THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

THE ANNUAL REPORT 1980

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

founded by Reginald Blunt in 1927
to protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea

President
THE RT. HON. LORD CHALFONT, P.C., O.B.E., M.C.

Vice-President
THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

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Assistant Hon. Secretary
MARK DORMAN, ESQ.

Hon. Membership Secretary
MISS BARBARA TOWLE, M.B.E.

Hon. Auditor
FRAZER WHITING & CO.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
Flat 1, 51 Cadogan Square, SW1

CONSTITUTION

1. (1) The Chelsea Society shall be regulated by the Rules contained in this Constitution.
   (2) These Rules shall come into force when the Society has adopted this constitution at a General Meeting.
   (3) In these Rules the expression "existing" means existing before the Rules come into force.

OBJECTS

2. The Objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea particularly —
   (a) stimulating interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea;
   (b) encouraging good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees, and the conservation and proper maintenance of open spaces;
   (c) seeking the abatement of nuisances;
   (d) making representations to the proper authorities on these subjects.

MEMBERSHIP

3. Subject to the provisions of Rule 7, membership of the Society shall be open to all who are interested in furthering the Objects of the Society.

THE COUNCIL

4. (1) There shall be a Council of the Society which shall be constituted in accordance with these Rules.
   (2) The Society shall elect not more than twelve members of the Society to be members of the Council.
   (3) The members of the Council so elected may co-opt not more than four other persons to be members of the Council.
   (4) The Officers to be appointed under Rule 5 shall also be members of the Council.
   (5) In the choice of persons for membership of the Council, regard shall be had, amongst other things, to the importance of including persons known to have expert knowledge and experience of matters relevant to Objects of the Society.
   (6) The Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day work of the Society, and shall have power to take any action on behalf of the Society which the Council thinks fit to take for the purpose of furthering the Objects of the Society and shall make and publish every year a Report of the activities of the Society during the previous year.
   (7) The Council shall meet at least four times in each calendar year.
   (8) A member of the Council who is absent from two successive meetings of the Council without an explanation which the Council approves shall cease to be a member of the Council.
   (9) Three of the elected members of the Council shall retire every second year, but may offer themselves for re-election by the Society.
   (10) Retirement under the last-preceding paragraph shall be in rotation according to seniority of election. Provided that the first nine members to retire after these Rules come into force shall be chosen by agreement or, in default of agreement, by lot.
   (11) Casual vacancies among the elected members may be filled as soon as practicable by election by the Society.
   (12) One of the co-opted members shall retire every second year, but may be again co-opted.

OFFICERS

5. The Council shall appoint the following officers of the Society, namely—
   (a) a Chairman of the Council,
   (b) an Hon. Secretary or Joint Hon. Secretaries,
   (c) an Hon. Treasurer, and
   (d) persons to fill such other posts as may be established by the Council.

PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

6. (1) The Council may appoint a member of the Society to be President of the Society for a term of three years, and may re-appoint him for a further term of three years.
   (2) The Council may appoint persons, who need not be members of the Society, to be Vice-Presidents.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

7. (1) The Council shall prescribe the amount of the subscriptions to be paid by members of the Society and the date on which they are due, and the period in respect of which they are payable.
   (2) Membership of the Society shall lapse if the member's subscription is unpaid for six months after it is due, but may be restored by the Council.
   (3) Until otherwise prescribed under this Rule, the annual subscription and the amount payable for life membership shall continue to be payable at the existing rates*.

   (4) Members are invited to pay more than the prescribed minimum, if possible.
   (5) Members who pay annual subscriptions are requested to pay by banker's order, unless they are unwilling to give banker's orders.

GENERAL MEETINGS

8. (1) In these Rules "General Meeting" means a meeting of the Society which all members of the Society may attend.
   (2) The Council shall arrange at least one General Meeting every year, to be called the Annual General Meeting, and may arrange as many other General Meetings, in these Rules referred to as Special General Meetings, as the Council may think fit.
   (3) General Meetings shall take place at such times and places as the Council may arrange.
   (4) The President shall preside at any General Meeting at which he is present, and if he is not present the Chairman of the Council or some person nominated by the Chairman of the Council shall preside as Acting President.
   (5) Any election to the Council shall be held at a General Meeting.
   (6) No person shall be eligible for the Council unless—
      (i) he or she has been proposed and seconded by other members of the Society, and has consented to serve, and
      (ii) the names of the three persons concerned and the fact of the consent have reached the Hon. Secretary in writing at least two weeks before the General Meeting.
   (7) If the Hon. Secretary duly receives more names for election than there are vacancies, he shall prepare voting papers for use at the General Meeting, and those persons who receive most votes shall be declared elected.
   (8) The agenda for the Annual General Meeting shall include—
      (a) receiving the Annual Report; and
      (b) receiving the Annual Accounts.
   (9) At the Annual General Meeting any member of the Society may comment on any matter mentioned in the Report or Accounts, and may, after having given at least a week's notice in writing to the Hon. Secretary, raise any matter not mentioned in the report, if it is within the Objects of the Society.
   (10) The President or Acting President may limit the duration of speeches.
   (11) During a speech on any question any member of the Society may move that the question be now put, without making a speech, and any other member may second that motion, without making a speech, and if the motion is carried, the President or Acting President shall put the question forthwith.
   (12) If any 20 members of the Society apply to the Council in writing for a special Meeting of the Society, the Council shall consider the application, and may make it a condition of granting it that the expense should be defrayed by the applicants.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

9. (1) The existing Council shall continue to act for the Society until a Council is formed under Rule 4.
   (2) Within five months of the adoption of the constitution the existing council shall arrange an Annual or a special General Meeting at which the first election to the Council shall be held.
   (3) The existing Officers of the Society shall continue to serve until Officers are appointed under Rule 5.

AMENDMENTS

10. (1) These Rules may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at an Annual or Special General Meeting, if a notice in writing of the proposed amendment has reached the Hon. Secretary at least two weeks before the General Meeting. Provided that nothing herein contained shall authorise any amendment the effect of which would be to cause the Society at any time to cease to be a Charity in Law.
    (2) The Hon. Secretary shall send notices of any such amendment to the members of the Society before the General Meeting.

WINDING-UP

11. In the event of the winding-up of the Society the available funds of the Society shall be transferred to such one or more charitable institutions having objects reasonably similar to those herein before declared as shall be chosen by the Council of the Society and approved by the Meeting of the Society at which the decision to dissolve the Society is confirmed.

**The existing rate is £5 annually payable on the 1st January. The annual husband-and-wife rate is £7.*

In March 1978 C. H. Pearce & Sons (Contractors) Ltd. acquired the leasehold interest in the Pheasantry site, Nos. 158-162 Kings Road. At the time of acquisition the old Classic Cinema and other property around the Pheasantry building had been demolished. Construction work soon commenced in compliance with the planning permission for shops with twenty-six flats above.

Following discussion with the Borough Planning Department and many other interested parties, including members of the Chelsea Society, a new planning approval was sought for a scheme more in keeping with the surrounding property in Markham Street and Jubilee Place, this scheme being reduced in height to only four storeys and incorporating the existing Pheasantry facade and equestrian arch.

Approval was granted in November 1978 and Pearce are now implementing their construction programme, completion of which is expected early in 1981.

The development now comprises five shop units on ground and basement levels, a new Pheasantry building behind the old facade and three levels of offices above the shops, together with a small block of seven flats adjacent to the existing Joubert Mansions and fronting Jubilee Place.

The Annual General Meeting

of the Chelsea Society
was held at The Chelsea College
(by kind permission of the Principal)
on Tuesday, 20th November, 1980 at 8.00 p.m.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Chalfont, P.C., O.B.E., M.C., President of the Society, took the Chair.

1) The minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on 20 November, 1979 were confirmed and signed by The President, there being no objections.

2) The following four new members of the Council were then proposed, seconded and elected:— Mrs. Joan Hayes, Mrs. Jane Dorrell, Mr. Jon Bannenberg, Mr. Fergus Hobbs. Warm tributes were paid to the two retiring members, Mr. John Yeoman, M.A. and Mr. Francis Baden-Powell, A.R.I.B.A., A.A.Dipl., M.A., both of whom had given much valuable service to the Society.

3) The Hon. Treasurer then presented his Annual Report.

4) The President then called upon the Chairman to present his Annual Report. This was delivered in full to the meeting, and the Chairman then introduced the Chairman Elect, Mrs. Lesley Lewis, who gave a short speech of thanks, saying that it was an honour to join the long line of Chairmen during the fifty years of the Society's existence. At this point Prebendary Harold Loasby, Rector of St. Luke's said, on behalf of all present, that he would like to thank Mr. Quentin Morgan Edwards for the time and trouble he had devoted to The Society during his Chairmanship and that his clear mind and sound judgment had made a great contribution, which could not have been easy at a time when his family and professional life made many demands. The Rector acknowledged his own debt of gratitude for the transformation effected to the old burial ground during Mr. Morgan Edwards' term of office.

5) The President then asked the meeting if there were any other business, but before further discussion he extended a warm welcome to the Mayoress, and thanked her for her trouble in being present. He also said what an honour he found it to be The President of The Society and what an admirable production he considered the Society's Annual Report to be; and finally he too thanked Mr. Morgan Edwards for his contribution,

and said that he looked forward to working with the new Chairman. Mr Grimwade then said that he wished to thank the President for his support, and to point out that a further course of lectures had been arranged for the first Wednesday of February, March and April, details to be announced.

Colonel Rubens said that he was worried about current rumours as to the Kingsley School being used by the Libyan Embassy. Lord Chalfont told the meeting that he could count on the support of the House of Lords and of the Government, and thought it likely that no unsuitable development would be permitted. Mr. Fergus Hobbs then said that he had been in touch with the Director of a building company, who had received a good offer to convert the present Kingsley School building to an Islamic School; and that the Headmaster of this school was likely to be a Sudanese who had taught in Birmingham for 20 years. The Islamic School would probably open in early April, and no diplomatic immunity would be given to this building.

Finally, Colonel Rubens also thanked the President for all the help he gave to the Society and, there being no further business, The President declared the meeting closed.

Chairman's Report

1. *Membership*

Our membership at present is 876.

2. *Introduction*

I am very pleased to welcome here the Mayoress of the Royal Borough, particularly since the Mayoress is a Member of the Chelsea Society and has for a long time been very much concerned with Chelsea matters.

Once again our President, Lord Chalfont, is here as Chairman of the Meeting. During this year he helped to put the finishing touches to Chelsea College's acqisition of the site of the College of St. Mark and St. John. I have no doubt but that should further major matters develop he will continue to play the same major role in setting Chelsea matters on a National stage. This can be vitally important for the Society and for Chelsea. One matter which immediately springs to mind is the traffic along the Embankment which has not been a mere parochial concern for many years and is something which has to be tackled on a Metropolitan and indeed National basis.

I would also like to remind members that we have had our Annual General Meetings for many years here in Lightfoot Hall, by courtesy of the Principal and of the Students Union. We are all very grateful for this act of kindness on their part since it is for us an ideal location, central in Chelsea and of exactly suitable size. This year for the first time in my period as Chairman we no longer have David Ingram as Principal of the College. He has now departed to be Vice-Chancellor of Kent University, where I am sure he will have the same success as he has achieved here in Chelsea. However, in our midst is the Vice-Principal, who is acting Principal until the arrival of Dr. Phelps whom I welcome to Chelsea, in advance, on behalf of the Society. I am glad to say that Professor Tyrell, the Vice-Principal, now lives in Chelsea and has indeed joined our Society.

3. *Summer Meeting*

I referred earlier to the final struggle of Chelsea College to acquire the site of St. Mark and St. John. Confident of his success at that time, David Ingram invited the Society to hold its Summer Meeting at the College. That invitation came in the summer of 1979. We did indeed hold our Summer Meeting in the College Grounds. It took its normal form of brief speeches and general socialising. For many of us it was a first visit to this hidden garden. However, we were also lucky enough to have as guides Hermione Hobhouse, the Secretary of the Victorian Society, and Dr. Jill Allibone one of their Lecturers. Whatever else has happened during my Chairmanship I must be able to claim some sort of record insofar as none of our Summer Meetings have been marred by rain. The record was kept, but only just. It rained before the meeting and shortly afterwards, but not during the meeting itself, when the sun came out for our benefit.

