THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

THE ANNUAL REPORT 1982

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

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

Vice-Presidents
THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
NICHOLAS SCOTT., M.B.E., M.P.

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Vice-Chairman: ARTHUR GRIMWADE, ESQ., F.S.A.
JON BANNENBERG, ESQ.
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Hon. Secretary
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Hon. Membership Secretary
MISS BARBARA TOWLE, M.B.E.

Hon. Auditor
FRAZER WHITING & CO.

Hon. Editor
TOM POCOCK, ESQ.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
38, Whitelands House,
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S.W.3 4QX.
Registered Charity 276264

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. (1) The Council shall appoint the following officers of the Society, namely—
(a) a Chairman of the Council,
(b) a Vice-Chairman of the Council,
(c) an Honorary Secretary or Joint Honorary Secretaries,
(d) an Honorary Treasurer and
(e) persons to fill such other posts as may be established by the Council.
(2) The terms of office of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be three years and those of the other Officers five years from the date of appointment respectively. Provided nevertheless that the appointment of the Chairman shall be deemed to terminate immediately after the third Annual General Meeting after his appointment.
(3) The Officers shall be eligible for further appointments to their respective offices.
(4) Nothing herein contained shall detract from the Officers' right to resign during their current term.
(5) By Resolution of a majority of its members the Council may rescind the appointment of an Officer during his term of office for reasons deemed substantial.

5A As a Transitional Provision for the purpose of carrying out Rule 5 (2) the existing Officers shall continue to serve within the provisions of this sub-rule.

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.*

The Annual General Meeting

of the Chelsea Society
was held at Chelsea College, Manresa Road,
(by kind permission of the Principal)
on Thursday, 2nd December, 1982 at 8.00 p.m.

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

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Dr. Bryan P. Levitt, and said how grateful the Chelsea Society was that he and the Mayoress could be present. The Chairman then thanked the Principal of Chelsea College for his hospitality and also the Students' Union for the use of their hall. The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

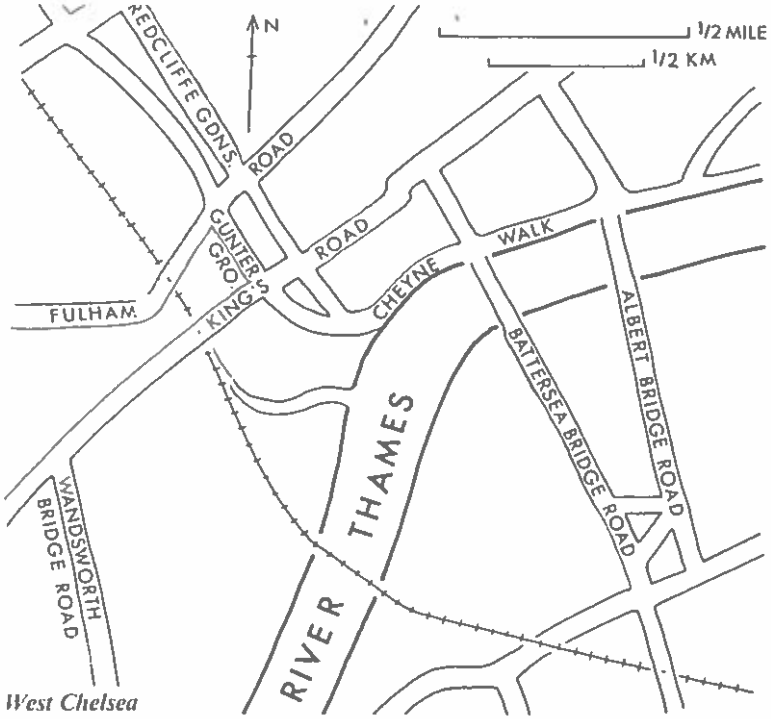
There were two nominations to fill the two Council vacancies so no ballot was necessary. Mrs. Venetia Okell, was proposed by Mrs. J. Wood and seconded by Mr. M. Dorman, and Miss Priscilla Playford, was proposed by Mrs. B. Woolf and seconded by Mr. P. Cheze-Brown. Their qualifications, were read out by the Honorary Secretary and both candidates were approved and elected to the Council with a warm welcome. The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. W. Haynes, then presented his Annual Report and the accounts for 1981 seconded by Miss B. Towle, were adopted.

The Chairman of the Chelsea Society, Mrs. Lesley Lewis, proposed that the Resolution set out in the Agenda relating to the West London Relief Road should, if passed, be forwarded to the Royal Borough Greater London Council, and Departments of Transport and the Environment and this was agreed.

With the aid of a sketch map showing the principal roads in West Chelsea and the West London railway line, Mrs. Lewis outlined the history of a proposed Relief Road in the following statement:

I beg to propose the Resolution on your paper relating to the West London Relief Road or Bypass, to be communicated, if passed, to the Royal Borough, Greater London Council and Departments of Transport and the Environment.

On the screen is a sketch map of West Chelsea. On the left is the West London Railway and you may remember that in 1972 a Public Inquiry was held on the GLC's application to build the West Cross Route. This Local Relief Road, intended to take through-traffic out of the One-Way System and



West Chelsea

Imagine our astonishment when in 1974 we found that our Borough was collaborating with the GLC and others in studies for a Relief Road along the same route, a new bridge being specifically excluded from the terms of reference. The Borough has continued to urge the construction of such a road and there has apparently been no full debate, and little opportunity for any debate, of a complete reversal of a major policy decision vitally affecting Chelsea and already endorsed by a Public Inquiry. At Kensington Town Hall it is now thumbs down for any relief from traffic for Cheyne Walk and the Embankment, and thumbs down to preservation of our historic riverside landscape.

relieve Earls Court, would go along the railway to Chelsea Creek, with a westerly branch to Wandsworth Bridge and an easterly one to Cheyne Walk, passing through the Lots Road area.

The Royal Borough took the same view as the Chelsea Society, that without a new bridge at the Creek the riverside would be ruined by a major road severing the connection between houses and the river, by massive alterations at Beaufort Street, and by a huge increase of already intolerable traffic attracted by the new road. Together we fought our way through a six-week Public Inquiry, at a cost to the Chelsea Society of £10,000. The Secretary of State for the Environment rejected the road on the grounds that without a new bridge the environmental damage to the Embankment was unacceptable and that the road, as planned, would only give a few years' relief even to Earls Court. There was then a change of party at the GLC, the Motorway Box proposals of the Greater London Development Plan were scrapped and any hope of a relief road with a new bridge, to serve both Chelsea and Earls Court, faded away.

For financial reasons this road scheme is now in abeyance. The GLC has dropped it out of its Highways Improvement Scheme and the Department of Transport has refused to adopt it as a Bypass in the national scheme. Our Borough however continues to urge it instead of insisting on an alternative solution. The differences between this road and the West Cross Route do not remove the major objections. A renewed Public Inquiry, presented with the same facts, would almost certainly reach the same conclusions, and years would be lost in attaining a purely negative result.

Our Resolution does not preclude the principle of a Relief Road on a different route, nor the consideration of any other means of relieving the appalling impact of through-traffic on Earls Court and the Embankment. It does however reaffirm our adherence to the policy which was formerly that of the Royal Borough too, and I hope you will pass it. I now repeat it:

"The Chelsea Society opposes in principle any physical alteration to, or incorporation of, any part of Cheyne Walk or the Chelsea Embankment in a West London Relief Road or Bypass."

The Chairman then requested Councillor J. Wheeler to explain the policy of the Borough Council on a Relief Road. He hoped the Mayor would not mind such a controversial subject being discussed in his presence and gave his assurance that no discourtesy was intended. The Mayor replied that on this occasion he represented the people of Chelsea and not the Borough Council.

Councillor Wheeler then read the following statement:

My Lord President,

At a recent meeting of the Council of the Chelsea Society upon which I have sat for the last 7 years, I was asked by our Chairman, Mrs. Lesley Lewis if I would explain the policy of the Kensington & Chelsea Council in relation to traffic control and by-pass ideas for Earl's Court. The Borough Council's Town Planning Committee of which I am Chairman have responsibility for these matters and I am grateful to have this opportunity to set out the Council's policies.

As is well known the Borough Council have for a long time persued a policy of traffic restraint in the western part of the Borough and have supported in principle proposals for some form of relief road or by-pass. Various schemes for a western by-pass road have been discussed over the years without anything actually happening. The previous GLC (a Tory administration) at County Hall favoured such a road. The present GLC in July last year deleted proposals for the road from their major roads programme. We strongly support a by-pass for the Earl's Court one-way system. The proposals which were deleted would have provided relief for the Earl's Court one-way system and the Council has been pressing for early implementation for some time. Relief to the one-way system is the fundamental reason for the Council's support for a by-pass. In supporting this the Council has also pressed for a new Thames river crossing and an essential link to Wandsworth Bridge Road. The estimated cost of such a road would be over £200 million which is a very large amount of money in terms of central Government roads budget let alone GLC programmes. With the GLC deletion of the scheme, it was apparent that with the frequent swing of the political pendulum at County Hall; Tories in one time; Socialists in the next: one adminstration progressing proposals and the next, not; that nothing would happen since the four years

life of a council at County Hall was simply not long enough for anything to be done. In the meantime the appalling traffic conditions in the one-way system continue and our residents have to put up with intolerable congestion and levels of traffic.

If any local by-pass is ever to be built, a longer term commitment is required than is possible from a continually changing GLC. There was thus the need for a new initiative by the Borough Council if anything was to be done. An opportunity to take the proposals out of the GLC arena and up to central Government arose earlier this year in April with the Department of Transport's White Paper on Roads Policy. The Department of Transport is the Highway Authority for Trunk Roads which form a national system of through routes. This White Paper outlined schemes where roads or by-passes promoted by a Local Authority could be taken over by the Department of Transport and would therefore be eligible for 100% grant. The White Paper stressed the Goverments concern that "roads providing environmental benefits would be given priority and especially local by-passes". A by-pass for Earl's Court seemed to us to fall clearly within these criteria and we therefore approached the Department of Transport with a request to consider the concept of an Earl's Court by-pass for 100% central funding. If one can get away for a moment from what must be jargon for many here tonight — 100% central funding simply means "the Government will pay all the costs of the by-pass" and at an estimated £200 million maybe this was why the present GLC deleted the scheme from their budget although high-cost projects have not deterred them in other fields.

So I hope you can see from what I have said that although there are no specific plans or proposals drawn up for an Earl's Court by-pass; your Council is committed to the concept of such a by-pass and is therefore persuing every opportunity of progressing this concept to proposals which can then be discussed in detail. The new initiatives I have just outlined resulted in our approach earlier this year to the Secretary of State for Transport to give serious consideration to the construction of an Earl's Court by-pass as part of the trunk road system which would thus be eligible for the 100% funding I have referred to. Last June the Department of Transport replied to say that since an Earl's Court by-pass would not link at either end with the Trunk road network it would not attract 100% grant. They also said that since the proposed road would by-pass metropolitan — that is GLC — roads and link to metropolitan roads it would therefore be the responsibility of the GLC and it would be undesirable to set a precedent for adoption by central government of schemes which are properly the concern of GLC merely because they had been abandoned. This response did not seem quite in line with the spirit of the White Paper proposals and after further approaches to the Department of Transport they said

> "An Earl's Court by-pass could only be included in the Trunk road network if the Secretary of State were to make significant changes to the long-standing division of responsibilities for highway matters between himself and GLC".

Now it so happens that the House of Commons Transport Committee's inquiry into Transport in London has been considering just this point and

their report was published in July this year. The House of Commons Transport Committee to whom we had made representations, achnowledged that there were some major schemes in London and major problem areas which could merit priority action and that the level of expenditure in the GLC roads budget (TPP) would be inadequate for the purpose. The Commons Committee included in this category the provision of an Earl's Court by-pass. In making this recommendation, the Commons Committee were re-iterating what has been a continuing central government policy acknowledging the needs for improvement in this part of London ever since the war. But more importantly they concluded that as major road construction programmes are susceptible to shifts in policy with changes of political control (with GLC in particular not being noticeably successful in achieving a reasonable continuity of policy from one adminstration to another.); it is not desirable nor practicable for the GLC to continue to be the overall authority for all transport services in London particularly as London's transport services now extend over a larger area than the GLC and in any event the GLC is dependent upon central government for finance.

The Commons Committee therefore propose establishing a new single authority with sufficient power to co-ordinate the long-term planning of investment and management of London's principal road system. The creation of a Metropolitan Transport Authority would cover the whole of the present GLC area together with parts of the surrounding counties where there are regular London commuters. Road building would thus be removed from GLC to the MTA.

And so, my Lord President, you will see that at this stage the Borough Council has no plans to show you of an Earl's Court by-pass. The GLC has no plans. The scheme has been deleted from their roads programme. The MTA has no plans. The MTA does not exist yet. But although there are no plans I hope there is an appreciation of what the Borough Council has been trying to do. We have been trying to get to a position where plans can be drawn up; where there can then be public discussion and consultation and where something can be done. Not that I want to imply that everything hinges upon the building of a by-pass. Measures for traffic control are already in operation and there is the night-time lorry-ban on the one-way system. Until last year the ban operated from midnight until 6 a.m. in the morning. Due to pressure from the Council the hours of this ban have now been extended so that the night-time ban is from 9 p.m. at night until 6 in the morning and we hope this will be made permanent soon. The Council has also pressed for an extension in the morning until later than 6 a.m. but so far without success.

