Feedback is welcome michaelbach@madasafish.com

Dates:

3 November 6.30pm	Residents' Association Meeting Chelsea Old Town Hall
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24 November 6.30pm	AGM: Large Hall Chelsea Old Town Hall
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2 February 6.30pm	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
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23 February 6.30pm	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
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23 March 6.30pm	Lecture: Chelsea Old Town Hall
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Christmas Cards

Our Christmas cards are on sale at Cards for Good Causes at **Holy Trinity Church**, Sloane Street, from now until **20 December**, from **9.30am to 5.00pm** except Sundays. This year's new card by Hugh Krall is of the Royal Hospital.

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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