4. *College of St. Mark and St. John*

Recapitulating on the immediate past history of St. Mark and St. John, you will recall that the site had been in the ownership of the GLC for a number of years following its compulsory purchase in 1975. Offers were invited for it which had to be made by 16 June 1978. Until the end of that year Chelsea College were in no position to make an offer. Therefore the main hurdle was persuading the GLC to consider an offer. Whilst this was under consideration, appeals against planning refusal by the Borough in respect of applications by Romulus Construction Limited, and BUPA Hospitals Limited, were considered in May 1979. Great pressure was placed on the GLC to adopt a less stony-faced attitude to Chelsea College. Eventually they did so. It was now up to the Secretary of State to endorse the GLC's decision to sell to Chelsea College. It was only in December last year that the Secretary of State published his decision and there was a great deal of nail-biting before he did so. He did this by granting permission to the GLC to sell the site (whether or not they needed this permission is another matter), whilst at the same time giving consent to the planning application appeals from Romulus and BUPA. At the same time the Inspectors Report, dated June 1979, which recommended these consents, was published. Finally, there were negotiations between the GLC and Chelsea College which were completed shortly before our Summer Meeting.

Frequently major topics such as this come up in the Annual Report for year after year. I make no apology for this, since they are the major matters which will affect us all on a long-term basis. Although this site is on the extreme edge of Chelsea, I am certain that its use over the next hundred years or more, was perhaps the major planning decision in Chelsea since the war, and perhaps the outcome was crucial to the continued existence of Chelsea College. As Chairman of this Society, therefore, I did everything possible to assist the College and I hope the Society contributed to their victory. I am sure that in future years we will benefit from the College's existence and community activities in Chelsea. Equally perhaps the College may benefit from being in Chelsea.

5. *The Department of the Environment*

Mr. Heseltine has, politics apart, shown himself to be a fairly enlightened Secretary of State. Another decision which to a certain extent affects Chelsea is that over the Green Giant. In this matter your Council considered that there would be no direct impact on Chelsea and indeed that there were already many pressure groups active in opposing it. I am delighted that it was turned down and congratulate Lady Wynn Jones on her success in this particular campaign.

One matter however, which might well affect us is the increase of permitted development from 10% to 15%. Few of us like the idea of bureaucracy and interference, but we are all so immediately affected by our neighbours' planning consent that this sort of relaxation in control could have unfortunate consequences, and the Society will have to watch its implementation carefully.

6. *Planning Matters*

a. *The Pheasantry*

Some hardy perennials remain in the Planning Field, but Marjon has now been settled in our favour and the results of the Pheasantry consent as well as Tedworth Square are largely apparent. Though some of our members have voiced criticism, I myself consider that the outcome at the Pheasantry is the best that could have been hoped for. It is not really desirable that there should be such an influx of office space in the Kings Road and I doubt that the shop units will become the sort of handy neighbourhood shops whose departure we have all deplored. God forbid that there should be yet more shoe or jeans shops on the Kings Road. However, we are not going to be faced with a Tower Block for which there was a Valid Planning Consent, the development will be in scale with its neighbours. I personally am in favour of the brickwork chosen and I consider that the design matches the existing façade of the Pheasantry, rather than trying to copy it slavishly.

b. *The Stowell's Site*

Another major application was for the Stowell's site, which is located behind Habitat, and is in fact a few yards from my house. The application was for the demolition of the existing office block and other buildings on the site and their replacement by new and increased office space. The area was made part of a conservation area some years back. It was one of those occasions where the Borough's Planning Officers acted swiftly and effectively as a result of pressure from the Society and neighbours. The application was not opposed by the newly formed Astell Street Residents Association, although doubts were expressed about the height of the new buildings. However, after some consideration the Society decided to oppose the application since it involved the demolition of the Edwardian Office Building, which has particularly attractive variegated brickwork. It is easy to pull down these buildings and normally their demolition makes for a more profitable development. The buildings may not be architecturally significant, but they are very much a part of Chelsea and reflect its different ages and activities. The Society has to take a rather longer term view than some of the local residents associations, however useful they may be in other ways. Once again I am glad to say that the application was refused and I believe that eventually there will be a sensible scheme which will preserve and put to good use the Edwardian building.

There is now redevelopment of the adjoining site which fronts onto the Kings Road just by the Trafalgar. I understand that it will in due course be a Waitrose Supermarket. I think that that will be an amenity for us and infinitely preferable to a boutique complex.

c. *Kings Road Study*

As many of you will know, there have been a number of background papers for various of the conservation areas in the Borough. The borough attaches a high priority to these, and it is the intention that each area shall have its study paper. They are concerned with such matters as the historical background of the area, the particular architectural significance of its buildings and general environment, and outline the planning policies that should be laid down in relation to that area. Our Society has been much concerned about the Kings Road and has been anxious that Planning guidelines should be established. The sort of things that concern us are not just the disappearance of the traditional useful shops, but such matters as change of use from shop to restaurant or to Banks and Building Societies. These can be controlled, since planning consent is necessary, but more difficult is a change of use of the upper floors from residential to some other purpose. By and large the Planning Committee have been strict. I am pleased, however, that there is shortly to be a Kings Road Study. This sort of Study will concentrate our minds on the sort of problems that are now being faced in the Kings Road from the points of view of the developer or shop owner, the resident, the shopper and indeed members of our Society. I hope that we will be able to take a hand in shaping this study and that it will lay down satisfactory planning guidelines that will be acceptable to all of us and properly enforced by the Borough.

d. *Mallord Street and Conservation Area Studies*

As you know, we comment on all Planning Applications that strike us as being significant to Chelsea. In the Annual Reports, we certainly do not list these. But there is one which I will refer to because it illustrates how pointless it is to produce these studies that I mentioned if they are then ignored by the Planning Committee, and how easy it still is for that Committee and its officers to come to an inept decision.

One of the most recent policy studies has been for the Elm Park and Chelsea Park Conservation Area. This is a document of 131 pages which is certainly worthy, but perhaps rather over detailed. In the summary it sets out the specific control guidelines. I will quote one:—

"a). Roof lines and dormer extensions — will not be considered where none exist. Otherwise they should not destroy the unity of a terrace nor alter the ridge line. They should be of suitable shape and proportion, and materials. They should respect the shape of the roof, windows and visual axes of the buildings."

What could be more specific and sensible?

No. 14 Mallord Street, is part of a terrace of five houses constructed between the wars and very much part of the architectural environment of the area. In April this year, the Planning Committee on the recommendation of the Planning Officers granted a consent in

respect of this house which involves raising the roof of the house and inevitably destroying the symmetry of this small terrace. It was thus in direct contradiction to the planning guidelines themselves. There was considerable outcry at this decision, which we are now told "should not be used as a precedent for other similar change in the street". Objections were made by neighbours, the Elm Park and Chelsea Park Residents Association and by the Chelsea Society. The consent was granted only a few months after the very detailed study for that conservation area was published.

Now clearly this is not a major planning matter and it will pass unnoticed by 99% of those who live in Chelsea. However, two points emerge. In the first place, in the words of the study itself (page 59)

> "One of the main threats to the character of a conservation area is not from large scale development . . . but from detailed changes",

and then alteration to roof lines is given as the first of the problems which can arise. In the second place, what is the point of spending so much time and money on producing these very detailed studies if the Planning Committee immediately backtracks on the guidelines?

e. *Proposed Cardiothoracic Centre*

One of the matters of continuing concern to the Society is the proposed Cardiothoracic Centre. We strongly supported the idea of a public inquiry into this. We have done so ever since the first Planning Application was made. However, without the assistance of the Borough it was most unlikely that such an inquiry would be called by the Secretary of State. Unfortunately this proved to be the case. It is certainly true that the current plans which have now been about for a long time and on which I commented last year, are an improvement on the original scheme. But we are particularly concerned at Phase II, for which no plans have been publicly revealed but which will involve the demolition of a further terrace of listed houses and an even greater over-development of the site than Phase 1, and that the Borough may adopt the same pusillanimous attitude to these as it did to the original plans. For this reason the Society has sought, with some success, to include within the District Plan the same criteria for statutory developers as already existed within the plan for commercial and private developers. Phase I even may never go ahead, bearing in mind the current financial and medical climate. But if it does, and a Planning Application is made for Phase II, at least let us hope that the Borough will stick to its own district Plan.

While on the subject of the Cardiothoracic Centre I would refer to its current tenant Jack Beanstalk. I am delighted that the Borough is sticking to its guidelines over the right of way from Dovehouse Green to Sydney Street. During opening hours it is now possible to take this sensible short cut from the Kings Road. However, this right of way should be available on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, I note with

regret that no steps have yet been taken to return the gates and railings to the Old Registry Office on the Kings Road (from which they were taken without any form of consent) and incorporated in the garden centre.

In this connection I wrote to the Chairman of the Planning Committee. As yet there has been no response. In the meantime, the wooden palings which were meant to be a replacement of the iron railings are in a state of collapse and doubtless will soon be vandalised and disappear.

f. *The Chelsea Rectory*

In 1978, we held what was possibly a farewell Summer Meeting in the Garden of Chelsea Rectory, thanks to Prebendary and Mrs. Loasby. Not a great deal has happened since that time by way of its sale except there was the possibility, which perhaps might still exist, that the National Trust might purchase the Rectory and Grounds for its own occupation. I am sure that we would all welcome such a purchaser and the Council of the Society has already indicated that limited commercial use, subject to certain safe-guards, would be far more satisfactory than development as a private housing estate. We will watch with great interest any proposals that are made for the future of these fine buildings and the extensive private garden.

g. *Kingsley School Site*

Just to the South of the Rectory lies the Kingsley School Site. This has had a very unhappy history in the last year. Since an article on the subject will appear in this year's Annual Report it is not necessary for me to detail the events and its most unsuitable use as a Libyan Arab School. I would however especially commend the work of Fergus Hobbs, who is the Chairman of the Glebe Place Residents Association and the author of the article.

7. *Chelsea Society Lectures*

This year the Society instituted a series of lectures on Chelsea topics. They were as follows:—

The Royal Hospital, by David Ascoli, on 20 February

The Chelsea Physic Garden, by the Curator, Alan Patterson, on 19 March.

19th-Century Artists in Chelsea, by Philip Hook of Christie's, on 16 April.

The Lectures were all held at the National Army Museum by kind permission of the Director, William Reid. Bill Reid is of course one of our Council Members and he and Arthur Grimwade, our Vice Chairman, were responsible for organising these lectures.

All three of the lectures were well attended and our costs were covered. I was away when the last Lecture was held, but I can certainly commend the quality and interest of the first two. Being no gardener I thought that the Physic Garden might be a rather dry subject, but it turned out to be one of the best lectures I have ever attended. I am sure that this series will continue and prosper and I hope that our members and the public will give it the same support in the future as already demonstrated.

8. *The District Plan*

This week I attended the Inquiry on behalf of the Society that is now going on at the Chelsea Old Town Hall into the District Plan. The Chelsea Society has been concerned with this since the first discussion papers were issued by the Borough over 5 years ago. During that time, and it seems for ever rather than a mere 5 years, I have been Chairman of the Church, Cheyne North and South Stanley Forum. On this Forum Chelsea Society members have been well represented. Because of this, and with the approval of the Society's Council, our objections match those of the forum insofar as the Society is concerned with a particular chapter. I am sure that we have had a considerable influence in shaping the plan at every stage and since it covers how Chelsea — and indeed Kensington — will develop over the next 10 years, this has been an important task.

We are primarily concerned with two particular chapters, namely conservation and movement. As regards conservation I have already referred to two matters. These are the importance of the same criteria for statutory developers, which is now firmly incorporated in the plan, and the study papers on each conservation area. Bearing in mind what happened over Mallord Street, the question of the use of these study papers is vital. The Borough wishes to concentrate its resources on the papers. We think this is wrong. There should be a fairer division of Council resources by making the papers simpler documents — at the moment each successive paper has become larger and more elaborate — and thus releasing funds to consider new conservation areas or changes in their existing boundaries. Above all there must be proper resources for policing the documents and enforcing the controls. At the moment the authors of the study papers and those who seek to enforce them appear to live in two separate worlds. There must be no more Mallord Streets.

But Chelsea Society objections at this stage, save for movement, are not sweeping condemnations. The whole process of making the plan has involved participation and it has been a joint exercise which has allowed for influence to be exerted on the Borough. Our current objections are largely ones of detail — though nevertheless important — and we hope that the Inspector will be prepared to accept what we have to say.

The movement chapter is slightly different, but in this the Society is largely adopting a supportive role of WLTR — West London Traffic Reform. The objections largely relate to reducing the overall level of traffic and as regards the vexed question of the one-way system and embankment traffic, seeking palliatives now as well as tying in the wording to the council's previous stance at the 1972 West Cross Route Inquiry.

9. *Richard Stewart Jones*

I am sure that the name of Richard Stewart Jones will be well known to many of you. He was of course an outstanding secretary of this Society immediately after the War and was very much concerned with the restoration of Chelsea Old Church following its bomb damage. He then left and went to work for the National Trust, but tragically died at a very early age. At an earlier AGM I

referred to the fact that there was in course of preparation a book of people's memories concerning him and this has now just been published. It is a particularly fascinating document for those who have memories of Chelsea just before, during and after the War.