There will be further opportunities for traffic control when the outer orbital route, the M25, is completed and opened for use in 1986 or 1987. When the effects of the M25 are known it is likely that there will be further controls on heavy lorries and in the Councils District Plan we confirm that we will support policies to limit and control heavy goods vehicles in London. Although at present these can only be estimates, it is anticipated that when the M25 is opened the main relief on the Royal Borough will be on the Earl's Court one-way system, Cheyne Walk and the Chelsea Embankment where there could be 15% reduction in lorry traffic and as completion nears "driver preference"

may achieve progressive reductions. But the Council would like to see a by-pass built so that the one-way system which we have now had for 20 years can be changed back to two-way working. With two-way working the affected roads in Chelsea can revert to being local roads for local traffic and local people.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Lewis for her clear explanation and Councillor Wheeler for his exposition on policy adding that it was not appropriate at this meeting to enter into a general discussion about road systems in the Borough but invited comments directly relating to the Resolution.

Mrs. W. Flexner said the explanations were clear and helpful, but she criticized the Resolution for being somewhat negative and would like to see a more constructive line taken.

Colonel Rubens thought the Resolution would be weakened by any qualifications and that it was vital to pass it as it stood.

Mr. Francis Baden-Powell suggested an amendment mentioning the Houseboats and Mrs. Lewis readily accepted this.

After further discussion the following wording was proposed by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Krall:

> "The Chelsea Society opposes in principle any physical alterations to, or incorporation of, any part of Cheyne Walk, or the Chelsea Embankment, or the area occupied by the houseboats, in a West London Relief Road or Bypass"

This amended Resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

Mrs. Lewis then presented her Annual Report. (see pp. 17.)

Mr. Grimwade said that lectures on Carlyle's house and one called "Cremorne Scrapbook" were being arranged for next March and April, full details of which would be circulatd early in the new year.

Mrs. Flexner commented that the lectures in past years had been of a remarkably high standard and suggested they should be incorporated in book form.

In the case of the lecture on the Royal Hospital, Mr. Grimwade pointed out that Mr. David Ascoli had written a very good book entitled *A Village in Chelsea* which covered his lecture and other points of great local interest.

It was requested that the dates of lectures should not clash with meetings of the Chelsea Gardens Guild, which was noted, with regrets expressed for the clash this year.

Mr. Baden-Powell asked whether the public would be allowed to go into the old Rectory garden. Mrs. Lewis replied that she understood contracts had been exchanged for sale to a private buyer but the conditions were not known.

Lord Chalfont proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Lewis for her excellent Chairmanship of the Chelsea Society which entailed a great of hard work. This was seconded by Mrs. P. Pocock.

Mr. Grimwade thanked Lord Chalfont for his calm, efficient and all-embracing Chairmanship of the meeting.

At 9.30 p.m. The Chairman declared the meeting closed and members adjourned for wine and conversation at the back of the hall. The numbers present were about 150.

Chairman's Report

We are delighted that our President, Lord Chalfont, is here to chair this meeting and we thank him for his interest in the Society's affairs. We also welcome Lady Chalfont.

I am pleased to announce that our Member of Parliament, Mr. Nicholas Scott, has accepted our invitation to become a Vice-President. His duties did not allow him time to attend Council Meetings, but he is always most helpful to us when we specially consult him and I am sure you will feel that this appointment is a very suitable one.

Last year we welcomed Miss Joyce Knight as our new Honorary Secretary and she gave us sterling service in organising the two Summer events, for which we are most grateful. However, her old friend, Colonel Wood, came galloping down from Nottinghamshire, married her last August and took her from us. Nevertheless, we can afford to be magnanimous and wish them well because her friend, Miss Mary Fisher, has taken over from her and is already proving her worth. Her address is Flat 7, 80 Elm Park Gardens, SW10, but it seems convenient that my own address should be the official one of the Society for the moment.

Tom Pocock has now taken over as Editor and we look forward to seeing his first Annual Report in the New Year. His predecessor, Sam Carr, has retired from the Coluncil under the rotation rule and we warmly thank him and the other retiring members, our architectural adviser, Denis Broodbank, and Richard Burgess for the years of loyal service they have given the Society. I have here a confession to make. By some untraceable error we elected an extra member to the Council and found we had one too many. Therefore to restore the correct number of twelve we are only offering two vacancies this time.

Our Officers, Arthur Grimwade, Vice-Chairman; Bill Haynes, Treasurer; Barbara Towle, Membership Secretary; Eileen Harris and Mark Dorman, Planning and Assistant Planning Secretaries; have continued their excellent work, for which we are most grateful, as we are indeed to all Council members who have helped so much in various ways. We also thank our Honorary Auditors, Frazer, Whiting & Co.

Our pleasant relationship with Councillors, the Borough Planning Officer and his staff, the Information Officer, the Librarians and with all at Kensington Town Hall and the Works Depot is greatly valued by us all. We much appreciate the circulation to us of Borough Minutes and other documents which keep us informed of current affairs.

2. *Membership*

Our present number is 725 and I must point out that the 594 given last year was incorrect and should have been 709. Recruitment continues satisfactorily and I shall be very pleased if any new members here tonight will make

themselves known to me and other Officers at the end of the Meeting. Please all of you tell your friends we would welcome many more.

3. *Planning Matters*

Our Planning Secretaries inspect all Chelsea Applications in the lists in the Information Office at Chelsea Old Town Hall and when they think necessary submit objections in writing to the Borough Planning Officer, with copies to Ward Councillors. Many applications however are for rear extensions or other features, which we cannot see from the street. For these we rely on our members, or residents, or Residents' Associations for information which we will follow up when we can. We must however be notified quickly, or the relevant date for objections may have passed. One point that has been brought to our notice this year is the painting of brick house-fronts in certain streets. This does not normally require planning permissions and in the rare cases where it does enforcement may prove impossible. We would advise that where residents object they should try to achieve agreement between neighbours through Residents' Associations. In the opinion of the Society it is a great mistake to paint in bright colours the brickwork or stucco of streets with a regular architectural scheme, such as Radnor Walk. Brownish brick with white stucco dressings is elegant and very characteristic of early nineteenth century terraces, needing nothing but good maintenance and the replacement of missing features such as parapets and mouldings. Irregular terraces, such as in Godfrey Street and Bywater Street, look charming in varied colours but we would remind residents that the painting of brickwork, once started, has to be kept looking smart at considerable expense.

Eileen Harris and Hugh Krall, with other Council members, contributed to the Borough's King's Road Character Study, responded to the GLC's requests for suggestions as to conservation and development along the Thames, and advised on nominations for the Borough's Environmental Awards. The latter are for small-scale developments and improvements such as Dovehouse Green, restored railings round Christ Church, and a conservatory extension in Carlyle Square. Members' recommendations of any such things they have noticed during the year will always be welcome. We particularly commend the replacement or restoration by householders of parapets, railings, balconies, door and window-dressings, and glazing-bars in a style contemporary with the building.

The Planning Applications about which letters were written to the Borough were of comparatively minor importance, including rear and roof extensions, licensing matters and change of use. There are now however two major developments under consideration, that of the vacant space now used as a car park in the King's Road, and the refurbishment of a block of houses betweeen Cadogan Place and Ellis Street. Among Appeals dealt with by attendance at Inquiries or by written representations was one relating to the licensing of a public house in Burnaby Street. We gave evidence supporting the objections of residents in the Lots Road area and the application was withdrawn before the hearing was completed.

4. *The District Plan.*

For several years local Planning Forums met regularly to help the Borough frame the District Plan which was formally adopted on 28th April, 1982. It was a mammoth task followed by a mammoth Public Inquiry and we were much impressed by the thoroughness and patience with which the Borough officers carried the whole thing through. Some forty-six public-spirited individuals, including our former Chairman, Quentin Morgan-Edwards, also gave much time and thought to what related to the Chelsea Wards and though I cannot name them all here I should like to express the Society's gratitude to them. It is to be hoped that similar voluntary service will continue to be available during the monitoring process implicit in the Plan. To say that we admire the manner in which the work was done is not to say that we are entirely satisfied with everything in the District Plan. In spite of strenuous representations throughout it seems to us that there is too little commitment to practical as opposed to theoretical conservation of riverside amenities and too little emphasis on traffic restraint. Our apprehensions about the revival of proposals for a West London Relief Road are dealt with in connection with a Resolution put forward at this Annual General Meeting.

5. *West London Traffic Reform.*

This organisation, to which we are affiliated, continues its activities and we are much indebted to Betty Woolf, our Council member, for all she does for it and for keeping us informed. Protests against heavier lorries have been registered, with the support of Nicholas Scott MP, but apparently with only limited success, if any success at all. It is most disappointing that enforcement of the night-ban on lorries is still so unsatisfactory, the more so because this is at present the only feasible protection for residents against traffic noise and pollution.

6. *Chelsea Rectory and Garden.*

We hear that contracts for the sale of a long leasehold to a private buyer have been exchanged but we know no details. The Chelsea Society formerly welcomed in principle a scheme whereby, in return for Planning Permission for some office space, including the Rectory, about one and a half acres of garden should be given to the Borough in perpetuity as a public open space, with the existing Adventure Playground for the Handicapped remaining as before. Those acting for the Diocesan Fund, owners of the site, commissioned a very sensitive architect, Mr. Donald Insall, experienced in dealing with old buildings, to prepare plans as guidelines for development by a purchaser. Unfortunately the 30,000 square feet of office space required by the Fund for the financial viability of the scheme was almost double the amount the Borough Planning Committee might have considered acceptable on environmental grounds, and the application was refused. The property was then put on the open market with what result we still do not know. The Chelsea Society, with knowledge going back over many years of the value of the Rectory Garden to the local community, saw with great regret the foundering

of what seemed a wise and statesmanlike scheme, which reflected credit on the Church and the Royal Borough, and satisfactorily safeguarded the future of the site.

7. *The New Cremorne Gardens*

On 25th March of this year, Lord Cadogan opened the Gardens in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress and unveiled a commemorative plaque. This imaginatively planned riverside garden off Lots Road is a notable addition to the amenities of the area and a particularly welcome feature is the restoration and installation of the splendid nineteenth century cast-iron gates from one of the entrances of the old Cremorne Pleasure Gardens which closed in 1877. The gates have been in store for many years, periodically worried about by the Chelsea Society, and we congratulate the Borough on the conversion of one of our seemingly lost causes into a veritable triumph.

8. *Dovehouse Green.*

We still have about £1,000 from the original Appeal Fund and now that the garden has settled down we can devote this to improvements outside the Borough's normal maintenance budget. In consultation with the Director of Engineering and Works and with the advice, particularly, of Hugh Krall, we propose to pay for kerbs at the southeast corner (to discourage short cuts over a flower-bed), the planting of more trees and shrubs and re-sowing of grass. As before, Mr Reginald Grenfell is kindly providing spring bulbs through the Joyce Grenfell Memorial Fund. When these come into flower we shall remember them both with gratitude and affection.

9. *Activities.*

The Summer Meeting. We had an exceptional treat this year because the Lord Mayor, Sir Christopher Leaver, is a Chelsea man and he allowed us the great privilege of holding a Reception in the Mansion House on 24th June from 6 to 8 p.m. The great suite of state rooms was opened to us and we could admire the architecture and the pictures while enjoying the wine and light refreshments served to us by a friendly and welcoming staff. Then the Lord Mayor himself came down from his residence on an upper floor and spent a considerable time with us, talking to members of our Council and to the many old friends he recognised. The Mansion House has a surprisingly private atmsophere despite its grandeur, it is relatively unfamiliar to many who know the historic buildings of London well, and the event was well-supported by about 180 of our members and their friends. Nearly all those who had accepted managed to get there, in spite of a British Rail and Underground strike that day. The Reception was preceded by a delightful visit to Goldsmiths' Hall, arranged for us by Arthur Grimwade, himself a prominent member of the Company. The Curator, Miss Hare, showed us the treasures in the magnificent rooms, and told us much of the history which goes back long before the present building.

Visit to Battersea. On the evening of 14th July about fifty of us visited Old

Battersea House and the pretty Georgian church which we can see from our side of the river. The honorary verger, Mr. Fred Hammond, met us there, told us its history and even gave us tea. The Old House has recently been magnificently restored by the Forbes family of the American Forbes Magazine company, and Mr. Christopher Forbes kindly allowed us to see it. The Curator, Miss McCaldin, made delightful arrangements for us, and small parties of us wandered at will round the late seventeenth century red brick, panelled house which has survived so unexpectedly in this much-altered neighbourhood. It now houses a fascinating collection of Victorian paintings, "The Royal Academy (1837-1901) Revisited", and our members immensely enjoyed seeing these varied examples, many very fine, from the recent past, hung in so congenial a setting. The evening ended for some of us with a drink at the White Swan, overlooking the river.

Lectures. Arthur Grimwade organised his third series of lectures at the National Army Museum, by kind permission of the Director, and these were much enjoyed. On 18th February Mr. Terry Knight spoke on "The Rich Language of Brickwork", on 18th March Charlotte Gere, with the aid of slides presented by Arthur Grimwade, showed us "The Edwardian Buildings of Chelsea", and on 15th April George Perkin gave us "Building in Harmony — new buildings in older urban areas." Arthur takes enormous trouble in thinking out and organising these lectures, which have become a most enjoyable and valuable addition to the Society's year. We are most grateful to him.

10. *Some News Items.*

The Royal Hospital. The Tercentenary was celebrated this year, a great Chelsea event. Her Majesty the Queen attended the Founder's Day Parade, at which the Society was represented by courtesy of the Governor.

Chelsea Methodist Church. The official Stone Laying of the new Church, Pastoral Centre and Flats for the Elderly was performed by the Speaker, Mr. George Thomas MP on 23rd October, who spoke with eloquence and wit of this courageous project which will now fill the vacant space left by bombs in the last war. It is truly ecumenical and we feel that our member, the Rev. David Horton, of 155a King's Road, SW3, should not take very long to collect the rest of the large sum of money he needs to complete it. We wish him all success.

Chelsea Art Society. The organisers of this thirty-fifth annual exhibition, held from 23rd to 30th October in the Sports Hall Gallery, report that it was particularly successful. A record number of entries enabled a high standard to be maintained, and the sales were excellent.