10. *Retirements from the Council*

After many years of service on the Council, John Yeoman and Francis Baden-Powell are stepping down, but John will still be concerned as a liaison with the River Thames Society and we will continue to use the expertise of Francis in major architectural matters. On behalf of us all, I would like to thank them very much for their many years of service on the Council.

As you will have seen from the Notice, I also will be retiring from the Chairmanship, having now served 5 years in what is a fairly onerous position. I have certainly enjoyed the work for much of the time and I think the Society has achieved a certain amount during this period. One of the first matters that came up was an application for demolition of the fragment of the Tedworth Square Terrace, which is in fact part of St. Leonard's Terrace. We opposed this vigorously and I am glad to say that the Planning Committee turned down the application and that these few houses appear to have been splendidly restored and are a complete refutation of the idea that there was any requirement for their demolition.

Perhaps the most striking event was the celebration of our 50th anniversary and the sponsoring of the rehabilitation of the Old Burial Ground, now known as Dovehouse Green. It is increasingly used by all members of the public and was very much a demonstration that conservation societies don't just oppose but also can improve the environment in a constructive way. As I have already said, the major planning matter was concerned with St. Mark and St. John. Here the Society played an active role and a most notable victory was achieved by the cooperation of many people and organisations. I am glad to mention increased activities such as the Chelsea Society lectures and the various other talks and meetings which preceded this series. You will also have seen that there is to be a private view for Chelsea Society Members at the Studio of Sam Herman on the 4 December.

It was a significant step when we started to take advertising in the Report. Without this advertising I do not think it would be possible to continue production of the Report in its present form. This would have been a loss not only to the Society, but also to Chelsea, since the Report is not just a record of what happens each year but also a handsome publication which always contains a varied selection of Chelsea topics and indeed learned articles.

But the major matter with which I have been concerned continuously has of course been the District Plan which, as I mentioned, is now at the inquiry stage and virtually completed.

I would like to pay tribute to Members of the Council and Officers of the Society during my period as Chairman and in particular to thank those very

hardworking Planning Secretaries, Eileen Harris and Mark Dorman, as well as our Treasurer, Bill Haynes, and membership Secretary, Barbara Towle. Any comments about the Annual Report would be incomplete without reference to its Editor for these years, Sam Carr, who has not only succeeded in producing excellent reports but has also quietly but firmly reminded me to get cracking on getting the Advertising copy in.

I am delighted that Lesley Lewis is to be my successor. She has already completed a 10-year stint as secretary of the Society and there could scarcely be anyone who needs an introduction less than does Lesley.

I would conclude by thanking you all for coming this evening, for your support during these years, and by wishing Lesley all possible success during her period as Chairman.

Living in Chelsea: Lawrence Street

by Tom Pocock

On a Thursday evening, when the bell-ringers are at practice in the Old Church, the only sound may be their peals and you could imagine yourself in a tranquil country town. On an autumn night, when there is fog about, you can sometimes hear ships' sirens from the river and feel the draw of the sea and distant places. On a drowsy summer day, you can sit in an old-fashioned English garden behind a Georgian house, where bees hum among the hollyhocks, and reflect that some things have not changed since that house was built.

Such pleasant moments are among the reasons that Lawrence Street, where they can be experienced, can be considered as the innermost heart of Chelsea. Many will think this should be in the part of the quarter where they happen to live, or around some particularly revered building, such as the Royal Hospital or the Old Church, or even a view — Whistler's Reach, perhaps. But even before I moved across Oakley Street to Lawrence Street, I had a feeling that the true heart of Chelsea was there, for it seemed to be made up of the right ingredients.

It is, for a start, as pleasantly mixed socially as it is architecturally. In a hundred yards or so, you can find residents of most income groups — except the very highest and lowest — and as much divergence in character and activity; yet most will know each other (by sight, at least) and greet each other on passing as is the custom in villages. It is a family street; about a dozen children are growing up there and its young people commute to university, art school and the first job.

It is a place to see Chelsea natives: several have lived there half a lifetime; my own family has lived within a few hundred yards of it for four generations (not counting an eighteenth-century ancestor round the corner in what was Church Row); and, until recently, Ted Lloyd, our milkman had been making the rounds of Lawrence Street since the war and was himself from an old Chelsea family.

Two-thirds of Lawrence Street buildings are about a century old; one third, a century and a half, to two. Amongst the former are, of course, Carlyle Mansions and the Cheyne Hospital for Children, both in the grand Victorian style that was thought suitable for the new Embankment along Cheyne Walk. There is the pub, the Cross Keys, rebuilt at the same time to replace an ancient inn. Next, opposite one another, are flats: King's Mansions on one side; Lawrence Mansions and the Peabody flats on the other. Then, at the top, where Lawrence Street meets Upper Cheyne Row, are the old houses: some, mostly on the west side, date from about 1790; others, on the east, are typical little terraced houses, built for Chelsea artisans in 1835.

But familiar as the street would still seem to Thomas Carlyle or Whistler, it would be wholly strange to Tobias Smollett, who lived there a century before, and *his* Lawrence Street would be almost as unfamiliar to the family after whom it was named. The Lawrences were lords of the manor and their house, Lawrence House, stood at the top of the present street and they remained there even after King Henry VIII acquired the manorial rights and built a new manor-house farther east.

Early in the eighteenth century, the house was let to the Duchess of Monmouth, the widow of the rebellious Duke, and named after her. Later, it was divided into separate houses and lodgings and it was there, during the middle years of the century, that Smollett lived with his wife and the daughter for the sake of whose health he had decided to move to the fresh riverside air of Chelsea.

While Chelsea is still sometimes described as the artists' quarter of London — as indeed it was for a century — it has been the home of as many writers. Poets and journalists, critics and playwrights, essayists and historians, biographers and novelists have lived here for three centuries.

But few of them have the immediate appeal of Tobias Smollett. He was a writer with whom most others can identify in his struggles for recognition and success. The brilliant novelist, who had to turn to hack-work to pay his bills; the journalist whose opinions cost him a fine and a prison sentence for libel. He was good company: entertaining fellow writers to generous, simple meals of beef and beer and stimulating conversation in Lawrence Street, or talking, drinking and smoking clay pipes with his cronies at the Old Swan or Don Saltero's down by the river.

Some of his friends were men of distinction, like Garrick and Wilkes, but he was probably closest to "my friend Bob", Captain Mann, Royal Navy, whom he described as "an honest tar in whom there is no guile." For seven years, the two were regular companions in Chelsea taverns, their common bond being throught Smollett's former service as a naval surgeon, and until Mann returned to sea and death in action, the captain was reassuring company in worrying times. These culminated in the death of Smollett's daughter Elizabeth and the beginning of his sad wanderings on the Continent, from whence he wrote, "I cannot help respecting Chelsea as a second native place notwithstanding the irreparable misfortunes which happened to me while I resided in it."

It is tantalising that, although Smollett brought Chelsea into his novels, he never described the extraordinary establishment that stood next to Monmouth House. This was the porcelain manufactory, which flourished for some forty years in the eighteenth century, produced some of the loveliest porcelain in Europe — *the* loveliest, perhaps, in the Red Anchor period of the 1750s — then vanished so totally that there was much debate as to exactly where it had stood.

Fragments of porcelain had been found in two Lawrence Street gardens so, ten years ago, when my wife's family bought the house between them, I had

a faint hope that now the mystery might be solved. It was in their garden, which had long been neglected (but now regularly wins prizes from the Chelsea Gardens Guild) that I caught sight of what appeared to be a fragment of bone but turned out to be an eighteenth-century porcelain knife-handle. Subsequently, the Victoria and Albert Museum conducted a limited excavation, finding large quantities of porcelain fragments and kiln equipment. Gradually, the vanished past of Lawrence Street began to come into focus . . .

This was never a grand street like Cheyne Row, with its Queen Anne houses, or a busy commercial one, like Old Church Street with its shops and stables. In Victorian times, Lawrence Street was noted for its pubs (the Cross Keys, where there was a celebrated murder, the Prince of Wales, on the corner of Justice Walk, and the Lord Palmerston on the corner of Upper Cheyne Row) and its toughs, who hung about them and got the apprehensive nickname of "Lawrence Street 'erbs". There was a doss-house opposite Juctice Walk, dignified by one of the double door-hoods from the demolished Monmouth House and, even in the most respectable homes, much overcrowding.

My own little house, which was built upon much older foundations immediately after the demolition of Monmouth House in 1834, is, even with recent extensions, a tight fit for four people, but in Edwardian times fourteen members of a coal merchant's family lived there.

Gradually, Lawrence Street become more prosperous, less crowded and more respectable. Two of the pubs shut; the doss-house became two handsome Georgian residences; the stables were converted into studios. It escaped serious damage in the Second World War but narrowly, since the churches on either side of it — the Old Church and the Church of the Holy Redeemer — were both bombed with loss of life. Subsequently, while much of Chelsea became another Mayfair, the old quarter continued without drastic change. Cheyne Walk was still the place for the landowner's or merchant prince's town house (and for the pop star's), and Cheyne Row for the literary mandarin, but Lawrence Street was essentially for busy people: the architect and musician, journalist and actor, lawyer and designer and also the hospital porter and the mathemetician, the jeweller and the sandwich-man, the businessman and the carpet-dealer — a cross-section of London life that it would be hard to better.

But if this account seems rather too smug and cosy, it must be added that this agreeable street has to fight for its survival. A few years ago it had traffic trouble: a commuters' short-cut ran through it from the south-west suburbs to the West End and a campaign against this resulted in the present one-way system which has brought peace to the neighbourhood.

Currently Lawrence Street is, with the rest of Old Chelsea, faced with two major problems both the consequence of decisions by authorities from whom such actions come as a shocking surprise. One is the secretive sale of the Kingsley School in Glebe Place to the Libyan Government, which has openly supported international terrorism. The other is the Greater London Council's

plan to attract even more heavy traffic to Cheyne Walk by converting it into a motorway, so finally cutting off Chelsea from its river.

In ten years' time another article such as this should make interesting — let us hope not saddening — reading.

The King's Road, Chelsea

by Charlotte Gere

It may seem curious to many of the readers of this Report — by definition, I suppose, either inhabitants or devotees of Chelsea, or an exasperated combination of both — that anyone should undertake to write from choice about that notorious 'lost cause' of urban conservation, the present day King's Road. The Chelsea Society is entirely concerned with espousing lost causes and effecting miracle victories, (*vide* Dovehouse Green) to the benefit of the resident population and, perhaps without any very great dedication to their comfort or amusement, incidentally to the non-resident users of the Borough's amenities. It is those tourists and King's Road promenaders that the residents owe many of the ills that have befallen the main shopping centre and thus the principal amenity of this locality. The type of amusement which they demand is in direct conflict with the needs of a resident community, but their vastly superior spending power and their apparently insatiable appetite for overpriced junk of every description has dictated the choice of merchandise that is on offer in the King's Road shops, the type of restaurant or café, and, to a large extent, the appearance of the buildings themselves.

The old King's Road, with its solidly old-fashioned, utilitarian shops, just the very kind needed by a modest, even in some respects raffish, local population, is mourned as having disappeared without trace. The few residents who remember pre-war Chelsea, and can perform the phenomenal feat of memory needed to recreate the old sequence of shops from begining to end, can hardly point to a single survivor from their childhood. Some ghostly lettering on the brick walls, at least two mournful cow's heads remind us now of lost hardware shops and dairies; the removal of layers of genteel decoration occasionally reveals an interior entirely faced with painted tiles, which are quickly covered up again in case the present inhabitants may be reminded of how much more convenient it is to have a butcher near at hand rather than an antique market. The loss of an excellent printer and stationer is not likely to be compensated for by yet another dress shop for the Chelsea inhabitant who wants some postcards or a new typewriter ribbon. It is for this reason that the reappearance of Kirkham's, resplendent with their fruit and flowers which far outshine the glittering lurex clothes which hem them in, was greeted with what may seem to the outsider quite disproportionate enthusiasm. It has become the obvious duty of every Chelsea resident to maintain the few beleaguered amenities that remain, the solitary electrician, a real fish-shop which has become a great luxury nowadays, and a good butcher.

Chelsea is widely but I think mistakenly regarded as being a despoilt village, a little larger than life — certainly more endowed with eccentric local characters than the real country village which I lived in as a child, still a haunt of phlegmatic rural people who in no way resembled the hard-pressed but ingenious population of the London of thirty years ago, and with an unusually large artistic clique — but full of the traces of modest elegance and abundant

greenery that poignantly recall an idyllic past. In fact for at least a century Chelsea has partaken more of the character of a thriving small town with a prosperous commercial centre continually in the process of profitable development. A dispassionate look at the road from beginning to end, or rather from beginning to World's End which is the area where the most radical change in the commercial character of the locality has taken place — will show that it is many decades since the King's Road presented a consistently elegant face to the world. The architectural character of the successive bouts of shop-building activity indicate the dates at which this small town moved with the times, and the inexorable way in which this process of commercial up-dating takes place.