The Pheasantry. The Pheasantry complex, consisting of the restored house in the centre, with brick wings for shops, offices and flats on each side, was opened by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine MP, on 24th February. The Pearce Group of Companies has done a wonderful job in bringing the charming facade and triumphal arch to pristine condition, and though we have waited long for this hideous gap in the King's Road to be filled,

we have not waited in vain. We hope the whole enterprise will be a great success.

The Civic Trust. I represented the Chelsea Society at the Trust's Congress of Amenity Societies, celebrating its Silver Jubilee at York from 9th to 11th July. This is the parent society of us all, though it is much younger than we are, and it was cheering to note that despite disappointments and setbacks, the principle of conservation, if not always its full implications, is now accepted both nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, we all came away feeling that the task is never done.

Television Distributing Cables. It has been drawn to my attention that cables for piped television may soon literally be coming among us. If we do not want our houses festooned with these cables, it is up to us to stop it. No one has the right to fix a cable across any part of your house, and if anyone asks if they may do so, you can refuse. Any story they may have about being authorised to do so cannot be correct, and no one else but you can forbid it and prevent it.

Down Your Way. Some of you may have heard this Radio 4 programme on 28th and 29th November, when Brian Johnston came to Chelsea. Our friend Christopher Long of the Chelsea News kindly suggested to him that the Chairman of the Chelsea Society should be included to answer some questions about history. The other interviews were at the Royal Hospital, the National Army Museum, the Houseboats, a toyshop "Tiger, Tiger" in the King's Road, and the programme ended with a talk to a Chelsea pensioner who chose "The Boys of the Old Brigade" as his tune. It was a most amusing and enjoyable experience having the team at home in our flat and I was delighted that the Society had been invited to take part.

The Chelsea Physic Garden. There has been concern about its future but I can end with a piece of excellent news. The City Parochial Foundation (Trustees of the London Parochial Charities) is now transferring the Garden and its care to a new body of Trustees. The Chairman will be Dr. David Jamieson and the ten others, all with names prominent in the horticultural world, will include Lady Salisbury, Lord Gibson, Sir Giles Loder and Lord Hollenden. Mr. Philip Briant has been appointed Administrator, and the position of Curator will be filled by a Committee of four, chaired by Sir Giles Loder and including Professor J. P. M. Brenan, retired Director of Kew, Dr. Max Walters, Director of the Botanical Garden of Cambridge, and Mr. C. D. Brickell, Director of Wisley. A change in educational syllabuses has somewhat altered the Garden's functions but the Natural History Museum's Laboratory and greenhouse, under Dr. M. Gibby, will be retained and other research projects are envisaged. An Appeal for funds and for Friends will shortly be launched and meanwhile volunteers for practical and clerical work will be welcome. Mr. Briant's telephone number is 352 5646 and he will be delighted to answer enquiries.

Living in Chelsea

by the Rt. Hon. Sir Christopher Leaver,
then Lord Mayor of London, in an interview with the Editor

"Other Lord Mayors have lived in what is now the Royal Borough but I think I am the first to come from the village of Old Chelsea. That is why I wanted to begin my year in office with a procession from the Old Town Hall to Cadogan Pier, where we embarked for the voyage down-river to the City, and why I was so delighted to welcome the Chelsea Society to the Mansion House for their summer meeting.

"I think of myself as a Chelsea person, although I was not born there. My father was a doctor and I was born in Wimpole Street. As a child, during the war, I was evacuated to the United States, and when I returned went to live in a country cottage. I came to Chelsea after finishing my national service in the Army in 1959. I took the tube to Sloane Square, began walking along the King's Road and the first thing I did was to read the advertisement cards for accommodation in the window of the newsagent opposite Peter Jones. At the time, I did not know where I was going to spend the night.

"One card offered a bed-sitter in Redburn Street for £3 a week. I went straight round and, when the landlady opened the front door, I told her I would take the room before I even saw it. I lived there happily for more than four years. But I had no money and needed a job. So I became a milk roundsman, working from the Express Dairies depot in Ives Street. I got to know Chelsea people of all sorts. Many of the shopkeepers became friends and, towards the end of the week when my resources were running low, would let me buy from them 'on tick'.

"One house, to which I delivered milk, had recently been built in Old Church Street in the Georgian style near the Rectory by Admiral Dick, and I became particularly attached to it. This was not only because the Admiral used to give me cups of coffee, but because it seemed to me to be the ideal Chelsea house, the sort that I would like to live in one day.

"Apparently I was rather an efficient milkman and I was promoted. But I had no inherited money and I needed capital so, in 1964, I went into business on my own account in the wine trade. This was when I became interested in the City as an institution as well as a commercial district and an historical place. As my fortunes improved, I was able to afford a flat in Tite Street: I lived there for fourteen years and it was the best investment I ever made — not in financial terms but in happiness for it was there that I began married life. I entered politics, too, and represented Cheyne Ward, where I have lived for twenty-three years, on the Council of the Royal Borough.

"For the first year of our marriage we stayed in Tite Street but, when we started a family, we needed something larger with a garden and I was delighted to be able to buy Admiral Dick's old house, which is still our home. Old Church Street and the street around it are still a bit like a village, but so much of the Chelsea I remember has changed. Only a handful of the shops I used to

know are still there and have not been replaced by those selling the interminable jeans. The few familiar places that remain include shops like Kirkham's, the greengrocer; Ashby's, the electricians; Andrews, the butcher; Beaton's, the baker; Boris, the delicatessen; Jeremy, the antique dealer; and Choy's, the Chinese restaurant, where I used to eat well for £1. A few familiar faces are still in the shops and it is a source of considerable joy to me that Mr. Duncan of the hardware shop at Chelsea Green in joining my livery company, the Carmen's.

"I deplore what has happened to the King's Road. But, as a believer in free enterprise, I realise that there are often practical commercial considerations that must be taken into account, so that you cannot always have what you want in your environment. So while rates price out the small shopkeepers — and rates are the most serious detrimental problem to the London boroughs — I despair of the King's Road. It is now a place where tourists come to gawp and I am afraid we must grin and bear it.

"But Chelsea still has the river and we could certainly do something constructive by making more use of that. One reason why I decided to make my ceremonial entry into the City from the Thames was to draw attention to its neglected, but historic, value as a highway. River transport could relieve the pressure of traffic on roads, particularly in taking some of the million or more people who commute into the City and Westminster each day to and from work. It probably would not pay, but then London Transport does not pay and cannot pay. I have used the river many times while Lord Mayor; when a launch is waiting for me, I can travel from the Mansion House to Westminster in fifteen minutes. I want the possibilities of river transport looked at seriously. It could not only ease the problems of travel within London but would enhance the lives of Londoners — particularly those of us who are lucky enough to live in Chelsea. And what a lovely sight an alive river would be!"

Cremorne re-opened

For the first time since Roper's Garden was opened in 1964 a significant and welcome improvement to Chelsea's traffic-blighted riverside was made when, on 25th March, 1982, the new Cremorne Gardens were opened by Lord Cadogan. Occupying one and a quarter acres at the extreme western end of Cheyne Walk, beneath the chimneys of Lots Road power station and the towers of the World's End Estate, it is, in effect, a miniature park. The project was carried out by the Health and Housing Committee of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, under its chairman, Councillor Bryan Levitt, and was helped by a grant of £10,000 from the Sports Council.

The new Cremorne Gardens occupy part of the original site of the Victorian pleasure gardens of the same name. The earlier gardens covered an area of some 28 acres between the river and Kings Road to the north, Uverdale Road in the west and the "Cremorne Lane", now part of the World's End Estate, in the east. The new gardens of some one and a quarter acres occupy the south-east corner of the site where Victorian visitors landed from a regular steam-boat service from the city.

The history of the area begins with the construction of a villa called Chelsea Farm between 1740 and 1745 on a piece of woodland known as West Field. The house passed through various owners until 1778, when it was acquired by Thomas Dawson, Baron Dartrey, who in 1785 was created Viscount Cremorne. The house was enlarged, improved and renamed Cremorne House. The Viscount died heirless in 1813 and his widow bequeathed the property to her cousin, who eventually sold it in 1829 to Charles Augustus Random de Berenger, Baron de Beaufain, a French refugee.

De Berenger planned, organised and financed the opening of "The Stadium" in 1830 — a national club for the "cultivation of various skilful and manly exercises". The Stadium, or British National Arena, offered a wide range of sporting activities including football, cricket, wrestling, military drill, horsemanship, shooting and "ice skating in severe seasons".

In 1837, De Berenger obtained a music and dancing licence and the emphasis changed from a sports centre to an amusement park. Following his death in 1845 the gardens passed through various owners and lessees, and entertainments were gradually added, including a bowling saloon, a crystal grotto, a theatre, a banqueting hall, sideshows, shooting galleries, a circus and a pagoda surrounded by a circular platform which could hold 4,000 dancers. The gardens were regularly used for displays of fireworks, balloon ascents and more spectacular events such as aquatic tournaments and military fêtes.

However as more and more visitors came, the gardens gained a reputation for licentiousness, raising objections from moralists and local residents. As early as 1857, the Vestry (an assembly of local ratepayers, a precursor to the Council) was petitioned for the licence not to be renewed because of rowdiness and a suspicion of vice. In the 1870s, hostility towards the conduct of the gardens grew stronger, there being moral objections to the "drink, dancing and devilry". Finally, in 1877, the Vestry submitted to public protest and

refused to renew the licence. On 4th October, 1877, the Cremorne Gardens ceased to exist.

The site was quickly let as building plots and the existing buildings and fittings auctioned. The beautiful trees that covered the site were sold and felled as timber. Soon a labyrinth of small streets and mechanics' houses sprang up (some of them — Stadium Street, Cremorne Road, commemorate the past in their names) although some of these streets have in their turn disappeared to make way for the World's End Estate.

The new Cremorne Gardens, formed on the site of Durham and Kensington Wharf, have been designed to incorporate existing materials found there wherever possible. All the promenade areas have been paved with salvaged granite setts and the walls are old London stock brick, many of which come from the buildings and walls demolished on the site. The small pool was at one time a weighbridge and the kayak training pool a refuse transfer pit. The larger of the two shelters incorporates the original columns from an open shed in the same location, whilst the smaller uses secondhand columns in the same style. The white Portland stones once formed columns for the lion and unicorn statues now to be found on the front face of Kensington Library. The two jetties originally carried mobile cranes which were used to transfer refuse from the adjacent pits to barges moored alongside.

The Cremorne Gates, which have been restored and re-erected by the Royal Borough, formed one of the entrances to the original Cremorne Gardens. They are believed to have been located near the King's Road entrance to the Gardens not far from the point where Edith Grove now crosses the King's Road. When the Gardens closed in 1877, the gates were preserved by Bowden's Brewery, sited at 533 King's Road and formed the back entrance in Tetcott Road. The brewery subsequently became the Welsh Ale Brewery and, eventually, Watney Combe Reid, who finally, in 1960, presented the gates to the Borough of Chelsea for re-erection on a site of its choice.

The gates are mostly built in cast iron and weigh approximately 8 tonnes. The castings, which are extremely elaborate and finely detailed, were undoubtedly made using the "lost wax" process, which dates back to 300 BC and was used by early Chinese founders in making sculptures. The process involved a sculptor producing in wax a slightly oversized pattern, which then had sand moulded and set around it. The wax was subsequently melted and allowed to run away, leaving a hollow mould into which molten iron was poured. Once the iron had cooled the sand was broken away as in a conventional casting. The castings, would have taken the founder many hours to create; each urn, for example, was cast in seven pieces.

The gates were restored in 1981. This included casting a new urn complete with the acorn motif at the top and lions heads. The detail on these castings proved extremely difficult to reproduce even using the lastest sand techniques. The gates are white, their original colour, and the overmantle contains a shield portraying the 'Royal Arms' as still used by the present Royal Family, a style which dates back to Queen Victoria's succession to the throne in 1837.

— adapted from pamphlet published by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

A green shield for Chelsea

Early warnings came from Chelsea about the probable dangers to the health and mental balance of children from lead discharged into the air from the exhausts of petrol-burning traffic. Dr. Mary Maguire, who lives in Cheyne Walk and practices in Chelsea, had become increasingly worried by the evidence she discovered. She had not only monitored her own family but many of her neighbours living in Cheyne Walk and became convinced that, although car exhausts are, in effect, highly efficient aerosol sprays for the wide dissemination of poisonous lead, those living on busy roads, like Cheyne Walk, the King's Road and the roads leading to and from Earl's Court were particularly at risk from the heavier lead particles.

She then took samples of soil from Cheyne Walk gardens and had them analysed for lead dust. This showed that the level inside a garden wall, or fence, was far lower than that outside, although both sites were only a few feet from the traffic. It seemed likely that similar reductions in contamination could be achieved by the planting of thick, evergreen hedges.

Parents living off Cheyne Walk in Old Chelsea were also concerned since the prevailing south-westerly wind blows traffic fumes into those narrow streets. It was therefore suggested to two members of the Council of the Royal Borough with particular responsibility for environmental matters, Councillor Jonathan Wheeler, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, and Mrs. Anne Jardine, Chairman of the Libraries and General Services Committee, that such a hedge planted along the two stretches of Chelsea Embankment Gardens might prove a useful barrier. They took this up, firstly with the Borough Environmental Health Officer, who said that, while the only real answer to the lead problem was to remove it from petrol altogether, a hedge could "help considerably" in holding back lead particles from exhausts. The proposal was then discussed with the Director of Engineering and Works Services and then with John Yeoman, the former Councillor and member of the Council of the Chelsea Society, who has long been concerned with the planting of trees in Chelsea.

When Basil Marsden-Smedley, the former Mayor of Chelsea, Chairman of the Chelsea Society and tireless protector of the borough's trees, died in 1964, John Yeoman founded the Basil Marsden-Smedley Tree Fund in his memory. Since that time, its two trustees, John Yeoman himself and Colonel E. G. Goldring, the former Borough Engineer, have done much to enhance the streets of Chelsea by the planting of trees.