The 1880's and the early years of the present century were periods of fairly large-scale commercial building activity, not much of it in a very distinguished style; Chelsea had to wait until the 'thirties to see a really first-class piece of shop design in the rebuilt Peter Jones whose elegant curve now leads the King's Road round into Sloane Square (page 33). Other distinguished individual developments include the fine building opposite the Town Hall done for the Westminster Bank by Sir Reginald Blomfield and of course the Town Hall itself (J. M. Brydon, architect).

But even the curious sea-front style of the parade of shops between nos. 85 and 91 (page 38) is preferable to the semi-circular building at the corner of Sidney Street. It is no use trying to preserve a commercially unviable environment like a fly in amber, but it may be that even the best interests of the landlords of the local commercial property are not served by indiscriminate exploitation of their assets. At any time in the recent past, and it must be assumed that no great change in the situation will take place in the immediate future, at least a hundred shops have been available to the enterprising or hopeful Chelsea shopkeeper. The rents are high, and the mysterious commercial doctrine of 'comparability' (i.e. that all rents shall be as high, comparably, as all other rents) means that no bargains are to be had amongst this *embarras de choix*. There are only a few sorts of vending enterprise that can produce the scale of profits needed to cover the large sums demanded in rent and rates, with the result that modest neighbourhood shops are bound to disappear.

The gaps in the development of the old King's Road which existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century were filled with the modified Nash or Cubitt-style terraces which were the accepted ideal of the urban planning of the period, scaled down to suit the modest pretentions of the middle-class inhabitants of the borough. This must have made of the King's Road of the 1850's a handsome and coherent pattern, filling in appropriately the earlier groups of brick-built Georgian houses of which now all too few traces remain.

The loss of many of the beautifully proportioned brick terraces took place at a time when redevelopment was regarded as the only possible solution to the problems imposed by the crowded, decaying streets of London. Many more or less unsuccessful solutions had been tried before the practice of tearing down whole areas of community life was at last questioned, and to a large extent

abandoned. While it is true that the Chelsea Polytechnic canteen and living quarters could hardly have been accommodated within the narrow, elegant facades of the pretty terrace which they have replaced, some more ingenious use of the whole site might have allowed the King's Road houses to have been preserved in a usable form. Nowadays much thought goes into the problem of the adaptation and re-use of existing London buildings of any merit, and it seems likely that in the present climate of opinion the uniquely boring Polytechnic extensions would have been considerably modified to fit in with the general character of their immediate surroundings. Whether such attempts at preservation, when they are forced on a sceptical financial committee, are likely to be successful still remains to be seen. The endless manœuvering over the old Pheasantry Club has resulted in a solution which may or may not prove satisfactory in the end.

The decision to effect urban renewal without large-scale demolition sadly came too late for the World's End – Lot's Road area, which became Chelsea's only venture into high-rise development. The tower block in the King's Road itself is a distinguished and bold silhouette, but the scale is quite out of proportion to the surroundings.

It is fortunate that private residents are still prepared to put up with the noise and discomfort of living in the group of houses which includes Leoni's beautiful Argyll House (page 35). This group would not disgrace a famous architectural area like Blackheath village or Hammersmith Mall, and with the other fine buildings on the King's Road like the Duke of York's Headquarters (which was recently the subject of an article in this Report) and the short terraces, of only three houses, at the open ends on the King's Road of Carlyle Square (page 34), make the problem of how to preserve the architectural amenities of the whole area worth considerable thought and effort. The house on the south-west end of Carlyle Square has recently been done up and even added to with a sympathetic regard for the character of both the house and its surroundings which deserves the highest praise (page 34). This kind of rehabilitation seems to be beyond the imagination of any of the shop owners of the area. Even as I write the whole front of a former Indian restaurant, which operated without apparent inconvenience behind the old conventional shop facade for many years, is being transformed into a disastrously dainty olde worlde village premises complete with bottle-glass window panes in bow windows. This turns out to front another restaurant, of no readily identifiable nationality, which will have to compete with all the other restaurants of the same type already jostling for custom in the immediate area. An on-the-spot opinion poll of the local residents would be unlikely to uncover any enthusiasm for this new venture, when the purchase of such mundane items as pins or thread or a refill for a Biro remains so difficult.

It may perhaps seem somewhat unfair on the developers of the curiously named 'Porticos' parade of shops not to single out their efforts for undiluted praise, but I hope that the photograph (page 35) will demonstrate how much the removal of the lateral dividing lines of brickwork from the lower half of the facade has taken away from the coherence of the design. The large areas of

plate glass make the arcading appear insubstantial, and the detailing of the upper half now looks quite out of place, because it is comparatively on too small a scale. It is obvious that there are many kinds of commercial enterprise which could not prosper behind the elegant shopfront of no. 255, but the principle of keeping a whole building in a consistent style, with appropriate lettering and lighting is so obviously admirable, that it is to be hoped that more rigorous requirements to abide by the traditional design of the building which they occupy will be part of the conditions imposed on intending King's Road traders (page 35).

Chelsea residents now often resort to the last expedient of despair, that of avoiding their main thoroughfare as far as is practicably possible. They have many reasons for doing so, not least of which is the inconvenience of walking along the uncomfortably crowded pavements. Many — even most — of the King's Road shops are now leased to cheap chain stores and antique markets of the type which more properly belong in the Oxford Street area, where a certain sleazy vitality is wholly appropriate; they have a style of fascia designed without any regard for the character of the building which it adorns. Everyone probably has a pet hate amongst the horrors perpetrated by these leaseholders; mine is the fake rustic exterior of the Westerner jeans shop.

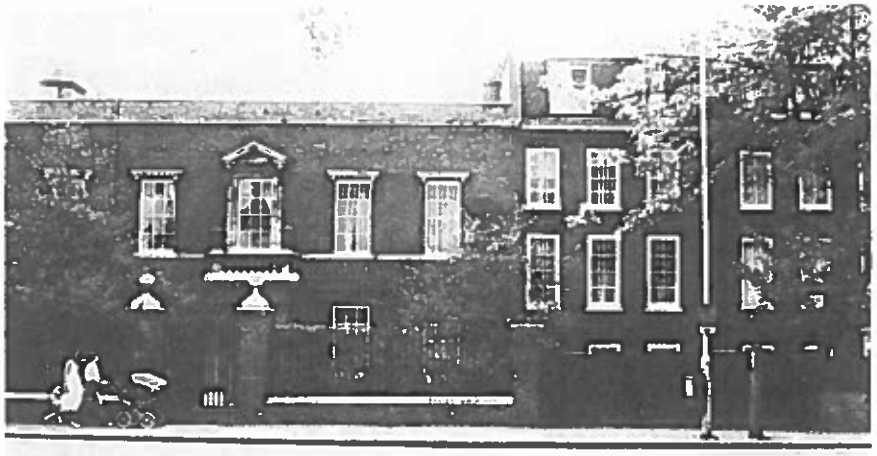
The one area in which a radical re-thinking of the policies of twenty years ago has been most beneficial to the traditional urban centre is in the style of redecoration now adopted by many large brewery companies for their public houses. After a little somewhat half-hearted streamlining of pubs, rather in the manner of the road-house style of the between wars period, it is now much more usual to find the old-fashioned public-house 'Baroque' being used, with decorative plaster-work, intricate iron railings and swirly graining of the woodwork. The King's Road has several successful examples of the style, notably the Markham Arms, the more restrained Chelsea Potter, and the marvellous World's End pub, sadly shorn of the flanking buildings in the same style (page 38).

The modern commercial character of the area has drastically altered the street which threads its way through the centre of Chelsea. The old atmosphere is irretrievably lost, and this is what the residents miss most of all, but in deploring the loss of the bath-water we should do well to note that not all of the baby has been sacrificed along with it. The skeleton of an interesting and varied main street remains intact, supporting a mixture of residential and commercial building types spanning two centuries of middle-class urban development. The walk from Sloane Square to the World's End can be made into a pleasure rather than a penance by a little carefully selected sight-seeing, and there is no reason why future schemes for the King's Road frontages should not build on this basis imaginatively.

Peter Jones. (Photograph: Nick Pallister). See page 30

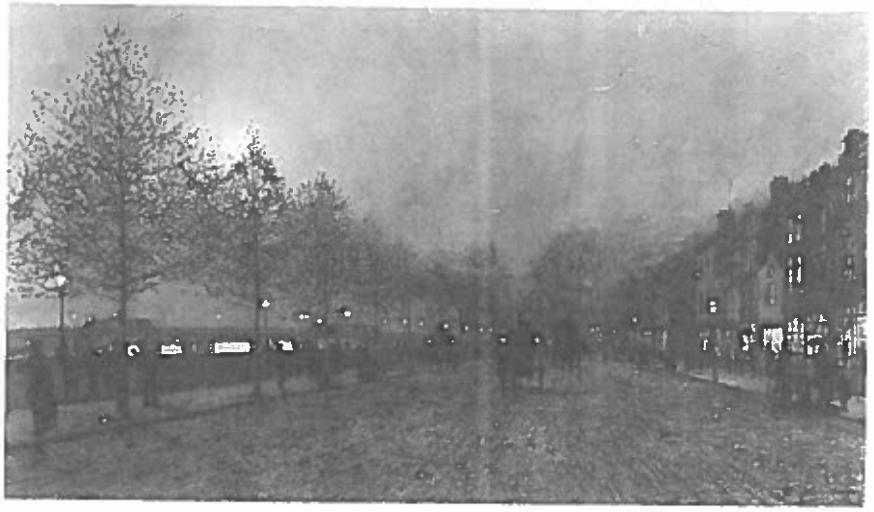
255 King's Road: Jeremy Ltd. (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 31

11 Carlyle Square: King's Road frontage. (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 31



211 (Argyll House. Giacomo Leoni, architect, 1723.) — 215 King's Road. (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 31

'The Porticos', King's Road. (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 31



Atkinson Grimshaw: The Embankment by Moonlight (1885). (Photograph: Christie's). See page 48

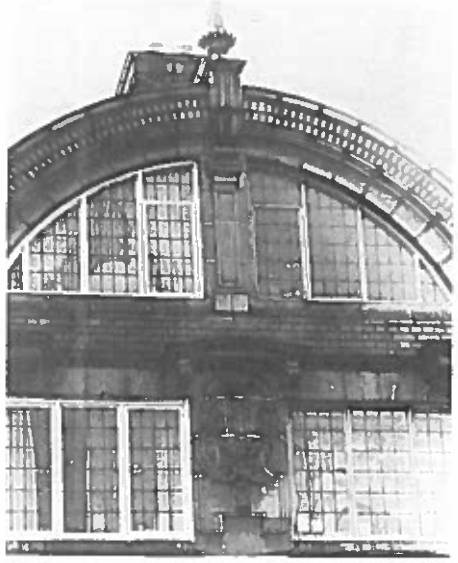
Louis Grimshaw: Old Chelsea. (Photograph: Christie's). See page 49

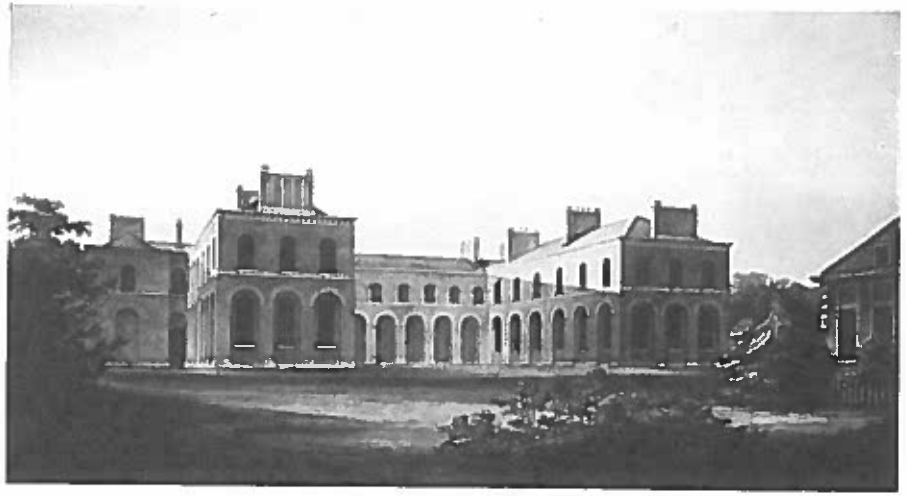
Henry and Walter Greaves: Old Battersea Bridge (1858). (Photograph: Christie's). See page 50

Henry and Walter Greaves: Danvers Street (1859). (Photograph: Christie's) See page 50

Above: The World's End pub (1897). (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 32

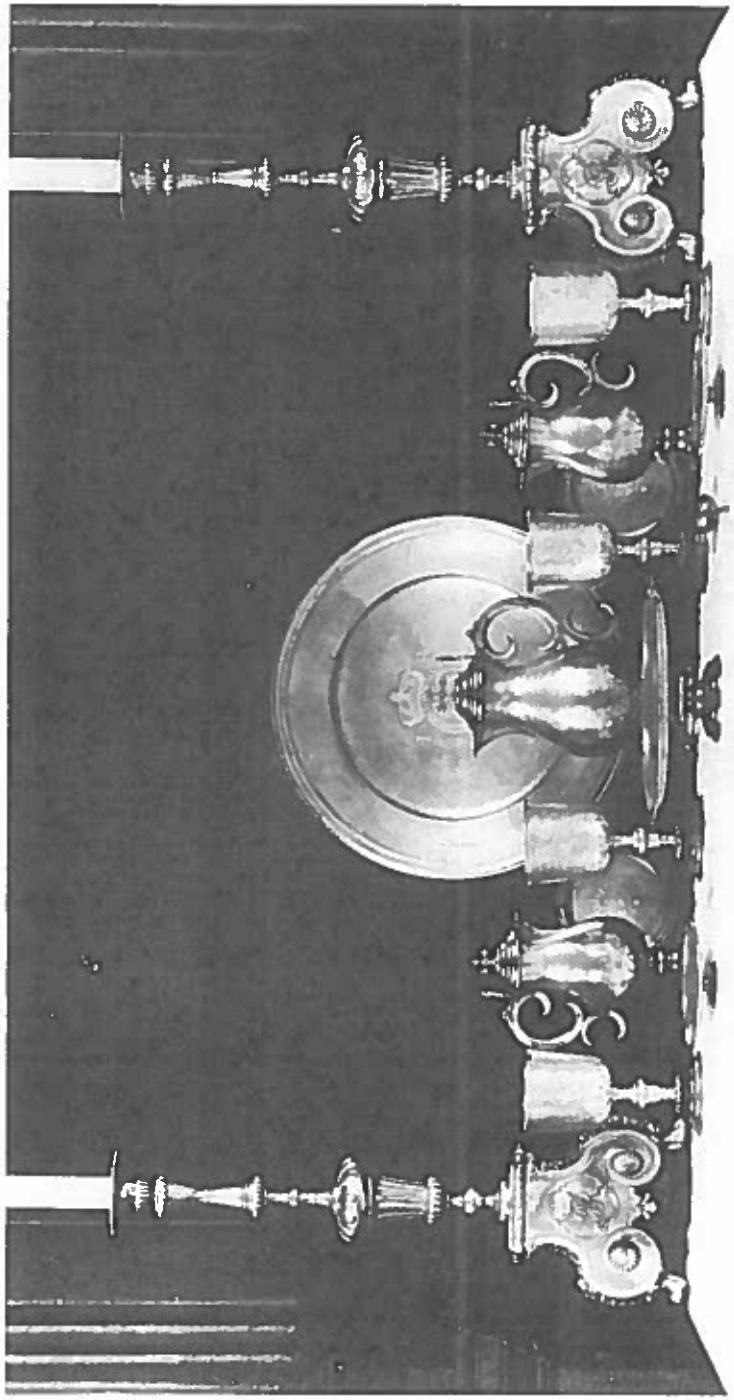
Right: 85-91 King's Road: central pediment (1901). (Photograph: Nick Palliser). See page 30





Royal Hospital: the New Infirmary. Sir John Soane, architect, 1809-12. (Photograph: Trustees of the Soane Museum). See page 45

Royal Hospital: Stable, Infirmary and Clerk-of-the-Works House. Sir John Soane, architect. (Photograph: Trustees of the Soane Museum). See page 45



The Chapel Plate of the Royal Hospital. (Photograph: Courtesy of E. W. Evans). *See page 41*

The Chapel Plate of The Royal Hospital

by Arthur Grimwade

When at the Restoration the king 'came into his own again' much activity ensued in the refurbishing of cathedrals and great churches to the Laudian standards of worship which had prevailed until the Commonwealth and had been preserved only in a few country backwaters thereafter. There was soon a flurry of activity in consequence in the London goldsmiths' workshops. The new Regalia was first priority. Westminster Abbey, as the setting for the Coronation, acquired a large communion service in January 1661; Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford and other cathedrals followed in the next few years. The Chapels Royal at St. James's and Windsor also needed re-equipping and later new establishments, like St. James's, Piccadilly were to be given magnificent services of great size and dignity by beneficent donors. So, when the great chapel of the new Chelsea Hospital arose, it was natural for it to be supplied with a considerable service of silver-gilt communion plate, which would, in the custom of the time, make a fitting display on the altar at great festivals of the Church and other important occasions.

Although the official guide to the Chapel suggests that the altar candlesticks, at least, were 'probably made to Wren's own specifications', there seems little to support this theory in the documentation of the service, which is recorded in the Hospital accounts as having been purchased as an entity from John Rogers, the junior partner of Francis Child, who it seems fairly safe to assume was Sir Stephen Fox's banker. The goldsmith bankers of the day, like Child and Richard Hoare, were quite accustomed to supplying plate and jewellery to their customers, putting out the making to the leading craftsmen of their choice. The Hospital plate does, in fact, bear the maker's mark of Ralph Leake, the probable brother of Francis Leake, whose mark appears on pieces of the coronation plate in the Tower of London and St. George's Chapel among others, while Ralph was prominent in the next decade or so and made a large winecooler for the Duke of Rutland in 1681 and the magnificent service of St. James's, Piccadilly in 1683. Stephen Fox was fond of presenting plate to the churches in Wiltshire and Somerset with which he was connected. To Farley, where he had been born in 1627, he presented in 1689 a chalice and paten and flagon by Leake, perhaps impressed by his Chelsea service; although, when he gave pieces to Redlynch in Somerset and Maddington in Wilts, they were made by Robert Smythier, who worked to the order of the Jewel Office and made pieces for the Chapels Royal and the Privy Council. Mr. Charles Oman, in his classic *English Church Plate* implies that the Hospital service was ordered through the Jewel Office. This may well have been so, but one remains with the feeling that Fox must have taken a personal interest in the order.

As Mr Oman has pointed out, there is an interesting contrast between Leake's work for St. James's, Piccadilly and 'the more austere version

thought appropriate when the Royal Hospital was furnished out five years later'. Apart from the candlesticks, which we will consider later, it will be seen that the service is, indeed, almost entirely plain, the only concession to decoration being the 'cut-card' foliage forming a calyx to the bowls of the chalices and bases of the flagons, the attractive applied flat sheet silhouette of leaves which first appeared in French silver earlier in the century, and secondarily the fluted flanges or platforms at the base of the chalice stems. Otherwise the pieces rely for their effect on their weighty proportions and fine engraving of the Royal arms, apart from the somewhat light-hearted reverse scrolls forming the lower part of the flagon handles, which look almost as if they were held in place by faith alone.

What is not easily appreciated from a small illustration is the imposing size of the major pieces. Thus the candlesticks are 37 inches high to the waxpans and the almsdish or 'great guilt bason' as it is called in the accounts, is 24 inches in diameter, while the large central flagon is 17 inches high. This is not, however, exceptional for such peices. The 1683 examples at St. James's, Piccadilly are 18½ inches while two pairs at St. George's Chapel, Windsor measure no less than 20 and 20½ inches.

The chalices, which show close relationship to the imposing standing cups of the period of Livery Companies and Colleges, are much in the line of other Restoration church plate, as, for instance the pair of *circa* 1660 at Gloucester Cathedral, although the latter have heavier stems. Leake's chalices at St. James's have Gibbons-type decoration of cherubs' masks and fruit festoons in high relief and the same fluted flange above the foot as at Chelsea, although the stems are of inverted pear shape chased with acanthus foliage. For similar cut-card decoration to the Chelsea examples we may turn to the later chalice of 1699 at Christ Church, Oxford by the Huguenot goldsmith John Chartier, which has a similarly decorated cover surmounted by a cross. The paten covers to the Hospital chalices, of which two can be seen standing on edge between the inner pair of chalices and the flagons in the photograph, and the other two in front, are of the standard form with central foot, which like their Elizabethan ancestors can be inverted on the chalice to form a cover.

The existence of three flagons, a pair of 14 inches height and the large one of 17 inches is a rather unusual feature in services of this kind, although a similar set of three in two sizes is also a feature of the St. James's, Piccadilly service. It may be argued that this was primarily designed to ensure a suitable focal point for the altar arrangement, but this is more usually provided by the almsdish alone, since no altar cross was allowed at the time, but one is also left pondering the possibility of another intention. Granted that the large dish is certainly of the usual almsdish form and dimension, there seems just a possibility that it might have been evisaged also as a baptismal basin for which the large flagon would serve as the accompanying ewer, if the need arose, even though it seems unlikely that christenings would have been expected in the Chapel at the foundation date of the Hospital! Admittedly there is no parallel evidence that I can recall for such a conjunction of flagon and shallow dish for christening purposes, although the unlidded rosewater ewer and flat dish for

ceremonial dinner usage remained *de rigueur* into the eighteenth century as evidenced by many examples in College and Company possession. The *raison d'être*, therefore, for the supplying of one large flagon remains a matter of conjecture.

I turn now to what must, aesthetically, be the most noticeable items of the service, the candlesticks. These, as will be seen, are of the continental Catholic form emanating from Italy into France and Flanders in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, of which the earliest surviving examples in England are two pairs, one of 1653, at Rochester Cathedral by the fine maker only known to us by his mark of a hound sejant, who also made a second pair at Staunton Harold, Leicestershire for Sir Robert Shirley in the following year. As Charles Oman has remarked, it is difficult to explain why seventeenth-century Anglicans were ready to accept contemporary continental designs for altar candlesticks while markedly avoiding the form of chalices used across the Channel. The same basic form on triangular base appeared next in 1660 at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, to be followed in 1676 by another pair at Ingestre, Staffordshire, and after the Chelsea examples by others by the well-known maker Anthony Nelme of 1694 again at St. George's, and in 1697 by a fine pair made for the Duke of Manchester's embassy plate for Venice, after which we have to move over sixty years till the pair of 1759 at Trinity College, Oxford. Of all these variations on the theme, the Chelsea examples are perhaps the most elegant, if perhaps slightly weak in design in the narrow baluster between the main vase element above the base and the upper spool-shaped section below the waxpan above. As may be seen, they are embellished with the applied cast Royal Crown and cypher of James II in place of the engraved arms on the other pieces. My minor criticism apart, the candlesticks are, of course, highly important members of a very small group of High Anglican altar plate of the period.

I turn now to a very minor, but quite rare item of the plate, to which I am happy to contribute a fresh angle. This, which can scarcely be seen in the illustration immediately to the right front of the inner right-hand chalice, is the straining ladle, which is unmarked except for a barely distinguishable maker's mark in the bowl, which may be the initials E. H. above a rosette. In the Hospital accounts all the main items are detailed followed by the words 'and other plate delivered for ye use of ye Hospitall'. It has been suggested in the Chapel guide, referred to earlier, that the ladle or straining spoon was probably acquired early in the eighteenth century, but comparison of form with the few existing examples of the late seventeenth century suggests that the present item is clearly of that period, the maker's mark being of pre-Britannia standard hallmarks form which dates it therefore as pre 1697, and most probably is a piece of the 'other plate', which may well have been transferred from domestic use in the Hospital to serve the purpose of straining the communion wine before filling the flagons or equally likely for removing any impurities detected in the chalice when prepared.

As has already been said, altar crosses were not part of altar furniture in the period of the Hospital's foundation and it was not until about 1900 that the

first, a gilt metal example, was presented to the Chapel. This was replaced in 1954 by the present one designed by the well-known silversmith Leslie Durbin, adapting the form of the base of the candlesticks and changing the cypher of James II to that of our reigning monarch. Two years later a silver-gilt christening bowl was made to the design of Paul Paget to fit the existing font pedestal with a new crown-topped wood cover to complete the composition. Mentions of these modern additions to the Chapel's plate closes this survey of what readers will, I hope, appreciate is one of the most important groups of seventeenth century church plate in the country.

I am most grateful to the Governor of the Royal Hospital, General Sir Antony Read, for permission to inspect the service and to the Chaplain, the Rev. E. W. Evans, for his kind co-operation and the loan of the excellent photograph for reproduction.

See illustration on page 40.

Sir John Soane and the Royal Hospital

by Dorothy Stroud

On Saturday 7 February, 1807, John Soane noted in his pocket-book 'S. Wyatt died this day'. In fact, Samuel Wyatt's death came very suddenly while putting on his boots. He had, among his many other posts and an extensive private practise, acted for fifteen years as Clerk of the Works to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, an office in which he had succeeded Robert Adam. Soane is therefore not likely to have given any thought to the Chelsea Clerkship until he heard of Wyatt's demise, but once this occurred, he seems to have acted swiftly towards obtaining it for himself, and it is significant that an entry in his note-book records on Sunday 15 February that he had ridden 'with Mrs. S. to Chelsea.' His application proved successful, and on 4 March he was at the Hospital to meet various officials, while a week later he called on the Governor, Sir David Dundas, from whom he received the warrant for his appointment.