The new scheme for planting trees and shrubs, which has been approved by the trustees and the Council, involves ninety flowering cherry trees and one hundred and fifty aucuba shrubs and will be carried out in St. Luke's Gardens, Redcliffe Gardens and Chelsea Embankment Gardens. All the aucubas will be planted along the northern edge of the latter to form a thick evergreen hedge as a barrier against the poisonous fumes blown into Chelsea from the Cheyne Walk traffic.

T.P.

The heirs of Whistler

by Michael Parkin

It was in late 1862 that the American-born 'Butterfly with the sting in his tail', James Abbott McNeill Whistler, first settled in Chelsea. After three months in Queen's Road West (now Royal Hospital Road), he moved to Lindsey Row, Cheyne Walk, and it was here in the tempestuous years that followed that he proceeded to make it very much 'My Chelsea' as he often referred to the 'Wonderful Village'. Here he painted some of his most important pictures and his reputation began to grow along with the legend. He moved to Tite Street, where he lived in the White House, built for him by Goodwin, until 1879 when the Ruskin libel action bankrupted him and drove him to leave Chelsea and take up lodgings and hotels here and abroad. He lived first in Alderney Street, Pimlico (1880), then in a rented studio in Tite Street (1881), moving in quick succession to the Fulham Road (1884), the 'Pink Palace' in The Vale (1885), Upper Cheyne Row, and Tower House in Tite Street (1888), finally returning to 72 Cheyne Walk (1902) the year before his death.

When Whistler arrived, there was no embankment and Chelsea was still a riverside village separated from Kensington by green fields and country lanes. The river, we are told, swarmed with fish; snipe and wild duck came from Battersea fields. The population when he arrived was 45,000; by the time he left it had nearly doubled to 75,000. The sounds and smells were different. One would hear the clatter of hooves on cobbled streets, the bell of the Old Church, the shouts of newsboys and street vendors and, despite the 'sweetness of the air', there was the smell of horses, beer-soaked sawdust and human odours coming from the many crowded houses. However, for the few — Leigh Hunt in Upper Cheyne Row, the Carlyles in Cheyne Row and Rossetti with his large garden in Cheyne Walk, where he kept so many animals that it became small — life was peaceful and remote.

The house in Lindsey Row was opposite Greaves' boatyard and Whistler's first followers were the two brothers, Henry and Walter. "Come over to my place" he said and they were immediately caught by his magnetism. "I lost my head over Whistler when I first met him and saw his paintings" Walter Greaves recalled. Walter Sickert was at the Slade when Whistler urged him to join him with: "You've wasted your money, Walter; there's no use wasting your time too!" To Mortimer Menpes, the young Australian he met in the Fine Art Society, he said "If you want some fun, Menpes, come with me". The four became his closest disciples and not only bore his mark but carried the legacy of his teaching and ideas from the nineteenth century far into the twentieth.

Who were these followers and where in Chelsea did they live? Whistler lived (1863-1967) at 7 Lindsey Row (now 101 Cheyne Walk) then (1867-1878) at 2 Lindsey Row (now 96 Cheyne Walk and the present Minister of the Arts' home). He then moved to the White House, Tite Street, for what was alas, to be only fifteen months and also lived briefly at 21 Cheyne Walk.

The Greaves family lived at 10 Lindsey Row (now 104 Cheyne Walk).

Mortimer Menpes lived first in Osborne Lodge, Fulham, then in the house A. H. Mackmurdo built for him, in 1893, at 25 Cadogan Gardens (now Peter Jones' staff quarters) and the fact that it was decorated in the Japanese style he had favoured must have irritated Whistler. Walter Sickert lived first in Islington and Kensington and, later, at 53 Glebe Place (next to "Henry VIII's hunting lodge", which is now a nursery school). Sir William Rothenstein later lived in the same house, Whistler having said "Of course, you will settle in Chelsea", and the young William newly returned from Paris unhesitatingly agreed. Arthur Studd, who had met and was influenced by Gaugin in 1890 to the extent of going to Tahiti, then met Whistler and changed his style, living first at 251 King's Road and then next door to the Master at 97 Cheyne Walk. Studd purchased three of Whistler's finest pictures including the *Symphony in White (The Little White Girl)* and *Cremorne Lights* which he bequeathed to the National Gallery on his death in 1919 and are now in the Tate collection.

Sidney Starr, another friend of both Whistler and Studd, lived at 36 South Parade (King's Road) until an affair he was having with one of his sisters was discovered by the husband, who chased him with a gun first to Paris and finally to New York. Also a few doors away from Whistler was Charles Conder, who lived at Belle Vue House (92 Cheyne Walk) until his death in 1909. It had also been the home of William Bell Scott, the painter, poet and friend of Rossetti in the 1860s.

Other painters to come under the Whistler spell were Ricketts and Shannon who lived at 2 The Vale; Henry Tonks, principal of the Slade, also lived in The Vale; Philip Wilson Steer lived at 109 Cheyne Walk (it is still there, close to Turner's House) from 1898 until his death in 1942; Dame Ethel Walker was Steer's neighbour at 127 Cheyne Walk until her death in 1941; Paul Maitland lived at 45 Rowland Gardens; and Theodore Roussel lived in Parsons Green. In Tite Street, the Hon. John Collier, who painted *The Last Voyage of Henry Hudson,* built More House in 1882. Next door lived Wendela Boreel, pupil of Sickert and still alive today. Opposite lived Augustus John at 33 Tite Street, having moved from Mallord Street, and further up at 13 Tite Street was the handsome studio of John Singer Sargent who lived there until 1925.

Whistler was a founder member, with Clausen, Steer and Sickert, of the Chelsea Arts Club. Begun in 1891 by the sculptor Stanley Lee, it was at 101 King's Road (now the Chenil Galleries) until 1902 when it moved to its present premises in Old Church Street. It is still the meeting place of young artists who, are, after all, hopefully today's recipients of the Whistler legacy.

The author regularly holds exhibitions of English School paintings, drawings and etchings of the Whistler period at the Michael Parkin Gallery, 11 Motcomb Street, S.W.1.

The flowering of Chelsea

by Esther Darlington

The Chelsea Gardens Guild was founded in 1927, about a month before the meeting in Swan Walk at which the Chelsea Society came into being. Before that there was a long tradition of palace gardens (Henry VIII, Sir Thomas More, Sir John Danvers), large houses with large gardens, farms, fields, cottage gardens, bowling greens and finally nursery gardens, filling Chelsea with colour and fragrance. Mr. Stewart of the Royal Hospital at our first meeting told us that as a boy living on the edge of the the Grampians he had heard of the 'beautiful village of Chelsea'. As befits a village, The Gardens Guild has always enjoyed its strong ties with other local bodies.

Our civic connections began when the Mayoress became our first President, and Mayors have officiated ever since. In those days the Borough lent us a room in the Public Library in Manresa Road for lectures, the Town Hall was used for flower and bulb shows, and we were even invited, on production of a membership card, to take away half a bushel of good soil, gratis, from the Municipal Depot in Alpha Place. Our membership subscription, apart from Associates and Fellows, was one shilling per annum.

The Christchurch Association, which originally suggested the formation of the Gardens Guild, had already held eighteen bulb shows when we first began. The Garden of Remembrance in Flood Street was also part of our history, joined later by the biblical garden of St. Andrew's, Park Walk, various square gardens and the long garden behind Lower Sloane Street. Nearly all can be gazed upon by the passer-by.

At our early flower and bulb shows we welcomed other groups: Boy Scouts, Girl Guides; Christchurch and St. John's Schools, schools for defective and bi-optic children; the Cheyne and Victoria Hospitals for children; Chelsea Girls' Club; Chelsea Pensioners and even Library-users. All entered for our competitions. In the 'thirties the Kate Courtney Memorial Fund (Baroness Courtney of Penwith) invested £100 to buy bulbs for school children and Girl Guides, and prizes were given at the World's End bulb competition.

The Physic Garden was another longstanding connection. In 1927 its Director, Mr. Hales, lectured to us, and succeeding Directors have given us the privilege of visiting this oasis, secluded behind tall brick walls, where, since the 17th century, academic studies have been pursued.

Our meetings and lectures have been held in every corner of Chelsea: in the now defunct St. John's Hall at the World's End, in the Conservative Club, the Red Cross Headquarters, the Synagogue and now in St. Luke's Church Hall. We shall never forget those summer meetings in the Rectory Garden, now, alas, denied us.

But perhaps our most valued link is with the Royal Hospital. The Superintendents of Grounds have always been our mentors and from the very

first meeting have lectured to us, demonstrated the terrifying art of pruning, taken part in Gardeners' Question Time and have answered all our conundrums with patience and wisdom. Mr. Edward Sweeting and Mr. John Ottaway are the most recent and we have been fortunate in their guidance. They have brought along their friends in the gardening world to judge our competitions: Mr. Frederick Nutbeam from Buckingham Palace, Mr. Robert Tegge of the Royal Parks and Mr. James Dalgleish of the Royal Borough.

So the Chelsea Gardens Guild gathered members and momentum until the war years when it was in abeyance and allotments in Battersea Park took precedence. It was revived in 1947 when a small gathering, mostly of pre-war members, met at Chelsea Town Hall. To quote our leaflet of that year: 'Now that the whole Borough still presents a drab appearance through lack of paint, if we cannot decorate our homes, let us at least decorate our gardens'.

The *West London Express*, in a leader, went further: 'Let us raise our hats to the people who are bent on beautifying Chelsea. That is the professed aim of the Chelsea Gardens Guild whose survival will, we trust, mean a revival of the sun-starved bloomings which have been wilting in the fog and gloom of the war years. . . . a window box in every Chelsea window presupposes a window to put it in. If we pursue the matter to its logical ending, can we hope, that our eagerness to fill windows with flowers may advantageously affect the supply of homes for the homeless?'

If our contact with the Borough could not make its mark on these weightier issues, at least the phoenix guild was born again with energy. Richard Stewart-Jones, the new secretary, could bring his original mind to bear on other matters forecast as our first steps: the layout of a triangular piece of land in Cale Street known to the locals as Chelsea Common, the provision of window boxes at the Town Hall, the conversion of the disused burial ground into a public garden, the restoring of the green space by Battersea Bridge. It can be seen today that these plans were realized.

Let it not be thought that all our projects were so momentous. A dance was held, a children's painting competition, a competition for six garden songs. We chose *The Last Rose of Summer, Come into the garden, Maud* and even though old fashioned favourites prevailed, a *modern* song slipped in: *Tiptoe through the Tulips* from *The Gold Diggers of Broadway*.

Since then the Guild has perhaps changed. The emphasis is no longer on civic issues but on gardening pure and simple. Our meetings and lectures are informed and relaxed, we enjoy our parties to visit Polesden Lacey, Sissinghurst, Queen Mary's Rose Garden. We compare notes with each other. Our Brains Trust is a regular feature and such august happenings as HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother's visits to prize-winning gardens, radio broadcasts and BBC Question Time broaden our spectrum. We planted a tree for the Queen's Jubilee — stolen, of course.

In 1982, many more gardens flourish and our members are constantly active in varied and sometimes surprising fields. Large expanses of lawn with statues, ponds with fountains, fish and toads are delightful reminders of the country. A series of waterfalls cascading down rocks, a front garden only inches above dustbin lids, roses jostling each other in a back yard, a terrace

stretching above garages, window boxes in basements. All are signs of love, patience and hard work. Herbs are grown, tomatoes, lettuces in hanging baskets, plants in small greenhouses. You name it, we have it and more, in spite of cats, green, black and white-fly, slugs and snails. The Mayoress said of us in 1929, 'All gardeners are people of the utmost optimism and hopefulness. . . .'

Those people — the Guild is full of rich and varied personalities: Ian Cunninghame, Ralph Willsmer, our first secretary and treasurer, and R. E. Bruce-Beal, first chairman. The Hon. Lady Lyttelton, Lady Moud, Mrs. Horniman the Lady Maud Hoare, Vice-Presidents. After the war Richard Stewart-Jones, Councillor Hannay, Mrs. Cockburn, Colonel Boyle, Robin Fredericke; Rupert Gleadow, chairman, and his wife Helen, who created the bomb-site garden in Cheyne Walk; Mrs. Eates and Miss Morrisey, chairmen; Marigold Pym, ('Gogi' of the Chelsea News), Mrs. des Voeux, Mrs. Houlder, Mrs. Robbins, secretaries; Captain Duckworth, Mr. Macdonald and our late lamented Captain Skinner, treasurers. There were others equally notable, but too many to mention. Last but not least, there was Mrs. Emma Margrie, treasurer, wife of the Chelsea blacksmith, whose 80th birthday party was a landmark, ('I don't suppose' said our present chairman, Judge Willis, 'that there will ever be another occasion when we celebrate such a long association with the Guild.' But there will — Chelsea has not changed after all.