From then on the Hospital was to claim a considerable amount of Soane's working time. His salary was £200 a year, with an allowance of three shillings a day 'table money' (the equivalent of subsistence money), and a small house in which he was supposed to reside. On 30 June he noted that he had 'slept at Chelsea first time', but a drawing of the house shows it as a mean little dwelling at that time, and probably it was Mrs. Soane's reluctance to leave their comfortable home in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and join her husband there, which prompted his request to the Lords Commissioners six months later to be excused from regular residence at Chelsea. Over the ensuing years, however, he was able partly to rebuild and extend the house, and it is evident that after Mrs. Soane's death in 1815 he came to regard it as a haven to which he could escape from sad memories in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

For the first two years Soane's work was mainly concerned with routine repairs to such items as chimneys, cornices and roofs. Stone sills were introduced below the windows of the main block facing north, and the brickwork of this façade was repointed. Maintenance was, of course, to be a recurrent problem, but in 1809 came the first of Soane's major undertakings which may briefly be listed as the New Infirmary (1809-12) (page 39), the stables (1814-17) (page 39), the Bake House (1814), and the Gardener's House (1816), all of which were in or adjacent to the West Road. The new Secretary's Office (1818) and the Physician's House (1819) were both on the East Road, but the Surgeon's House (1821) was on the West Road.

The building of a new infirmary had been a matter of discussion for several years. By 1809 it had eventually been decided to select a site on part of which stood Yarborough House of which a portion was to be retained in the new building. This house had originally been the modest dwelling used by Sir Robert Walpole after taking the office of Paymaster General in 1714. It was

later enlarged by Vanbrugh and was then taken by Lord Yarborough whose name it subsequently bore. Of Soane's many proposals for the Infirmary that finally selected by the Chelsea Board consisted of a long range of buildings running from east to west, with two wings extending to the south. At the east end of the main block, and extending into that wing, were the parts of Yarborough House which were retained, including the old drawing-room with a coffered ceiling and marble chimneypiece. The external walls of the new building were of stock brick and carried a Portland stone entablature of Soanic ingenuity, with patera set between token 'triglyphs'. On the south the theme of semi-circular brick arches in which the windows were set was continued to form an open loggia connecting the two wings, while on the north projected a single-storey, five-window bay. The Infirmary was ready to receive its furnishings by the end of 1812, the building costs having by this time amounted to just over £28,135. Unhappily it was destroyed by bombs in the last war, and the site is now covered by the National Army Museum.

The next building of note was the replacement of the Wren stables with a more compact block, Soane's design for which proved to be one of his most idiosyncratic compositions. In this the stables and coach-houses are grouped round a courtyard the entrance to which is through the centre bay of a rectangular block in stock brick. On either side are doors leading to staff lodgings, both the doors and the central entrance being set in large round-headed brick recesses. The first floor rooms of the lodgings receive light from windows on the courtyard side, and the staircases are lit from the north and south walls. The simplicity of the main façade of the stable block is typical of Soane's fondness for stripping away all non-essentials, the only concession to decoration here being a recessed panel over the central arch, and the token triglyphs of the cornice here contrived with up-ended bricks. Although shaken by blast in the war-time raid which destroyed the Infirmary, the stables survived, and are practically unchanged.

For the new Bake House which Soane was asked to build in 1814, and for two or three other small buildings which followed, Soane kept to the style used by Wren for such single-storey quarters, that is, brick walls with stone quoins and steeply projecting eaves to the slate roofs. The same style was also adopted for the façade of the third of his major buildings, the new Secretary's Office on the East Road designed in 1818. Inside, however, are rooms of typically Soanic simplicity, the main door opening into a spacious hall with offices on either side. It is crossed at its further end by a narrow corridor running the entire length of the building and giving access to further offices, a library and a waiting room. At the far end of the hall hangs the large painting of the Battle of Waterloo by George Jones, from whom Soane was some years later to commission a painting showing the interior of the 'Smoking House' at Chelsea, a small building which he erected at the north end of the West Road in 1829, and which was later turned into a guard-house after the rules on smoking in the Hospital had become less stringent. The painting still hangs in Soane's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The furnishing of the Secretary's Office was carried out under Soane's direction in 1819 and much of it remains *in situ*.

Also surviving, and again remarkable for its simplicity, is the little garden shelter in the south-east area of the grounds. Here brick piers with retracted necking support a pitched roof which was originally thatched, but is now slated. No drawings for it seem to have survived, but the Hospital records show that it was constructed from one of four designs which Soane submitted to the Board in 1834. It was, therefore, the last of Soane's works at the Royal Hospital for he died in January 1837, and with his death the office of Clerk of the Works came to an end.

Nineteenth Century Views of Chelsea

by Philip Hook

Chelsea's position as one of the leading artists' quarters in the country was established in the course of the nineteenth century. From the time of Turner (who in later life would sit and contemplate the Thames from his little house in Cheyne Walk) and John Martin, who lived at Lindsey House from 1848 to 1852, through the Pre-Raphaelite presence (Holman Hunt in Prospect Place and Manresa Road, and Rossetti in Cheyne Row) up to the arrival of Whistler and his tutelage of the Greaves brothers, Chelsea's reputation grew as a place for artists to live and work. More than that, the artistic character of its leading lights during these years tended towards the revolutionary rather than the establishment, and so Chelsea became identified with bohemianism and innovation as against the staider character of artistic Kensington, for instance. All this culminated in the formation of the Chelsea Arts Club and its heyday in the earlier part of this century, when only to mention the name Chelsea was to conjure up images of the avant-garde.

Against this background there were also various artists who came to Chelsea attracted by the picturesqueness of its position and surroundings, by its quaint old streets and its proximity to the Thames, and, during the nineteenth century, produced charming and accomplished renderings of the place itself. I have made a selection of a few pictures from that period which illustrate some of the essentially Chelsea views and themes which most captured painters' imaginations. Such a selection cannot, of course, begin to be comprehensive, but I think that the pictures discussed here give a reasonably vivid image of what Victorian Chelsea was really like.

Atkinson Grimshaw painted his characteristic view of *The Embankment with Battersea Bridge Beyond* in 1885 (page 36). The figures by the waterside, those loitering by the lighted shop windows, the hansom cabs passing in stately grace, all combine to provide an evocative, almost idyllic picture of late evening life on a stretch of road which is now permanently clogged by heavy modern traffic. Grimshaw was an artist who hailed from Leeds and developed a highly individual style of modern landscape painting. His favourite settings were by night, and he perfected a technique which excelled in the rendering of subtle reflections of the light of the moon, together with a delight in sinewy branches silhouetted against the sky. When he came to London and rented a Chelsea studio he found many tempting subjects on and off the river: views of Wandsworth, Hampstead, Greenwich, Southwark, Piccadilly, Fleet Street, Wimbledon and Barnes are also known. What is surprising is Whistler's reaction to Grimshaw: usually sparing in his praise of contemporary English artists, Whistler seems to have been uncharacteristically forthcoming in his admiration for the Leeds painter. He went so far as to declare that he thought he had invented the nocturne, but when he saw 'Grimmy's' moonlit scenes he was forced to think again.

Atkinson Grimshaw's distinctive style was imitated by various others, most successfully by his son Louis, who came very much out of the same

mould as his father but never quite attained the same mastery of detail. He was at his best when working from compositions which had already been created by his father, as in the case of my second illustration, *Old Chelsea*, which is closely related to an original by Atkinson Grimshaw. Here we see a twilight view of the fascinating area round Chelsea Old Church, much of which is no longer standing (page 36). The Grimshaw technique was particularly skilful at catching a mood or atmosphere, and the capturing of the wet winter evening with reflections from the shining pavements and the dark figures bound for the warmth of their homes is especially successful here. Such pictures provoke a nostalgia in the contemporary spectator, particularly if he is now a Chelsea resident, and that is a large measure of their appeal today.

If one moves a little further east along the embankment from the scenes shown here by the Grimshaws, one reaches the Royal Hospital, home of the Chelsea Pensioners who were a frequent source of pictorial inspiration for Victorian painters. There was something about a Chelsea Pensioner which combined a number of features especially attractive to the later nineteenth century imagination. One was the idea of the old soldier in the autumn of his years, many acts of military heroism doubtless in his past, now drifting honourably towards the end with only his memories to carry him through. The dignity of old age was a theme which was dwelt on long and deep by many artists whose stock in trade was the provocation of as much dewy-eyed sentimentality in their audience as possible. Then there was the decorative appeal of so much red in the coats of the Pensioners which helped to create a more striking and visually attractive scene. Typical of this genre — indeed perhaps its most striking example — is that well-known painting, *The Last Muster: Sunday at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea*, painted by Sir Hubert von Herkomer in 1875.

Like many classic Victorian Pictures, there is much more narrative detail to this one than initially meets the eye. Besides being a well-observed study of a large number of old men's faces, there is a drama being enacted in the pew to which our attention is drawn. For the old soldier whose gnarled hand clenches his stick, this really is the Last Muster. His neighbour turns anxiously towards him, grips his hand to feel his pulse, and realises that his old comrade has passed on peacefully during the first lesson. To the Victorian imagination, a more fitting end to a lifetime's patriotic service to the country could hardly be found than that it should come in church.

From patriotism to libertinism was only a short hansom cab ride back down the embankment for Victorian Chelsea. Less than a mile west of the Royal Hospital lay the notorious Cremorne Pleasure Gardens, haunt of those disreputable sections of society in search of a good time. Phoebus Levin's view of the Dancing Platform at Cremorne Gardens is dated 1864, and shows the crowd on a summer's evening. Entrance to the grounds was one shilling, and, once in, the pleasure seeker might find all manner of diversions: apart from the dancing, there could be fireworks, balloon ascents, vaudeville and marionettes, while ladies of easy virtue plied their trade at discreet corners. From Levin's picture one understands the essentially raffish nature of the

clientele: the gentlemen have roguish gleams in their eye, while the ladies are coquettish in the extreme. It is the other side of Victorian morality, the opposite pole from the upright principles evinced in Herkomer's paradigm of an honourable life well-spent. As it turned out, the forces of righteousness had the last word as far as Cremorne Gardens was concerned. After a number of rowdy incidents in the 60's and 70's, and severe opposition from the Chelsea Vestry and the Principal of St. Mark's Training College opposite, the Proprietor, threatened with a libel action in May 1877, decided not to renew his licence.

In fact, the only occasion that the military world and Cremorne Gardens joined forces in a semi-official capacity ended in disaster, although the story has comic overtones. The enterprising proprietor decided after the Siege of Sebastopol to re-enact the British triumph, in Cremorne, for the edification of his public. Accordingly, he hired a section of a regiment from the Army who were to charge up a specially-constructed ramp, no doubt uttering Imperialistic cries of victory as they went. Unfortunately, the ramp gave way at the top and casualties were sustained, mostly from bayonet wounds, as rows of soldiers fell to the ground on top of each other. This is not an engagement recorded with pride in the annals of British military history of the nineteenth century.

One man who might have greeted the closure of Cremorne Gardens with regret was Whistler. He was an occasional visitor and sometimes protrayed scenes he saw there. Indeed it was his version of a firework display, *The Falling Rocket* of 1878, which was the direct cause of the famous libel case he brought against Ruskin when the eminent critic took such a violent dislike to the picture. Chelsea as a place held a powerful sway over Whistler: from his general disaffection with the state of the artistic establishment in this country during the later nineteenth century, one might have expected him to seek refuge in a more sympathetic climate elsewhere. But to a large extent it seems to have been Chelsea, and especially the Thames as his frequent inspiration, which kept him here.

In Chelsea, Whistler found two ardent disciples from the somewhat unlikely background of the local boatyard. Henry and Walter Greaves belonged to a family of Chelsea watermen, but became painters of undoubted talent and accomplishment. Although they adored Whistler, the tendency of their painting was towards a more detailed, literal representation of the Chelsea they saw about them. This view of *Danvers Street* (page 37) dates from 1858, and provides an entrancing glimpse of the long-vanished backstreet shops: an egg merchant, a wine merchant, and (sign of the artistic times in Chelsea) an artist's colourman. In a second example of the same date, showing *Old Battersea Bridge* (page 37), one is reminded of the Greaves' definition of the essential difference between then and Whistler: 'To Mr. Whistler a boat is always a tone, to us it was always a boat.'