From Chelsea to the Mansion House: Sir Christopher Leaver departs for the City by water from Cadogan Pier for his first day as Lord Mayor of London accompanied by his wife, Lady Helen, and the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Arnold Stevenson, and the Mayoress. *(See page 23)*

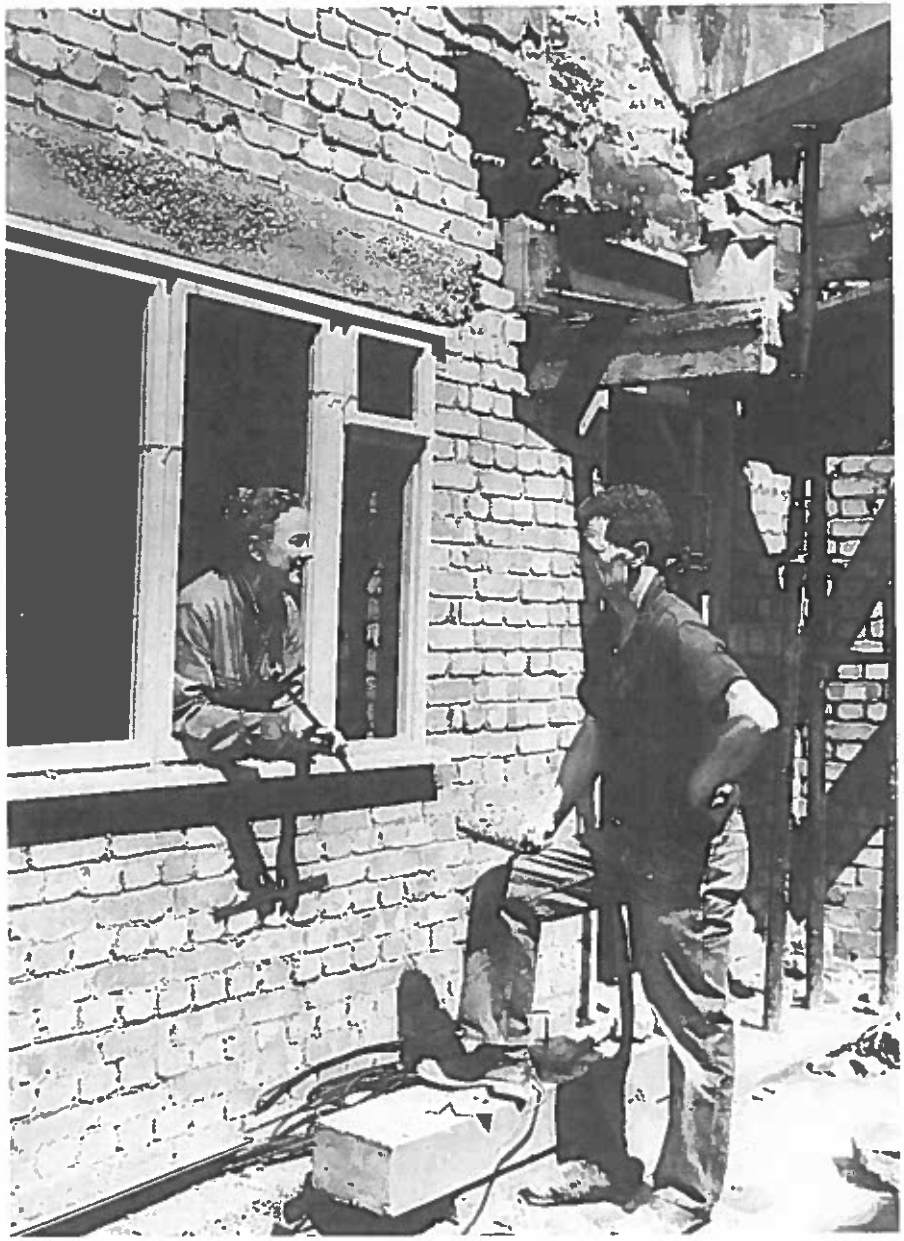
A Whistlerian mystery. The subject is clearly Whistler and the style that of the self-portrait. But is it by the great man himself, or is it an imaginary self-portrait drawn by Walter Greaves, amongst whose own collection it was found. Authorities of the work of both artists argue about it but its origins remain amongst the many enigmas of Whistler and his circle. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Chelsea Arts Club).
Michael Parkin's article, "The Heirs of Whistler". (See page 28)

Three centuries celebrated. H.M. the Queen attends the tercentennial Founder's Day Parade at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, in 1982 (above). Dr. Benjamin Moseley (right) Nelson's friend and one of the Royal Hospital's strong cast of characters. (See page 47)

Lawrence Street gardens (above). Two on the site of the 18th century Chelsea porcelain manufactory, which have been awarded prizes by the Chelsea Gardens Guild. On the left, Esther Darlington entertains in hers. (See page 30)

Cremorne Gardens, as they were (left). A drawing, dated 1866, by Walter and Henry Greaves shows Whistler by the fountain, Walter and his sister "Tinny" at a table, and the famous dancing-platform in the background.

Cremorne Gardens, as they are (above and right). Two views of the restored and reinstated gates of the old Cremorne Gardens in the little park and recreation ground which has been opened by the river opposite the World's End Estate. (See page 25)



Survivors in Blantyre Street. Elizabeth de Stroumillo and her husband, Philip Turner, the sculptor, building the ground floor of their Blantyre Street studio-house in 1958. *(See page 42)*

Blantyre Street has vanished, but the Turners' house survives with a Cheyne Walk address. The home-made house in 1982, with sculptured figures by Philip Turner perched on the roof.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Temples in the Sky

A Chelsea quiz compiled and photographed by Arthur Grimwade

When making the slides for the Chelsea Society lecture last spring on the Edwardian buildings of Chelsea, I found myself becoming aware of the number of attractive cupolas and turrets crowning institutional establishments of the Borough. Following the interesting illustrated article about Chelsea mews arches by Betty Nagar in last year's Report it occurred to me that a similar attempt might be made to increase our awareness of what surrounds us on the Chelsea skyline.

The cupola, or tempietto, essentially a Renaissance supplanter of Gothic belfries and spires, appeared in England in the 17th century on country houses like Coleshill and Belton and on public buildings like almshouses and hospitals. Crowded out by the Gothic enthusiasm of the early Victorians it had to wait till the late 1880s to return to favour with the revival of baroque and classical styles, from Norman Shaw onwards. After 1900, Gothic feeling sometimes merged into Art Nouveau to produce an occasional unexpected medley.

On the opposite page is a selection of Chelsea's "Temples in the Sky" — how many can you identify?

For the answers, turn to page 45.

Staying on: a sculptor in Blantyre Street

by Elizabeth de Stroumillo

It didn't absolutely have to be Chelsea, I suppose, but when you're house-hunting (as in anything else) you might as well start at the top, working down only if necessity dictates, and for Philip and myself, 26 years ago, Chelsea was the obvious first choice.

Its artistic tradition was not in itself the principal appeal; rather the reverse, since that was, even then, beginning to attract the trendy fringe. We simply felt that a community which had over the decades become inured to the eccentricity of artists' lifestyles would be more likely to absorb a sculptor, who did his own backyard bronze-casting, than, say, Ealing, or Balham. And as it happened, Chelsea very quickly yielded exactly what we were looking for.

Not at first sight everyone's dream house, it was a condemned mews in Blantyre Street, between Cheyne Walk and the World's End: dangerously derelict, lacking in all amenities, and smelling horribly of the ancient horse that had for years been its only legally-permitted incumbent.

Just too small to attract the commercial developers, who were at the time cramming bijou cottages into other Chelsea mews, and too large for individuals more sensible than ourselves, it was on the market for only £2,000 freehold. For us, it was perfect. The L-shape, enclosing a yard full of indescribable detritus, meant that we could put Philip's studio at the street end, into the long arm of the L, so that his heavy equipment and materials would never need to be dragged through the house; living quarters would be at the rear, fitted into the angle and short arm of the L with a couple of extra bedrooms above the studio.

Philip, with some experience of patching-up in the house he had shared with his sister before we married, reckoned he could learn enough about more ambitious building techniques to do most of the conversion himself. His two-days-a-week art-teaching job left him with plenty of time for his own work, which would have to be building rather than sculpture for a while, and he took a few lessons in bricklaying to start himself off.

Against all advice, we bought the place and started to plan the conversion, which we estimated would take about a year. In fact it took nearly three, and a tremendous toll of all our resources, including patience, and the final touches have been made this year. Even with a low-interest improvement loan from the LCC, as it then was, we could not afford such luxuries as architects and surveyors and had to draw heavily on other people's help and goodwill. Our initial sketch-plans were properly drawn up by a kindly man in the LCC's Planning Department, thus ensuring that they complied with the regulations. Chelsea's District Surveyor became our mentor on the proper dimensions of beams, lintels and joists, and on the depth and strength of such new foundations (far more than anticipated) as we needed.

An experienced structural carpenter called Ken, who happened to have a flat above some friends, agreed to help us draw up a specification of the work to be carried out, an alarmingly technical document the LCC required before it would advance any money. By amazing good fortune, Ken became intrigued by the venture and in his spare time continued to help with the building; without his knowledge and massive strength, it might have taken twice as long.

As it was, there were innumerable frustrations and holdups. Our insistence on preserving the original L-shape meant that we had to try to patch the building up piecemeal rather than tear it down and start afresh. This would have been far easier but we wouldn't have been allowed to do it: as it stood, the place infringed various regulations about back-to-back property and an entirely new house would have to have been lined up along the street with the yard at the rear: just what we wanted to avoid. But as we carefully removed each supposedly "worst" bit of the structure, supporting the parts around and above it with a cats-cradle of props, another even worse bit would reveal itself, and, in the end, just about everything except the party wall was gradually replaced in this crazily patchwork manner.

There were terrible moments: when the half-renewed roof nearly blew off in a freak gale; when the little "basement" we decided to dig alongside a new and deep stretch of foundations nearly fell in on us during a prolonged rainy spell; when an over-enthusiastic young part-time helper nearly incinerated the whole place by prematurely lighting a fire in the new chimney. There were also more fortunate moments: the owner of a vast Victorian mansion in Wales, where I had spent much of my childhood, finally decided to demolish it and put up something smaller, and we were able to buy beautiful old oak flooring, stairs, doors and other fittings at knockdown prices.

All this while, the inhabitants of Blantyre Street were taking a keen interest in us. It was a street of pleasant Victorian terraced cottages in those days, housing a nice social mix of neighbours. Some of their children deeply resented us at first for appropriating what they had regarded as their personal adventure playground, but after a few alterations even they resigned themselves to us. Their elders profferred cups of tea, Kit Kat bars, endless bits of advice, good and otherwise, and sometimes more practical help, too, such as the loan of a tool, or a few hours' urgently needed assistance. One neighbour's gift of a cutting from his grape-vine now spreads all across the front of the house.

By the time our building was completed we were part of a well-integrated and thoroughly villagey community, some of whose members such as the TV-actor couple, the lawyer, the schoolteacher and myself went off to the big city, and even beyond it, to work. Others, like the owners of the Chelsea Farm Dairy and of the junky antique shop on the corner, like the dress-designer three houses up and like Philip himself, both lived and worked in The Street and were quite content to stray only occasionally beyond the precincts of the Kings Arms (which in those days had a proper public bar).

Philip had populated our roof and yard with large sculptures and their merits and demerits, and the precarious living the business afforded, were

discussed almost as often as old Ted's problems with the Welfare, and when the Heath Robinson furnace was lit for a bronze-casting session, Philip was looked upon as an acceptable and free form of local entertainment. Indeed, some of the braver neighbours would offer to come and help instead of merely watching his antics from their windows.

The swing Philip suspended from a girder across the yard for our children became extremely popular with their friends from as far afield as Luna and Seaton Streets; the rather sour grapes from our vine were admired throughout the neighbourhood and solemnly exchanged for Smarties and other delights.

The looming threat of the World's End Redevelopment in the late '60s at first brought us even closer together as the householders of Blantyre, Luna and Seaton Streets closed ranks to fight it, vociferously supported by tenant neighbours who in most cases were residents of longer standing than we were. Meetings were held, lawyers and experts — including several distinguished members of the Chelsea Society — were enlisted, petitions were circulated and signed, impassioned arguments were presented at the public enquiry. Our plea was that those three streets had been improved to the point where redevelopment was no longer either necessary or desirable, and in the end, like so many equally logical pleas, it failed and only our own house and the three Cheyne Walk houses flanking it were spared.

Neighbours were dispersed, many never to be seen again, and their houses were felled in clouds of grit and dust. Amid more grit, dust, noise and chaos, interrupted by strikes and periods of eerie inaction, the present many-towered neo-Camelot of lurid, orange, semi-industrial bricks took shape, blotted out our sunlight and discouraged our grape vine from further productive efforts.

It would be silly to pretend that the neighbourhood has yet welded itself into a new community. The first years were nightmarish, with rotten tomatoes and taunts being thrown at our daughters, bricks being thrown at our windows and other vandalisms being perpetrated by tenant against tenant as well as against ourselves. Very gradually, though, the sense of disorientation experienced by the disparate families who were haphazardly heaped into the World's End Estate seems to be abating, but not before some of the nicer inhabitants gave up and left in disgust. The litter and noise and violence still prevailing greatly exceed that which the present tenants' predecessors would have considered tolerable and, not in the main being Chelsea people, World's End Estate tenants have clearly regarded Philip and myself and our activities as highly suspect.

Here again, however, building operations have helped. Two years ago, we started to put a half-storey of two new rooms above the studio end of the house, salvaging old timbers from a derelict Thames craft and other materials from wherever we found them. When Philip started to appear in precarious positions upon the structure, sometimes helped by more enterprising new neighbours, we began to click into some sort of focus with the remainder, and, by keeping a low profile, tenuous good relations have been maintained.

They're still not reconciled to sculpture, of course, but when Philip walked down the street recently with a head of Sir Thomas More beneath his arm, to

instal in Petyt House, remarks like "Cor, done yer mum in?" were uttered more good-naturedly than might have been the case five years ago. One World's End Estate neighbour even disclosed that he would have visited the exhibition Philip had at the Chenil Galleries in June, had he not been so busy studying for an exam. In another 26 years the area may feel like a proper community again; who knows?

Elizabeth de Stroumillo, the author of travel and cookery books, is Travel Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph.

Quiz answers

1. Royal Marsden Hospital.
2. Vestry Hall behind Town Hall.
3. Royal Hospital.
4. Holy Trinity, Sloane Street.
5. Christian Science Church.
6. Brompton Hospital Nurses' Home, South Parade.

New at the Library

As in previous years, the staff of Chelsea Library have compiled a list of books added to the local history collection during the past year, which might be of interest to Chelsea Society members. This year, they have included prints, photographs and miscellaneous items as well.

BOOKS

CARTER, Katy. *London and the Famous:* an historical guide to fifty famous people and their London homes. BTA 1982 £2.95.

DAKERS, Caroline. *Blue Plaque guide to London:* Macmillan, 1981. £7.95 (both of the above include a number of Chelsea people).

DALE, T. HADFIELD, Miles. *Harrods: the Store and the Legend.* Pan, 1981. £1.95. *British Gardeners: a Biographical Dictionary.* A. Zwemmer, 1980. £20 (includes several Chelsea gardeners).

MEADE, Richard H. *In the Sunshine of Life: a biography of Dr. Richard Meade, 1673-1754.* Dorrance & Co. Philadelphia, 1974 (distinguished physician, lived at 22 Cheyne Row).

WHITELANDS College Archive Catalogue. comp. Helen Henstridge. 1979. (college founded in Chelsea in 1841).

WHITEN, Faith and Geoff. *The Chelsea Flower Show.* Elm Tree Books/Hamish Hamilton, 1982. £8.95.

PRINTS

DAKERS, Caroline. *98 Cheyne Walk.* Pen drawing (reproduced in Blue Plaque Guide to London p.30).

GREAVES, W. *The Old Red House, Battersea; Lindsey Wharf and Old Battersea Bridge* (two rough sketches donated by Mrs. Major, U.S.A.).

MISCELLANEOUS

OAKMAN, Josephine. Transcripts of ms. diaries kept by the author describing war experiences at Chelsea where she was a council employee and ARP warden, 1940-1943.

OAKMAN, Josephine. Photocopies of bomb incident cards for Chelsea compiled by the author. 44 cards, 774 incidents, 28/8/40 — 3/1/45.

WORLD WAR II — Civil Defence: two files of posters and correspondence.

Dr. Moseley of the Royal Hospital

by Tom Pocock

In its tercentennial year, the Royal Hospital has had much to celebrate: its unbroken record of service to old soldiers, the preservation of Sir Christopher Wren's magnificent building and, finally, to mark this notable anniversary, the Queen's attendance at the Founder's Day parade. For the rest of Chelsea, there is another aspect of the Royal Hospital that is worthy of celebration: three centuries of the good company of the Chelsea Pensioners themselves.

In their red and blue uniforms they have been part of the Chelsea scene since they first took up residence and a tavern without the regular attendance of a Chelsea Pensioner could hardly call itself a Chelsea pub. Now that the old gentlemen have their own admirable club in the Royal Hospital itself they are not seen about quite as much as formerly but, when they are, they restore to Chelsea something that it has been losing: a stock of strong characters.

Not long ago, the borough — as it was before the merger with Kensington — could boast more "characters" than any other in London: artists, writers, doctors, parsons and the Pensioners amongst them. The more renowned have taken their place in the pantheon of Chelsea heroes and heroines, but a few remain unsung. One of these, who belonged to the Royal Hospital and so is particularly worthy of remembrance this year, was Dr. Benjamin Moseley, its physician for more than thirty years. A notable character — even an eccentric — of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, he had the particular distinction of providing Lord Nelson's only known link with Chelsea.

Benjamin Moseley, born in Essex in 1742, studied medicine in London, Paris and Leyden. In 1768, he took the gamble of moving to Jamaica, then the most highly prized of British colonies, where a young man could make his fortune by sugar-planting, in trade or in the professions that supported the British community served by African slaves, unless he died, as so many did, of one of the horrifying variety of tropical diseases. There was plenty of work for a resilient and hard-working doctor; Moseley prospered and was appointed Surgeon-General by the Governor.

It was then that he met Captain Horatio Nelson, RN, who was commanding a frigate in the Caribbean. The two became particularly close when both were involved in the disastrous expedition to Nicaragua in 1780. Moseley as chief medical officer; Nelson, initially, as commander of the warships escorting the troopships. The purpose of the campaign was to reach the Pacific, so cutting Spanish America in two as a prelude to invading and annexing the whole of it. Wisely, Moseley remained at the base in Jamaica, sending a subordinate with the expedition, but, characteristically, Nelson exceeded his orders and accompanied it to the castle of San Juan far inland.

While well aware of the dangers of fever, Moseley did not connect malaria with mosquitoes, which he considered a mere nuisance, and this, together with dysentery, destroyed the expeditionary force; Nelson himself being evacuated near to death. Back in Kingston, Moseley saw that a quick return to England

was the only hope of saving his life and was instrumental in arranging this.

As a doctor, Moseley's reputation was, perhaps, based more on his writing than his practical achievements. Although his use of the primitive medicines then available was no more or less successful than any other doctor's and a high proportion of those upon whom he performed surgery died of tetanus, he was recognised as an authority on tropical diseases. He wrote several books on the subject, the most renowned being *A Treatise on Tropical Diseases and on the Climate of the West Indies,* its appeal being partly in his vivid turn of phrase, especially when describing tropical thunderstorms and death agonies from yellow fever.

But Moseley's interests ranged wide. Then, and after his return to England, soon after Nelson's, he wrote tracts on hydrophobia, prisons, sharks, goitre, voodoo, sugar, hospitals, the yaws and the probability that diseases of the lungs were associated with the phases of the moon. He even combined military history with medicine and in his medical and tactical account of the Nicaraguan campaign he paid tribute to Nelson whose "capacious mind gave, on this dangerous and dreadful service, an early specimen of those splendid elements, which have since decorated with never-fading laurels the English naval and military fame with deeds unparallelled in history . . ."

On his return, Moseley toured the principal teaching hospitals of Europe before taking up his appointment at the Royal Hospital in 1788 in succession to the famous character Dr. Messenger Monsey, who died at the age of ninety-four. By the standards of the day, he was a success as a doctor and he initiated the new infirmary, which was eventually designed by Sir John Soane, and supervised its building and operation.

Amongst the general public, he was most widely known as the author of *A Treatise concerning the Properties and Effects of Coffee*, which had first been published in 1775 and reached its fifth edition in 1792. Coffee was a fashionable drink, but not widely available, so its qualities were a talking-point amongst the book-buying public for whom he wrote. The drink, whether taken with milk or, after dinner, without — or, even, as was sometimes the case, with mustard — offered more than "a pleasing sensation", he assured them. "Those who are imprudently addicted to intemperance," he wrote, "find coffee a benign restorer and bracer of the stomach for that nausea, weakness and disorderly condition, which is brought on by drinking bad fermented liquors and new rum to excess. . . . The heaviness, headache, giddiness, sickness and nervous affections, which attack the patient in the morning are agreeably removed by a cup or two of strong Coffee. . . .

"Besides its effect of keeping up the harmony of the gastric powers, it diffuses a genial warmth that cherishes the animal spirits and takes away listlessness and languour, which so greatly embitter the hours of nervous people after any deviation to excess." Coffee was, he added, also good for dropsy, worms, vertigo, lethargy, catarrh and disorders of the head.

Moseley and Nelson resumed their friendship when the latter returned from the Baltic in 1802 and settled down with the Hamiltons at Merton Place in

Surrey. The Royal Hospital was on the road from the Admiralty and Sir William Hamilton's house in Piccadilly to Merton and Nelson would sometimes call there for conversation, or consultation. Since he had lost the sight of his right eye in Corsica eight years before, the left had been failing and he had had to protect it with a green eye-shade. So he sought Moseley's advice, to the consternation another old friend from West Indian days, Captain Richard Bulkeley, who wrote, "Do, my good lord, tell me who you consulted besides Moseley, who, though an *excellent physician,* is not, I apprehend, a professional occulist."

One could speculate, too, whether their friendship led to two poignant reminders of the past in Chelsea.

In Nicaragua, Nelson's closest friend had been a young engineer officer, Captain Edward Despard, and their joint efforts had brought the desperate gamble of the expedition close to success. Subsequently, Despard, who was of French and Irish descent, became embittered over his treatment by the British Government when he was serving as a colonial official, and became involved with subversive, revolutionary movements. In time, he became one of their leaders and, in 1802, while hatching a plot for a *coup d'état*, which was to include the assassination of the King, he was arrested.

Although Nelson had not met him for more than twenty years, he spoke up for him at his trial; although to no avail for he and his associates were condemned to death and executed. While plotting his *coup*, most of Despard's meetings were held in taverns and one of them was The Magpie and Stump by the river at Chelsea, a few hundred yards from the Royal Hospital, where the Pier House flats now stand. Probably, Nelson and Moseley met at this time to discuss the plight of their old friend.

Not long after the Nicaraguan campaign, Nelson had visited Quebec, where he fell in love with Mary Simpson, the sixteen-year-old daughter of an Army officer. So smitten was he that he was planning to resign his commission to continue the courtship, when she rejected him. Years later, when he was famous, she told friends, wistfully, that she might now be Lady Nelson. She did become Mrs. Matthews, wife of an Army colonel, who was a senior staff officer at the Royal Hospital at the time Nelson was visiting Dr. Moseley. Did he also meet his old sweetheart, one wonders, and, if so, what were her feelings on meeting the nation's hero, whom she had rejected?

Sadly, Moseley was not well rewarded for his work at the Royal Hospital. When, in 1806, he complained that the surgeon's annual salary was £1,000 — presumably related to his ability and the earnings of other surgeons in London — while his own was only £100, this was increased to a mere £300. He received only one more increase of just £65.

Benjamin Moseley survived Nelson by fourteen years, dying at the age of seventy-seven at Southend and being buried at Chelsea. Amongst medical historians he is remembered as a pioneer of tropical medicine. In Chelsea, he deserves to be remembered as a character, and the conversations with Nelson at the Royal Hospital should excite the imagination like those that were never recorded in Sir Thomas More's library, Oscar Wilde's drawing-room and Whistler's studio.

"The Wednesday"

Of all the disasters that befell Chelsea during the Second World War, the most memorable was the bombing of the Old Church. It was the heart and soul of the place and its destruction was, at first, met with disbelief. Its subsequent resurrection, together with most of its monuments and furnishings, was thus all the more inspiring.

Two new accounts of the events of the night of 16th-17th April, 1941 — the occasion that became known as "The Wednesday" — have just come to light. Both describe the experiences of girls living nearby. The first was written, forty years on, by Theodora FitzGibbon, widow of the writer Constantine FitzGibbon, in her memoir *With Love* (Century Publishing, £8.95); she was then an aspiring actress and artists' model, living with the painter Peter Rose Pulham in King's Mansions, Lawrence Street. The second, pencilled into a diary at the time and never published, is by our present Chelsea neighbour June Buchanan (née Spencer); she was then a very young ambulance driver lodging at 97 Cheyne Walk with other friends of the late Richard Stewart-Jones, an Hon. Secretary of the Chelsea Society, who was to become the prime mover in the rebuilding of Chelsea Old Church . . .

Theodora FitzGibbon wrote—

There was a thud as if a gigantic sack of coal had been dropped, making the room shudder, almost immediately another thud, and a tremendous explosion. The window blew in and a dense cloud of greenish dust moved slowly through the gaping hole, forming into the shape of a weird monster. Peter flung himself on top of me on the bed, his eyes wide and dark with fear. His face and lips, pressed on to mine, tasted gritty.

'Dear Pussy, dear Pussy.'

There was a noise like exceptionally heavy rain, and his weight became almost unbearable. The bedside light was still on: the clock said twenty-five past one. All the furniture had moved, not far, it had all just moved round about a foot, except for the chair with my clothes on which had been under the window. There was no sign of that. I could move only my head, for the bed was covered with lumps of plaster, broken glass, wood and what looked like small stones. Peter's face was thickly covered with greenish-white dust, his eyes luminous, and large by contrast, like a clown's. . . .

'I'm all right, darling, I think. But what happened? There were those thuds, it didn't sound like a bomb.'

'Well, if it wasn't a bomb, I don't know what has brought the ceiling and walls down. You're right, though, it wasn't the usual long shriek.'

'Should we turn the light out?'

'In a minute, when I've got you free.'

'Find me a coat or something, all my clothes have disappeared. There's a torch under my pillow.'

Through the open window came the sound of excited voices. I turned my head to look out, and saw leaping flames quite nearby.

'I can see fires.'

'That's not unusual.'

'But it is. Normally all I can see is the church clock tower.'

He framed his face in his hands and peered out through the fog-like dust.

'I can't see the church either. I think it's gone. There are fires everywhere. I must get you out, Pussy.'

Dressed in a long orange chiffon nightdress, brown brogue shoes and my top-coat, I switched off the light and by torchlight we crept along the corridor. Peter picked up his overcoat from the bathroom floor, where it had been blown. It was like walking on a shingly beach. There was no front door, just a frame, and a pile of glass and wood.

'Cigarettes. Damn, look in the sitting room.'

From the first floor somebody shouted up:

'Come down slowly by the wall, the stairs may not be there.' Peter went first and held my hand tightly. Ahead of us we heard footsteps on the stone staircase, which was littered with debris.

'Some of the banisters have gone. Go slowly, sit down if necessary, and come down that way.'

We sat down, slithering on our bottoms like children.

In the street were the occupants from the lower floors, wardens, ambulances, nurses, firemen and police, all lit by torchlight, the wardens with their log-sheets hanging round their necks. Someone tried to herd me into an ambulance but I pulled away, and Peter and I went into the Cross Keys, which was wide open, the door and one wall blown into the bar. The elderly couple who ran it, never known for their generosity, were sitting down sipping brandy, covered in white plaster, looking dazed and very, very old, amongst the people gathered there. A local resident was in charge and gave us all a drink.

'The Old Church has gone!'

This was repeated frequently: that they were alive seemed incomprehensible.