For comparison, I may mention a typical Whistler of the Thames, painted in 1872. It is *Nocturne in Blue and Silver: Cremorne Lights,* one of a series of pictures which more than anything else have coloured modern-day

appreciation of the beauty of the urban river landscape. One of the reasons for this is that Whistler's nocturnes are more than studies from nature: they are imbued with a romantic feeling which is the artist's own, the result of working up a picture later in the studio from sketches taken on the spot. The mood of these late evening scenes is almost dreamlike, with a certain melancholy and mystery underlying their serenity. It has been much quoted before, but I make no apology for ending on Whistler's rapturous evocation of the Chelsea river and appreciation of all that it meant to him:

> 'And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil and the poor buildings loose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy land is before us — and the wayfarer hastens home: the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure ceases to understand, as they have never ceased to see and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master — her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.'

A Chapter in the Life of Kingsley School

by Fergus Hobbs, M.A., M.Sc.
Chairman, Glebe Place Chelsea Residents' Association

This article is a brief record of three years (1977-80) in the life of Kingsley School as it approaches its centenary, and may be of interest to Society members because it describes one of the most direct forms of action taken by a local association to counter what was seen as a great threat to a lovely area. This action was to seek planning permission for the Association's own scheme and pass it on to a developer, and the story is one of so-near-and-yet-so-far, of front-page reports in the newspapers and even of Prime Ministerial concern.

The story begins in the autumn of 1977, when local residents became aware of ILEA's intention to sell the School. A huge building formerly used for over 800 secondary pupils, the Kingsley School is obviously of great interest to developers, situated as it is on a 1-acre site at the bottom of Glebe Place and thus at the heart of one of Chelsea's loveliest conservation areas (sometimes referred to as Old Chelsea). The School had lain unused since 1971 and, while residents had distinctly unhappy memories of the rowdy impact of the School on the locality, they were also wary of the effect any new development might have on the area, given the size and dominance of the site.

These fears were realised when two planning applications were filed early in 1978. Both schemes aimed for high densities (over 120 habitable rooms per acre) and were architecturally uninspired, indeed many thought downright nasty. The Glebe Place Residents' Association was formed, led by the tireless Mark Thomson, to fight these applications, based incidentally on an agreed sale price with ILEA of just over £600,000.

The main battleground was a public meeting on 7 March 1978, called by the Chairman of the Borough Planning Committee to ascertain local opinion about the Wates scheme. It is an occasion fondly recalled by local residents, over 200 of whom packed into Petyt Hall and gave Councillor Maclaren what he later described as one of his 'most terrifying' meetings. This was not apparent to onlookers as he chaired a difficult occasion and extracted the main local concerns, namely the density of the schemes (with consequent heightening of traffic problems) and the mediocre architecture. The applications were refused.

Given that ILEA naturally wished to dispose of this surplus site and that it is difficult to maintain local momentum against a series of different planning applications, the Association decided in May 1978 to take a positive approach to the situation and thus not only to put forward what it would like to see on the site but also to seek planning permission for this, with the intention that a developer could take the scheme on (planning law allows any member of the public to seek planning permission on any piece of land, provided that the owner is notified).

Other associations who might consider similar action should not minimise the problems of getting local residents to agree on a scheme! There were lengthy meetings to consider many small details, but we were fortunate in having asked David Le Lay to design the scheme. He coped with the difficulty of effectively having many clients and came up with a delightful design which received planning permission in February 1979.

This positive approach has a decent chance of coming off only if the proponents are realists. With the Kingsley School we had to start with the owner's requirement to sell the site for the best reasonable offer. The Association's brief to David Le Lay was therefore to design a scheme to the maximum density recommended for the type of accommodation, in this case housing at 85 habitable rooms to the acre; David's scheme was in a Queen Anne style fitting in with the local ambience.

In keeping with the approach which ILEA seems to like to take in dealing with other official or voluntary bodies, namely one of suspicion and secrecy, it required a number of conversations and letters with the GLC Valuation and Estates Department, acting on ILEA's behalf, to convince them that this Association's intentions were honourable and that we were trying to get a high price for them as well as protecting, indeed upgrading, the local environment.

In the summer of 1979 the School was put out to tender as 'One Acre of Residential Building land, with planning permission for 15 Town Houses and 1 Flat and 17 Garages'. Planning permission goes with a site (rather than the applicant), although copyright is the architect's.

Knowing that bids around £750,000 had been put in by 'our' developers against the £600,000 which ILEA had been willing to accept a year previously, hopes were high. It came as something of a bombshell to learn in December that a deal had been completed within a couple of weeks of the tender closing date and that the freehold had been sold without any restrictive covenants to a firm acting on behalf of a middle-eastern client who wanted the site for educational use, the price being over £1 million.

During January 1980 it emerged that the purchasers were a government, the Libyan People's Bureau. The Association called a public meeting in February to review the situation, attended by Nicholas Scott M.P., the Chairman of the RBKC Planning Committee, John Cox, and GLC member William Bell. The views of the local residents were plain. Foremost was a worry about the use of the premises once more as a school, given the previous bad experiences and the fact that the pupils were to be wholly from outside the local area — something which would obviously lead to increased traffic. Second was a strong dislike of the spread of foreign diplomatic ownership to such a village area of the Borough, given that this can lead to considerable complications over planning and the use of buildings. Third was the fact that the government in question is at loggerheads with our own government, to which some residents added their own racial overtones.

While it was evident that the horse had already bolted, it was resolved to do everything possible to rein it in, and the Association has since followed up all

possible leads. Correspondence with Sir Horace Cutler established that the GLC is powerless to intervene; Lord Chalfont raised the subject in the House of Lords, to receive the assurance from the Foreign Office that there would be no question of diplomatic immunity for the site; Messrs Carrington, Gilmour and Hurd have individually corresponded with the Association, saying that the running of any school is a matter for the local authority concerned, although the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would intervene if there was any evidence of improper use; the Prime Minister, a Chelsea resident, has written to the same effect. Several national newspapers have carried leading articles and letters from erudite local scribes such as Tom Pocock and Max Nicholson.

Warning signs have therefore been posted in response to residents' fears about the involvement of a foreign government. Still to be established is the extent to which a non-local school will affect the locality, since at the time of writing the building is still empty. Nick Scott and I have met a member of the committee which runs the Libyan People's Bureau in St. James's Square. He explained that their purpose was simply to provide a free Islamic education for any children who might want one. Independent schools have to be registered with the Department of Education and Science under the 1944 Act and are then subject to some inspection (essentially having regard to the physical condition of the buildings). The Libyans have been made aware of local worries about the impact of traffic and intensive use, and have stated that there will be no week-end or residential use, and that they hope the premises can accommodate some local uses, e.g. meetings. We can but take heart from their initial friendly response.

And there the matter rests for the moment, with no action as yet on the expected refurbishment of the School. There is no doubt that local residents still hope that the Libyans will change their minds about using the School and sell it instead for residential development. If the Kingsley building had been a small one (such as that of the nursery school in Glebe Place), residents would have relaxed in the knowledge that there could only be a minimal impact on the locality; the lurking worry is that use of the huge building to anything like its full capacity cannot but cause local disruption.

Finally, what lessons can be drawn from this whole episode? If local residents are prepared to put in a very considerable amount of time and effort, the tactic of obtaining a practical and sensible planning permission for others to use obviously can work. In this case a maverick bidder upset things at the last hurdle. Had we been dealing with another body than ILEA, the Association's enormous efforts might still have been rewarded. However, ILEA chooses to interpret in the narrowest sense the obligation of all public bodies to obtain the 'best reasonable price' for disposals; as the GLC showed over Marjohn, public bodies have some discretion and the statement given to the public meeting in February — that 'as a matter of policy' ILEA does not consult other interested parties such as the GLC and RBKC in such cases — is breathtaking in its disregard for the public interest and, in this instance, for the efforts of local residents.

ILEA can expect no favours from this part of Chelsea. However, two gentlemen do deserve particular thanks: David Le Lay, to whom the Association owes a considerable debt for his excellent work, and Councillor Jonathan Wheeler, who has throughout taken a keen and helpful interest in the affair. We now await the next chapter in the life of Kingsley School.

The Punjab Frontier Force Memorial Chapel and Sanctum, St Luke's Church, Chelsea

by Major J. P. L. Furness

The south aisle of the parish church of St Luke, Chelsea is dedicated as a Memorial Chapel to a famous Corps of the former Indian Army, The Punjab Frontier Force (The 'Piffers' as they are affectionately known).

In the crypt beneath is a Sanctum containing memorial brasses, stone plaques and other Regimental memorabilia. Most of these were transferred after the partition of India in 1947, from Anglican churches in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan; there are several later additions.

In order to appreciate the Chapel and Sanctum, it is necessary to know a little of the history of the 'Piffers', which is closely bound up with that of the British in India. In 1849 the Punjab was annexed after the second Sikh War. The annexation carried with it the necessity of providing additional troops for the new province and particularly its much-exposed north-west frontier.

At the partition of India in 1947, the Army was divided between India and Pakistan on, broadly, Hindu and Muslim lines. The Frontier Force units were mostly transferred to the Pakistan Army, but its Sikh and Dogra Companies were transferred to Indian Army Regiments; two Mountain Batteries and the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles were transferred complete as Units of the Indian Army.

In the old undivided India, the garrison cantonments had their own churches with their resident Chaplains. These buildings were designed very much on the English style, often with spires or towers. Inside, apart from the 'punkas', or later, electric fans, one could well be in any British Garrison Church, with old Regimental Colours suspended from the walls. However, an inspection of the many stone or brass memorials on the lower walls, showed that one was very much in India where life could be short and dangerous — many recorded deaths by cholera, assassination or in action against enemy tribesmen.

After Partition, with the British gone, it was clear that the churches would quickly fall into disuse or even be demolished, and the memorials, which formed an important part of our history, might be dispersed or lost. A group of 'Piffer' Officers, led by Col. Charles Morris, set about negotiating with The Pakistan Government to have the P.F.F. Memorials transferred and shipped to England. Both the Pakistan Army and the Government were most helpful and co-operative; quite soon they were on their way.

Having got them back, the problem was what to do with them. There were several disappointments before we were fortunate in finding St. Luke's,

Chelsea, where a Memorial Chapel could be established and a Sanctum created in the capacious crypt which would house our Memorials.

With the unbounded support and enthusiasm of the Rector, the Revd Prebendary Arrowsmith, the Memorials Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Kenneth McLeod, commissioned the architect Mr Michael Tapper to design the Chapel and Lieut. Col. A. R. E. Pollard (himself a 'Piffer') and his firm, adapted the crypt most skilfully. Mention must be made particularly of (the late) Lieut. Col. R. C. Duncan 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, a parishioner of St Luke's, whose inspiration and untiring zeal helped so much to bring this imaginative venture to fruition.

The Chapel and Sanctum were dedicated on Sunday 3 June 1951 by the Bishop of London in the presence of F.M. Lord Slim and of General Sir Bernard Paget, Governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The Lessons were read by General Lord Ismay and the Revd R. F. V. Scott, Minister of the Church of Scotland.

A full congregation of 'Piffers' and their families came to pay tribute to their comrades and to give thanks to St. Luke's, its Rector and parishioners for their great kindness in providing a permanent home for their treasured Memorials.

The Memorial Chapel

On the south wall are two prized possessions, the framed Colours of the old 2nd Punjab Infantry and the Garter banner of the late Lord Ismay, which was presented to the Chapel by Lady Ismay in 1966. The General had been an Officer in the P.A.V.O. Cavalry and a former President of the P.F.F. Association.

The story of the 2nd Punjab Infantry Colours and its part in the winning of the V.C. at the Siege of Lucknow by Lieut. Roberts (later F.M. Lord Roberts), is given on the framed legend alongside.

The Altar frontal in the 'Piffer' colours of red, green and gold, was dedicated in 1975.

A set of twelve Memorial chairs, carved and inscribed were designed by Mr Michael Tapper, the designer of the Chapel.

The embroidered kneeler at the Altar rail and the individual kneelers at the Memorial chairs were made by lady members of the Association. The designs are based on the Regimental facings and badges.

Altar silver and Communion plate (not normally displayed) are part of silver items which were in the churches in N.W.F.P.

The Book of Remembrance, in a case by the pulpit, is unusual in that it contains the names of both living and dead 'Piffers'.

The Bishop's Chair was given to the Chapel by the present 5th Battalion (Vaughan's) 13th Frontier Force Rifles, Pakistan Army. The carved badge on the Chair illustrates the point that in spite of re-numbering, some Units clung to their old 'Kitchener' designations, i.e. the badge clearly shows the number '58' instead of the later '5'. The carved panels on the screen on the north side of

the Chapel contain the titles of the Units of the Punjab Frontier Force, together with their Regimental and Battalion crests and badges. War-raised Units are also commemorated on the panels. The Chapel is used daily for Communion services by the parishioners of St. Luke's.

The Sanctum

The Sanctum is on the north side of the church and is reached by turning right on leaving the porch. Ornamental gates open onto a flight of steps leading down to the crypt. This door is kept locked — the Verger has the key. It is suggested that intending visitors should telephone him on 352 9171 in advance of a visit.