We soon left, and went towards the remains of Chelsea Old Church to see if we could help. The nurses' home of the Cheyne Hospital for Children had the top floor blown off: a neat nurse's bedroom, the ceiling light still shining, looked like a stage set. A warden perilously climbed up the bombed staircase and switched it off, although there was a flaming gas main burning around the corner which floodlit the entire area. The church was nothing but an immense heap of timber and stone, flames licking through it; a large vaulted tomb with a stone urn on top rose up undamaged in the front. The New Café Lombard and all the large and small houses at the end of Old Church Street had been flung together into a giant mountain of shale-like destruction, all lit by the fires and the gas main. Under that fantastic mountain were people, some still alive. Heavy stones were flung aside like pebbles: the local grocer of the street, Mr Cremonesi, put his hand down through a space and felt warm flesh. A naked

unhurt woman was pulled up. An old lady appeared, staggering, from the far side of the mountain, having been flung at least thirty yards and then covered with glass, wood and bricks, from which she had extricated herself. She seemed unhurt. A curious rattling sound like a time-bomb made us cautious: a battered tin was moving on a piece of stick. Below, the young woman had forced it through the bricks to attract attention. She was rescued by a war reserve policeman. A sixteen-year-old girl, pinned, only her head showing, talked to a rescue worker: she was freed, but died several hours later.

Young and old brought buckets of water to supply stirrup pumps to douse the fires. The dust was like a great fog. Charred papers and smouldering wood choked the helpers. Still the raid continued with whining bombs, cracking, thudding guns, droning aeroplanes, both German and our own night-fighters. Huge chandeliers of flares hanging in the sky like Roman candles illuminated the bomber's targets. Our hands were cut and bleeding, and when I saw the blood on Peter's hands I felt suddenly sick and faint. He led me down to the Embankment. Although the day had been warm, a breeze came off the river and it was chill. He held me close to warm me. Several wardens, police and onlookers were there talking. Two land-mines had been parachuted down on the church, which was why the usual whining sound was absent. All the fire-watchers at my post had been killed except Arthur Mallett. . . . One of the mines had landed beside him and the other fire-watchers.

'For Christ's sake, run!' he had cried.

He had run so fast he couldn't stop in time to turn the corner into Old Church Street with the others. . . . He'd crouched behind a small iron post, seconds before the second mine landed, which also detonated the first one.

'Blimey,' he said laconically, 'that lot's gone.' All he had lost was the trouser on his right leg. Now he wanted a cup of tea, and to find his sister, so over the mountain he went, and met her halfway in that pitiful no-man's-land.

The Thames was at low tide, factories in flames opposite, as we smoked our cigarettes leaning over the wall near the steps leading down to the river. Bombs were dropping all round, but we were too exhausted to bother. So long as we could see them, we said. Down on the silty river-bank a man was walking about.

'There's a man down there, Peter.'

'Probably a fireman looking for an unexploded bomb.'

'Well, he's coming towards the steps. Let's go down and see. It's cold standing here.'

It was light enough to walk easily down the steps, and we were about half-way down as he was coming up. Over Peter's shoulder, I said:

'Looks like air force uniform. Hope it's one of ours!'

'Don't be so imaginative, Pussy.'

As they met face to face I heard:

'*Leutnant*—' and some German numerals followed.

Peter stood aside, and the German airman stood on the steps between us.

'*Ich spreche Deutsch*,' I said.

He repeated only what he had said to Peter, and we walked up in silence to the top.

The airman looked about twenty-three, the same age as myself; his face was pale with terror. He did and said nothing, just stood with his arm at his side, as is understandable when someone has just parachuted into an area which he has been bombing. Wardens and firemen came round, in fact one fireman had a hose ready in case he attacked us. Nobody knew quite what to do with this man who had dropped from the sky. The airman suddenly lurched forward, as a man who none of us had seen kicked him hard in the backside. The man then rushed to the front and wrenched a pistol from a pocket on the pilot's flying suit. Peter, usually slow-moving, quickly stretched out his long arms and wrested it away. It all happened so quickly, in the dim light, that only those close by realized what was going on. Two war reserve policemen materialized from nowhere, and quite quietly they marched off the German airman between them. Someone said: 'Like a drunk and disorderly on a Saturday night' — except that the captive marched firmly and erectly, and there was no disorder.

Without speaking to each other, Peter and I followed at a distance. We had been shocked by the pistol episode; death on the ground was more real and immediate than from the skies; and despite all our horrors of the long night, we both knew that the young boy was frightened too. In a funny way, he was 'our parachutist' and we wanted to see him in safe keeping. What can he have been thinking as he walked through the ruined streets, fires blazing in all of them, bombs still raining down?

The policemen marched him into Chelsea Police Station, and we were just leaving when other policemen came out and spoke to us. We went in, and reported as accurately as we could. At about four o'clock in the morning, two more parachute mines exploded nearby — one in front of the police station, and the other behind, but the block of flats, Cranmer Court, took the brunt. They gave us a cup of strong sweet tea, which tasted like nectar. The orange chiffon nightdress was in flitters up to my knees from the rubble shifting. We borrowed a pair of scissors and cut it straight. Even so we must have looked a comical couple, still covered in dust, blood and dirt. A few minutes before five o'clock the 'all clear' went, after eight hours of continuous bombing. It was the second heaviest raid on London, and became known as 'the Wednesday'.

June Buchanan wrote—

97 Cheyne Walk, Tuesday, April 15th, 1941.

Free day shopping on my bicycle all day — back to tea — Film in evening with John D.

Wednesday, April 16th, 1941.

On duty 8-4pm. Very warm spring day. The square gardens are a mass of flowers. In the evening out to dine with Sydney Cuthbert (on leave, Scots

Guards). We dine at the Spanish restaurant, Soho, in the ARP-wine cellar. Heavy bombing shaking everything by 9.30. Came out to find Piccadilly blazing — to The 400 [*the night-club in Leicester Square*] to dance for 2 hours — bad news of Chelsea.

Impossible to find a taxi-driver, so we walked (I was wearing a long pink and black tulle dress!). Fires were raging all around — very heavy bombing. We threw ourselves to the pavement a few times. Got a lift from Cadogan Square. Incendiary bombs all down the King's Road.

Got to the ambulance station (opposite the Old Church). It was quite flat, and most of Cheyne Walk, too. Glass in windows puffed out as you looked at them. I hunted for ambulance people and found all were safe (they had all been called out to the Royal Hospital just before).

One huge sheet of glass from the garage roof moved in the brilliant moonlight. Sydney pulled at it and from underneath rose a very tall policeman with a long beard, very drunk. He said he had no legs. To assure him he was standing on them, I pulled up his trousers. In his relief, he danced down the street holding Sydney's hand. [*He was Stanley Grimm, the painter, a special constable.*]

Back at 97. Windows out and many holes — but all was well. Sydney left. Changed — out again — amazing sight — brilliant moon — blazing wreckage — glass, glass everywhere — ambulances and cars with flat tyres — carried a dog home.

April 17th, 1941, Thursday.

Woke after 2 hours sleep on a pile of cushions in the hall. The dog had left — the all-clear sounded. Thank God for a gloriously sunny morning. At 6 am, all skylights blown in — the sun poured through the holes in the roof. Everywhere is inches of dust and fallen plaster. Everyone very active and full of life.

Spent a long time getting to Piccadilly with Terence. Houses in Jermyn Street, Leicester Square still blazing. Back again to Cheyne Walk. Red roses from S. Up on the roof helping with the black-outs. To the ambulance station at 4 — now a strange devastating sight. No Chelsea Old Church. No Blue Café [*The Lombard Café was confused with the Blue Cockatoo, which survived*] — just a long stretch of debris. Hard to believe it is real.

Met Alec McTavish [*from King's Parade*] working with the demolition party. They had just found two more men standing on their heads — one, old Barton, who I had been looking for that morning with his son. Spent evening re-equipping ambulances and "picketing" in the street. Slept in my tin hat.

April 18th, Friday.

Short warning during the night. Back at 97. Greeted by Ric [*Richard Stewart-Jones*] on a flying visit to find out the worst. Poor Ric.

Obituaries

Mrs Hester Marsden-Smedley

Hester Marsden-Smedley was born in Poona, India, in 1901, where her father, Major-General Sir Reginald Pinney, was soldiering. Her mother was Hester Head, a sister of Christopher Head, who was Mayor of Chelsea, and also sister of Sir Henry Head a neurologist, who thought sufficiently highly of his niece Hester to make her his Executor. Her childhood was spent in Dorset, where she later played an important part in founding the Dorset Women's Institute. She was presented at Court the same day as Joyce Grenfell. In 1927, she married Basil Marsden-Smedley, and raised two sons and a daughter in Tedworth Square, and she fell permanently in love with Chelsea.

Basil was on the Council of the Chelsea Society for 30 years, the last nineteen as Chairman, (except for two years between 1957-1959 when he was Mayor of Chelsea). Hester shared her husband's interests, and many of us will remember her sitting by the door at each AGM greeting everyone. She was interested in all the members and remembered them by name, and knew their interests.

She did much research on Chelsea matters and in *A Place Called Chelsea*, as well as in the Chelsea Society's Annual Reports, can be found articles about: Lord Haw-Haw's years in Chelsea, cricket, Crosby Hall, Swan Walk, the story of Sloane Square, the barrow-owners of Chelsea, etc. etc. In 1976, she wrote a book, *The Chelsea Flower Show*. She made herself an expert on Chelsea china, and, in the 1951 Chelsea Society Report, she wrote a long illustrated article on the Chelsea China Festival Exhibition in the Royal Hospital; she wrote much else and gave many lectures on this subject.

She liked to describe herself as "utterly uneducated" but established herself in journalism, rising to edit the women's page of the *Sunday Express*. When war started she was one of the last journalists to escape from Belgium, where she knew many people. From the mid-1940s she played a prominent role in the creation of the Belgian Institute which later became the Anglo-Belgian Club. For this work she was made a Knight of the Order of Leopold II. Her interest in Belgium extended to visiting the Congo.

From 1938 to 1971 she was a member of the governing body of Chelsea College. She had a special rapport with the students, and the various presidents of the Student Union became close personal friends. She served on all committees dealing with student welfare; she attended student parties, and was useful washing up! On her retirement she was made an Hon. Life Member of the Student's Union, which she appreciated as much as the receipt of one of the first Honorary Fellowships of Chelsea College, in the Chelsea Town Hall, on the 5th July, 1973. That day she sat on the platform in her academic gown, characteristically smiling broadly at everyone.

She was also a Governor of the Chelsea School of Art, and she was a President of the Poetry Society.

One of her ancestors, Azariah Pinney, who was on the wrong side in the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685, was banished to Nevis in the Caribbean, where he flourished, and had many Pinney descendants. Hester frequently visited Nevis where she had as many black as white friends, and she was very proud to be invited to sit on the platform when Nevis' Independence was declared.

In her last few house-bound years, her brain remained clear, and she was eager for news of all Chelsea happenings. There were usually two or three visitors in her Tedworth Square room, all greatly enjoying being with her. Each year there was open house on her birthday, the 21st June. I remember her cooking a wonderful Caribbean dish one year: a vast pot with a whole chicken, chunks of pork, sweet potatoes, fennell, a handful of peppercorns, lemon, garlic, green peppers, many herbs. This year, when she could no longer cook, there were as many visitors, and everyone contributed something. There were lots and lots of strawberries, and we all ate around her chair. She will be remembered for her warm interest in everyone of all types and races. Truly, she loved her fellow-men, especially those under thirty.

Alexandra Orde

Lady Reed (Penelope Dudley-Ward)

Penelope Reed, who died earlier this year, is most sadly missed by her many friends and acquaintances everywhere, and especially in Chelsea, where she lived for over thirty years.

As Penelope Dudley-Ward — Pempie, as she was known to her family — she seemed to have all the graces as well as being quite astonishingly beautiful; Rex Whistler drew and painted her a hundred times. What surprised many was her strength and capacity for sheer hard work. When she chose an acting career she flung herself into proving that she had more than mere looks; working in repertory for two years — first at Liverpool, then at Brighton — learning her job, before appearing in London in *Victoria Regina* and a revue for Noël Coward in New York.

In this revue she met Anthony Pelissier (and Fay Compton); and they married in 1938 and had a daughter, Tracy.

The climax to her stage career came early in the war in New York, when she made a triumphant success in the name part in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. After this, she returned to England and appeared in many films, notably *Demi-Paradise*, in which she gave an enchanting performance opposite Laurence Olivier. She also appeared with her infant daughter Tracy in Carol Reed's film *The Way Ahead*.

Her first marriage was dissolved during the war and, in 1948, she married Carol Reed. After exhaustive house-hunting, she found 213 King's Road, where their son, Max, was born and which was to be their home for twenty-eight years.

Anything she decided was worth doing she took pains to do very well indeed and anyone who visited the house in the King's Road will remember how lovely she made it. She sought expert advice (she always did) but, in the end, it was her own taste that determined the result, and very often her own hands that executed it. She mastered many techniques from embroidery to *trompe l'oeil*, even decorating a twenty-foot-high ceiling.

After her marriage, she gave up her own career, finding her husband's more important and more exciting. Together they went to Hollywood, to Rome, to Ceylon and, perhaps most notably, to Vienna, where they found Anton Karas playing his zither in a café: her excellent German made communication possible and the result was the amazing score for *The Third Man* and a lifelong friendship with Anton Karas.

Loyalty to friends was an outstanding characteristic. She was extremely modest about her own achievements (for example, not many people knew that three books of her photographs were published) — but about her friends she would talk with shining enthusiasm.

After Carol Reed died in 1976, she felt she no longer wanted to stay in the house in the King's Road that they had shared for so long and soon she found a new challenge in 34 Old Church Street, almost roofless, the old, overgrown garden graced with a giant mulberry tree. She spent the next year restoring the house and bringing the garden to life and, with friends and relations living nearby, it seemed a new beginning. Sadly, it was not to last, for in 1981, she became ill with a brain tumor. She bore the long decline with brave dignity and to the end could find a smile for those she loved. She died on January 21st. The funeral was at Chelsea Old Church, where she worshipped. She is buried beside her husband.

Judy Birkin (Judy Campbell)

Miss Hilda Reid

Hilda Reid was born in India of Scottish origin and lived for many years in Dorset, where she died recently. She studied at Somerville College, Oxford, with a brilliant collection of women writers, including Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby.

Hilda's own novels included *Two ers and a Lady*, *Emily* and *Ashley Hamill*. Hilda said she didn't write any more as she had to do the washing up.

It was however for 33 years (1932 — 1965) in Tedworth Square, Chelsea, that she found (in her own words) her true vocation and purpose in life. She threw herself into local activities, being Honorary Secretary of the Chelsea Society from 1955 — 1961 and brought to this organisation her very special dedication and painstaking work. She had already written the *History of Christchurch Parish*.

Hilda was a unique personality with a generous capacity for friendship. She was witty in conversation and writing. On one occasion, she planned to camp above the sea in Dorset. She checked carefully her equipment before leaving Chelsea. She arrived at the wild, lovely cliff on a rainy evening. She

called in on us, who had a small house nearby. We shouted "What have you left behind, tin opener, groundsheets, primus stove?" She left indignantly saying she had everything, but returned half an hour later admitting she had forgotten her tent!

During the war, Hilda was the chief Air Raid warden around Tedworth Square and her resourcefulness and courage marked her out even among such valiant people. Her warm sympathy and understanding of human nature at its best and worst was of help to many who suffered, or who had lost all.

Although her talents laid principally with the written word, she loved Art and pictures old and new.

When she left Chelsea in 1965, she went with her only sister Lesley to build a house in the wilds of Argyllshire at Ardfern. When Lesley's health failed, the sisters left Scotland for Dorset. Hilda often came back to Chelsea. Some years before she died when she knew her sight was failing, she travelled by herself to Kenya in order to paint. She never lost her amazing sense of colour.

There will never be another Hilda, but she has left her mark in many places not least in the hearts of her grateful friends.

Hester Marsden-Smedley

— reprinted with the kind permission of the Chelsea News.

Lady Richmond

Margaretta Josephine Richmond Gretta to her innumerable friends — died on September 22nd, and Chelsea willl be a poorer and duller place without her.

Having brought up a son (now a distinguished surgeon) and a daughter (a gifted artist) by a previous marriage, Gretta married Arthur Richmond (later knighted) shortly before the Second World War, and they settled in Paulton's Square. For more than thirty years they gave delight to each other, their families and a widening circle of friends. To mutual cultural interests, Gretta added practical abilities which provided invaluable support to Arthur's wide range of activities. The Chelsea Society, the Paulton's Square Residents' Association, the Royal Fine Arts Commission, the Thomas More Memorial Committee and lecture tours on the subject of land resettlement, absorbed his energies well into his eighties. In all of them he was sustained by Gretta's understanding, encouragement and devotion.

Arthur's death in 1968 was a shattering blow, yet in the fourteen years that followed, Gretta's positive approach to life and her gift for friendship remained unimpaired. Moving with her daughter and son-in-law, Jane and Val Astafiev, to Elm Park Gardens, she remained independent, driving a car until 85, and giving lifts to "old ladies" many years her junior. She stoutly resisted any diminution of her ability to help herself and others. In 1979 she moved into her charming room at Creswell House, Cadogan Place, where she continued to entertain her family and friends. Her Ninetieth Birthday Lunch, given her by the Chelsea Arts Club (where she was an honorary member), will long be remembered by the fortunate participants.

Perhaps her most remarkable quality was the ability to appear as a contemporary to people of all ages — except the aged; in her company one was conscious of the spirit of adventure, and she would have been the perfect desert island companion. Never thinking of herself as old, she never grew old. She was granted the rare privilege of living to a great age, yet dying young. Her warmth, vitality, and the stimulation of her company will leave an unforgettable impression on all who knew her.

John Yeoman

Captain Cecil Townsend

Captain Cecil Townsend — Bill, to his many friends — died in the Infirmary of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, on 28th January, aged 81. He was appointed Captain of Invalids to the Royal Hospital in September, 1936, and was the last surviving Captain of Invalids to be appointed for life.

Captain Townsend's military career began in 1919, when he was commissioned from the Royal Military College to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and where he served until 1929, transferring to the RAOC until January, 1933. During this time, he served in Shanghai, arriving there whilst the Japanese were preparing for their invasion of Shanghai. The Japanese were shelling the Chinese army and the shells were passing over the British Settlement. Captain Townsend, as munitions expert, was involved in dealing with the unexploded shells, and while defusing a Japanese shell, the detonator in the fuse exploded and hit him in the eyes. He was nearly blinded and lost the sight of one eye. He was subsequently invalided out of the Army with an 80% disability pension.

He then saw an advertisement for a Captain of Invalids at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. He applied and was accepted, and so began his forty-two very happy years in the Royal Hospital. At the outbreak of war, he was appointed ARP officer for the Royal Hospital and did part-time work in the Chelsea Civil Defence Warden's Office in the Chelsea Town Hall until the end of the war. He was a familiar sight riding around on his old bicycle.

When the war ended, he became a Borough Councillor representing the Royal Hospital Ward and remained so for twenty years. He was Deputy Mayor for two years and an Alderman for six years. When Chelsea amalgamated with Kensington, he retired from the Council, and was delighted when the Borough made him an Honorary Freeman of Chelsea, later of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. As Chairman of the Works & Highways Committee, he was the instigator for bus stops to be split, so that the buses did not all stop at the one stop. He also instigated a change over from gas to electricity for street lamps in the Borough, and changing to the new lamp standards which we see today.

Captain Townsend's beloved wife died during his time at the Royal Hospital and he is survived by his two sons, John and Michael. Captain Townsend was a quiet gentle man of many qualities. A wonderful friend and wise counsellor and very sadly missed.

Patricia Wilson

Correspondence

With reference to your article in your annual report under the title "Chelsea Mews Arches", as a resident of the Mews for some twenty years, I am able to confirm that the notice on the entrance to the Mews in Cheyne Walk [CAUTION: All drivers of Vehicles are Directed to Walk their Horses while passing under the Archway.] was repainted approximately ten years ago owing to the good offices of Sir Patrick Hamilton Bart, who then lived in number 23 Cheyne Walk.

Before the demolition of the Pier Hotel and adjacent buildings including the Mews there, the last Chelsea smithy still flourished, E. J. Margrie and Sons, and on a number of occasions I recall that horses were brought into Cheyne Mews for shoeing by mistake and the sign had a very real meaning.

Yours faithfully,

R. S. CLARKE,
2 Cheyne Mews,
Cheyne Walk,
Chelsea, S.W.3.

Treasurer's Report

For the second year running I am able to report an excess of Income over expenditure of £1,578.91 for the year ending 31st December 1981. This is very nearly the same amount as the surplus for 1980, and represents a very satisfactory state of affairs.

One of the main reasons this has happened is the amount of donations received during 1981 as a result of the appeal to life members launched with the notice for the Annual General Meeting in 1980, amounting to £710.50. Included in that total is the very generous donation which we received from Mrs. L. Smiley's Charity Trust. This same Trust has repeated the same donation during 1982. We are extremely grateful to the Trustees of this fund for their support.

The Annual Report advertising revenue included in these accounts represents one year's advertising only; namely the 1981 Report. Revenue from this source will not be so great in this year's account for the 1982 Report to be published in January 1983.

The additional events held in 1981 namely the three lectures held in the spring and the Balladmongers' evening last November all showed a profit amounting to £79.30, and prove that these events have been worth while. The lectures for 1982 alas will not show a profit, and no doubt the Chairman will refer to this subject in her report.

Looking to the future I am optimistic in the short term and hope that subscriptions which were raised with effect from 1st January 1981 to their present level, can be held for at least two more years. I would in this connection give my usual reminder to those who pay their subscriptions direct to me each year to do so as soon as possible, to save sending out reminders which is becoming a very costly operation.

This year I was very fortunate to have assistance in preparing the Society's accounts from Robert Dove who is himself an accountant, and I am very grateful to him for the work he put in drafting the accounts ready for our Honorary Auditors. Thank you very much indeed Robert, on behalf of the Council of the Society and myself.

Yet again Frazer Whiting, our Honorary Auditors, have carried out their task with great efficiency, and once again the Council and I wish to thank them very much indeed.

WILLIAM HAYNES
Hon. Treasurer

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1981

Income and Expenditure Account — General Fund

				1981
			£	£
Income	Annual subscriptions			1,528.34
	Donations received			710.50
	Donations received from Jubilee Fund			2,840.00
	Surplus of receipts from meetings over costs of meetings			108.78
	Income tax recovered on covenants			92.57
	Advertising revenue in 1981 annual report			762.50
	Deposit interest received			135.53
	Sundry sales			147.47
				6,325.69
Less:	*Expenditure*			
	Cost of Annual Report		1,530.29	
	Stationery, postage and miscellaneous expenses		125.89	
	Cost of annual general meeting		114.64	
	Donations to other organisations		23.00	
	Cost of summer meeting		112.96	
	Cost of improving Dovehouse Green		2,840.00	
				4,746.78
Excess of income over expenditure for the year				1,578.91

Income and Expenditure Account — Life Membership Fund

Balance of Fund at 1 January 1981			1,466.02
Income	National Savings Bank account interest		310.54
	Life membership fees		—
			1,776.56
Less:	Income Tax		—
Balance of fund at 31 December 1981			1,766.56

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1981

Current Assets				
	Debtors			604.47
	Balance in National Savings Bank accounts			2,271.83
	Balance at Bank — current account			1,217.47
	— deposit account			2,135.53
				6,229.30
Less:	*Current liabilities*			
	Creditors		1,437.25	
	Subscriptions received in advance		—	
				1,437.25
	Net assets			4,792.05
	Represented by:			
	Balance of Life Membership Fund			1,776.56
Add:	Balance of General fund 1st January 1981		1,436.58	
	Surplus for the year		1,578.91	
				3,015.49
				4,792.05

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.

Dated: November 1982
London EC2A 1EP

FRAZER WHITING & Co
Chartered Accountants

List of Members

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

*Mrs. A. Abeles
Mrs. Mary Acland
*The Lord Adeane
Frederick Akel, Esq.
Mrs. Frederick Akel
*Miss Helen Alford
*Miss D. C. Allason
*Lt.-Col. J. H. Allason
Miss C. J. M. Allen
*J. A. W. Ambler, Esq.
*The American Women's Club
Miss Sophie C. M. Andreae
*Douglas H. Andrew, Esq.
*Miss G. P. A. Andrews
*The Marquess of Anglesey
James Arbuthnot, Esq.
J. N. Archer, Esq.
*Mrs. John Armstrong
*David Aschan, Esq.
*Mrs. M. G. Aschan
Miss D. M. Ashcroft
Mrs. J. Ashton
*Major A. L. Ashwell
The Hon. Nicholas Assheton
*Mrs. R. J. V. Astell
*Mrs. Philip Astley, O.B.E.
*Hon. M. L. Astor

Mrs. M. J. Babington-Smith
F. R. Baden-Powell, Esq.
Lady Bailey
Mrs. Anne Baker
Mrs. P. J. Baker
Miss Patricia Banks
Jon Bannenberg, Esq.
Mrs. Jon Bannenberg
D. Baring, Esq.
*D. H. Barlow, Esq.
J. C. Barnard, Esq.
Mrs. W. J. Barnes
Miss Raie Barnett
Sir John Barran, Bt.
Lady Barran
*Miss Jean Barrie
Simon Barrow, Esq.
Stephen Bartley, Esq.
*Derek Barton, Esq.
*Mrs. Derek Barton
Mrs. Roger Bassett
*Mrs. L. Bayfield
Dr. J. H. B. Beal
Mrs. J. H. B. Beal
*Miss Vivien Beamish
*Miss A. M. G. Beaton
*E. V. Beaton, Esq.
*J. Becker, Esq.
Robert Beckett, Esq.
Mrs. Robert Beckett
*William Bell, Esq.
Simon Bendall, Esq.
Mrs. Simon Bendall
M. G. Bendon, Esq.
Mrs. M. Bendon
Mrs. Anne Trego Bennett
E. W. Beresford-Huey, Esq.
Mrs. E. W. Beresford-Huey
Mrs. Mary Berkeley-Owen
*Miss Anne Berriman
Miss E. M. V. Berry, R.R.C.
Sir John Betjeman, C.B.E.
Rear-Admiral C. Bevan, C.B.
Mrs. Patricia Bevan
*Ernest Biggin, Esq.
Miss Celia Bigham
John Bignell, Esq.
*Miss W. L. Bilbie
James Billing, Esq.
Mrs. James Billing
*E. W. Bissett, Esq.
Miss Thetis Blacker
Miss C. Blake
Miss Victoria Blake-Tyler
*Mrs. G. Blakiston
*Noel Blakiston, Esq., O.B.E.
*Miss Nancy Bool
*Miss S. K. Boord
Mrs. J. B. Flockhart Booth
Mrs. John Botterell
*Lady Bottomley
Philip Boucas, Esq.
Mrs. Philip Boucas
*Timothy Boulton, Esq.
Miss Muriel Bowen
A. E. Bowring, Esq.
Mrs. A. E. Bowring
*Miss M. D. Boyd
R. M. A. Braine, Esq.
Mrs. R. M. A. Braine
Rear-Admiral F. B. P. Brayne-Nicholls, C.B., D.S.C.
*The Hon. Virginia Brett
Philip Briant, Esq.

Mrs. Philip Briant
Miss E. M. E. Brighten
Mrs. E. Broadbent-Jones
Lady Bromet, D.B.E.
Denis Broodbank, Esq.
C. R. E. Brooke, Esq.
J. Elliott Brooks, Esq.
Mrs. J. Elliott Brooks.
*Mrs. E. Broughton-Adderley
*Miss Anthony Brown
Francis Brown, Esq.
Mrs. Francis Brown
*J. Francis Brown, Esq., C.B.E.
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