Wrought-iron gates at the Sanctum entrance give on to a small lobby. On the walls are photographs and other illustrations of St. Augustine's Church, Kohat before it was destroyed by fire in January 1938; many historical mementos were lost and monuments destroyed. However, some brasses were salvaged and repaired and placed in the temporary church which replaced it.

On the right-hand wall is a frame containing a silk scarf in the original 'Piffer' colours. Moving now into the main Sanctum, the brasses on the right date from 1897 and include some of the salvaged brasses from Kohat.

On the left wall are memorial brasses and tablets placed here since 1951. In the small niche at the end of this wall is a memorial to the late Lieut-General Sir Dudley Russell, Commander of 8th Indian Division in the last War. Turning the corner, on the right are the remainder of the Kohat brasses and include on the earliest, Officers killed during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and on the last four, those who lost their lives in the 1914-1918 War.

On the opposite wall and continuing along the next three walls is the most complete set of brasses; these are the Q.V.O. Corps of Guides memorials from their church in Mardan and include many of their distinguished Commandants. Notable among these are Lieut-General Sir Harry Lumsden, their founder and General Sir Sam Browne, originator of the famous belt. A recent addition to this Roll of Honour is a brass commemorating a famous young hero of the Guides, Lieut. Walter Hamilton V.C. who, with Sir Louis Cavagnari and their companions were killed in the attack on the British Residency in Kabul in 1879 — an event which led to Lord Robert's famous march to Kabul and Kandahar. The imposing monument to Cavagnari was one of the casualties of the Kohat fire. The Altar and ornaments, also the large candelabra, are from the church at Mardan. At the opposite end of this wing are the memorials of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles. Among these, the name of the Colonel of the Regiment, F.M. Earl Roberts V.C. is prominent and the name Chevenix-Trench might strike a chord in some young Etonians. The Gurkha memorials were taken from the church in Abbottabad, which is the Regimental Centre of the Frontier Force.

In spite of many gaps in the total of memorials, the collection is probably the most complete of any one Corps gathered under one roof.

Treasurer's Report

In presenting my third report I regret to have to record a loss for the year ending 31st December, 1979 of £131.53. This when added to the accumulated losses brought forward from previous years gives an overall deficit to the Society's account of £160.31.

This deficit will be reduced I hope somewhat during the current year as a result of the increased revenue from advertising in the 1979 Annual Report. There is one good point in last year's accounts: the Life Fund was not further depleted during that period, an event which had taken place in the previous two years to a greater extent than the income derived from it.

The major item of expenditure is of course the cost of the Annual Report amounting to £1,207.65, up slightly compared to the previous year. The other heavy item is stationery, postage, etc. at £442.55, making a total of £1,650.20 out of the total expenditure for the year of £1,738.36. Printing costs and postage are continually on the increase and in order to continue the Annual Report in the same form, which I am sure everybody in the Society agrees is very essential, the Council reluctantly decided that it was necessary to increase subscriptions from 1 January 1981, and I wish to say a little more about this.

In fixing the increase from £3 to £5 for individual members and from £5 to £7 for a husband and wife joint membership, we tried to take into account the likely increases in costs in the foreseeable future. We also realise the need to return the Life Fund to its correct and full amount by putting back the excess drawn from it in recent years. It is the intention of the Council that the new rates can be held for future years and I trust that members will accept the necessity for these increases. I would point out that the previous increase from £1 per annum took place at least four years ago, since when all costs have soared.

There is a great deal of work involved as a result of increasing the subscriptions as far as the members who pay by Bankers Order are concerned. All members who pay in this manner have received individual forms for making new orders. My request for them to be back to me by 1 December 1980 was made to give time for their processing by the member's Bank, so that payment of the new rate can be made to the Society's bank account on January 1st, 1981.

I should like to thank the Life Members very much for the donations which they have sent. We have received an increased number during 1980 and these will appear in the next set of accounts. We have sent an appeal to all Life Members with the notice for this A.G.M. and I have already received a good response.

I would like now to thank our Honorary Auditor, Frazer Whiting & Co., very much indeed for the excellent way in which once again they have audited and prepared the accounts, with a special "thank you" to the manager, Roger Seddon, who put in sterling work immediately prior to his move to the country. I would like on your behalf to wish him well in his new environment.

WILLIAM HAYNES
Hon. Treasurer

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1979

Income and Expenditure Account — General Fund

		1979 £	£
Income	Annual subscriptions		987.70
	Donations received		13.00
	Donations received from Jubilee Fund ...		268.00
	Surplus of receipts from meetings over costs of meetings		13.13
			1,281.83
Less:	*Expenditure*		
	Cost of Annual Report	1,207.65	
	Less: Advertising revenue	325.00	
		882.65	
	Stationery, postage and miscellaneous expenses	442.55	
	Cost of Annual General Meeting	73.66	
	Donations to other organisations	14.50	1,413.36
Excess of expenditure over income for the year ...			(131.53)

Income and Expenditure Account — Life Membership Fund

Balance of Fund at 1 January 1979		785.18
Income	Life membership fees	210.00
	Post Office savings account interest ...	215.00
		1,210.65
Less:	Expenditure — Income Tax	66.00
Balance of fund at 31 December 1979		1,144.65

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1979

Current Assets			
	Debtors		440.47
	Balance in Post Office accounts		1,616.16
	Balance at Bank		866.62
			2,923.25
Less:	*Liabilities*		
	Creditors	1,782.91	
	Subscriptions received in advance	156.00	1,938.91
	Net assets		984.34
	Represented by:		
	Balance of Life Membership Fund		1,144.65
Less:	Adverse balance on General Fund 1 January 1979	(28.78)	
	Deficit for the year	(131.53)	(160.31)
			984.34

W.S. HAYNES, *Hon. Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE HONORARY AUDITORS
to the members of THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

We have examined the above Balance Sheet and Accounts and we certify them to be in accordance with the books and vouchers of the Society.

20 November 1980
London EC2A 1EP

FRAZER WHITING & Co
Chartered Accountants

Obituary

THE LATE CANON de ZULUETA

Members of the Chelsea Society were deeply shocked and grieved to learn of the death suddenly as a result of a drowning accident in Spain on 13 June 1980 of Canon Alfonso Manuel de Zulueta (Conde de Torre Diaz), aged 77 years.

An informative and laudatory obituary appeared in the *Times* newspaper which doubtless will have been seen and read by most members, so in the interests of economy of space this note is confined to a mention of matters of local interest. For over 30 years the Canon had been the Rector of the very beautiful church of the Most Holy Redeemer and Thomas More in Cheyne Row. During that period he witnessed and acted upon two very important happenings in his Church. First, to accord with some of the liturgical changes as recommended by the Second Vatican Council he supervised the design of the rearrangement of the high altar and sanctuary and the erection of a fine marble pulpit. Second, there was the rapid development of the ecumenical movement within the various denominations and in this he took a keen interest and active part. He was a trustee of the Chelsea Council of Churches. In recognition of his services to his Church he was made a member of the Chapter of Canons of the Archdiocese of Westminster. He also took an interest in civic affairs and for many years had arranged a civic service annually in his church attended by the Mayor and members of the Borough Council.

Canon de Zulueta was a well-known figure in Chelsea, of tall and distinguished appearance, often seen wearing a black clerical hat of extraordinary size. He took a great interest in the reports of the activities of the Chelsea Society of which he was a long-standing and highly respected member. He will be sadly missed.

B. J. SIMS

New Books About Chelsea

Tolstoy in London, by Victor Lucas. (Evans Bros, 1979, £6.95)

This unusual book had its origin in the British Library Tolstoy Exhibition held in the British Museum in 1976; the author was the Library's official lecturer. Among the many cases of exhibits was one containing composition exercises on a subject set by Tolstoy and written by a class of boys in the practising school of St. Mark's College in March 1861.

In Russia Count Leo Tolstoy had tried various means of educating the peasants on his estate, Yasnaya Polyana, about 30 miles south of Moscow, and was anxious to find out how other countries were coping with this problem. He came to London in March 1861 and Matthew Arnold gave him a letter of introduction to the head of the school at St. Mark's College. Here he was handed over to a class of 11 to 14 year old boys who wrote the essays shown in the case in the Tolstoy exhibition.

These scraps of paper reveal that here in Chelsea was set up a system far removed from the earlier methods of Lancaster and Bell. The boys were taught by teachers who were being properly trained in the College and their attempts at writing show how their potential was being developed.

The book contains facsimiles of all the exercises written by the boys. They tell us how they enjoyed their lessons in scripture, reading, writing, Latin and music. They seem to have been drawn to adventure stories such as that of the Irish sailor boy, Volney Beckner. In their recreation periods they played marbles and went in for curious ball games unknown to us to-day. Apparently they were not lacking in the generally accepted schoolboy instincts, and accounts of kicking, splashing in puddles and throwing mud have their place in recording their adventures of the day.

It is good that a book, so well presented, should be published at a time when the vacated college has such an important place in the news. To add to the interest of the subject matter are some delightful little sketches of Chelsea in the mid-nineteenth century, and prints of other parts of London of about the same date. As end pages the publishers have made use of a nineteenth-century map of south-west London showing St. Mark's, and on the opposite bank of the Thames, St. John's, Battersea which joined St. Mark's in 1923.

Here is a book which throws further light on the history of Chelsea and the history of education in which Chelsea played a part. But it tells a story as well as recounting history, and with so many delightful illustrations, earns a place on the coffee table as well as on the book-shelf.

C.M.H.

Richard Stewart-Jones, as remembered by his friends. (Privately published. Obtainable from John Sandoe, Blacklands Terrace, S.W.3. £6.00)

Richard Stewart-Jones (1914-1957) was for many years a member of the Council of our Society. At that time he "had probably done more for local amenity", according to Basil Marsden-Smedley, "than any other person of his generation." His outstanding Chelsea achievement was to persuade the reluctant authorities to consent to the re-building of the bomb-shattered Old Church, and himself to take an active, even physical, part in that re-building. He was equally influential in bringing about the re-integration of those buildings on Cheyne Walk which together make up Lindsey House. In these houses, which included Nos. 93, 94, 95, 96 and 97 Cheyne Walk, Richard Stewart-Jones was landlord (or a more appropriate word might be, patron) of a lodging house, or caravanserai, whose tenants included an exceptional number of beautiful girls and talented men — among the latter Robin Darwin, James Lees-Milne, John Russell and J. M. Richards.

Elizabeth Pulford, Richard Stewart-Jones' surviving sister, has edited this symposium by his friends of recollections of her brother. From them emerges a picture of an unusually beneficent man, a description which would be misleading if it suggests someone who was too good to be likable. Richard Stewart-Jones, it is clear, was much more than likable in himself, he was also a man who enhanced the lives of everyone who came into touch with him.

If it is true that unqualified beneficence is not necessarily endearing, it may be as well to stress that Richard Stewart-Jones had other qualities, not least a sense of humour, and even some frailties, including chronic unpunctuality. Since gifted men and women were drawn to him, it is only to be expected that the contributors to this memoir should themselves write vividly and entertainingly; occasionally even with an excess of enthusiasm, as when their subject is at one point described as "literally married to the National Trust." To read the book is a delight, but occasionally a sad one too when the thought obtrudes itself that someone so influential for good as Richard Stewart-Jones is today little remembered, and the happy society which he created in Cheyne Walk is now as though it had never been.

Tactfully edited by Mrs. Pulford and admirably designed by Humphrey Stone, the book has been finely printed by the Scolar Press.

S.C.

Compiled by Reference Library staff of Chelsea Library.

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA LIBRARIES AND ARTS SERVICE. "A display of photographs by James Hedderly taken during the 1860s and 1870s". Catalogue, 20p.
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA LIBRARIES AND ARTS SERVICE. "Historic Chelsea in maps, 1700-1894". £2.40.
LONGFORD, Elizabeth, *Images of Chelsea*, St. Helena Press, £70 (£50 to subscribers). Due out October 1980.
LUCAS, Victor, *Tolstoy in London*, Evans, £6.95. (Tolstoy's visit to St. Mark's College.)
LYTE, Charles, *Sir Joseph Banks*, David and Charles, £10.50. Due out September 1980.
OLIVER, Hermia, *Flaubert and an English governess*, Clarendon, £7.95. (An account of Flaubert's relationship with a Chelsea governess, and his annual visits to Chelsea.)
ROOT, Henry, *The Henry Root Letters*, Weidenfeld, £4.50. (Pseudonymous letters sent to important people from Elm Park Gardens, and the replies received.)
ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA. (Conservation area policy documents):
a) *The Boltons*, 1980.
b) *Elm Park and Chelsea Park*, 1980.

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An asterisk denotes a life member. The Hon. Membership Secretary should be informed of correction or changes in name, address or title.

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