THE CHELSEA SOCIETY REPORT

1983

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY
38, Whitelands House,
Cheltenham Terrace,
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, 24th November, 1983.

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

The Chairman opened the meeting by referring to the petition relating to a merger of the College placed before the members by the Chelsea College Students' Union, to whom the Society was indebted for the use of their hall. He felt that formal note should be taken of the plea and then left aside for future consideration.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman he then informed the meeting it had been unanimously agreed by the Council that Mrs. Lesley Lewis, whose term of office expired immediately after the Annual General Meeting, should be asked to continue in the office of Chairman of the Chelsea Society for a further three year term and, with foolhardy courage, she had accepted. Lord Chalfont thanked Mrs. Lewis for all her hard work on behalf of the Society, adding that he looked forward to the next three years. At the same time, Mr. Arthur Grimwade's term as Vice-Chairman was due to expire and he did not wish to seek re-election as, in his words, he "expects to be Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company." He should, therefore, be congratulated on his "expectation" and thanked for being such a splendid vice-chairman who had brought great wisdom to the Council.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Fergus Hobbs was also recorded on his retirement from the Council.

Mr. Tom Pocock, who was co-opted to the Council on accepting the editorship of the Annual Report, was unanimously elected to take Mr. Hobbs' place as an elected member.

Lord Chalfont then asked the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. William Haynes, to present the accounts for 1982.

Councillor Mrs. Anne Jardine congratulated the Society on its low expenditure for stationery, postage and miscellaneous expenses. In reply Mr. Haynes pointed out that postage connected with various events was included in the costing of the event but he thought many expenses were not claimed for. Mr. Grimwade added that the Hon. Membership Secretary, Miss Barbara

Towle, had a wonderful team of helpers who delivered correspondence by hand. Mr. Haynes then proposed that the accounts be adopted and this was seconded by Councillor Jonathan Wheeler.

Mr. Grimwade proposed a vote of thanks to the Hon. Treasurer for the very hard work undertaken by him on behalf of the Society, with which the meeting concurred.

Lord Chalfont then said that after an extraordinarily interesting and lively year he felt sure the meeting looked forward to hearing the Annual Report by the Chairman of the Chelsea Society. After her presentation of the Report Lord Chalfont thanked Mrs. Lewis for a fascinating resumé, one that contained a catalogue of insensitivity and outright vandalism; the fact that the statues had been sprayed might have gone for some time unnoticed had it not been for one member of the Society reporting that they looked most peculiar. He felt the Chelsea Society had an extremely good record, possibly unsurpassed in the country.

The Chairman then conveyed to the meeting the apologies of the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, who was unavoidably prevented from being present. He also thanked the Principal of Chelsea College, Dr. C. Phelps, for his renewed hospitality, and the Students' Union for the use of their hall. Lord Chalfont then said he wished to put on record the wonderful help he had received from Mr. William Reid and his staff at the National Army Museum whilst doing some research there and conveyed his personal thanks to all concerned.

Mrs. Henrietta Williamson raised the question of public transport in Chelsea and asked if the Society could call upon London Transport to improve the efficiency of the bus service in the area. This request was supported by Mrs. June Buchanan who agreed that the bus service had been bad for a considerable time.

Mr. Quentin Morgan Edwards suggested that London Transport should be told that the war had been over some time ago and it was no longer necessary for No. 11 buses to travel in convoy.

Mrs. Jane Dorrell said the Greater London Council were planning to introduce a bus lane in Lower Sloane Street, to which scheme the Borough Council and the general public were hostile. Replying Lord Chalfont remarked that the planning stage of the scheme could easily outlive the Greater London Council, and it was agreed to consider whether action should be taken.

Mr. Morgan Edwards told the meeting that the new office block in Britten Street had installed air conditioning equipment in the basement of the building and the noise at night was most disturbing to local residents. He suggested that when discussing future planning applications the Borough Council should only give consent if suitable equipment was used which would not disturb residents. Miss Cynthia Allen said recourse could be taken in Magistrates Courts which were sympathetic, but procedure was slow.

Mrs. M. Colmore said she would like to say a few words in defence of the poor and of her own home, both of which were threatened by the Council's proposals to demolish St. George's Hostel and to build a modern block of flats and a car park with windows overlooking the gardens of Lindsey Row. By this action the Borough Council would at one blow destroy St. George's

Hostel/Shelter, caring work for 90 single homeless men including their own staff, and reduce the District Plan to a scrap of paper. It put Lindsey Row, attributed to Christopher Wren, at risk. The opening up of this preserve of the Thomas More Estate, with the Moravian Gardens on the one side, the hostel in the middle and Lindsey House facing the river was one of the most precious conservation areas in Chelsea. Because the matter was open to speculative development, under the guise of homes for the elderly rich, thus presumably attracting public funds, the Council were apparently prepared to break the rules of public streets and permit the windows of the new development to overlook private gardens.

St. George's was a Victorian edifice, part of the good works of Chelsea. It was direly in need of rehabilitation and the Stonham Trust who run it had been offered £100,000 government funding to put it in order. However, they could only do this with a secure lease, which the Council refused to grant. The Council, who had given themselves planning permission for the demolition and removal of the homeless from the site, justified this variously and stated at Housing Committee meetings that the hostel was used by overnight lorry drivers. She appealed to the Chelsea Society to take strong measures to preserve Chelsea in this matter.

In reply Mrs. Lewis pointed out that the terms of reference of the Chelsea Society were to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea and the Society could not therefore undertake social welfare matters. We had however thought that the rules for altering provisions in the District Plan had been over-ridden here, and objected to this as a general principle. The Society only had a persuasive influence, and although some of us were not happy as to the planning implications we could not pursue the matter farther, at present. Lord Chalfont said that if Mrs. Colmore would send him a resumé of the problem he would take it up on another network.

Mr. Grimwade announced that, by kind permission of Mr. William Reid, he had arranged for two lectures to be held at the National Army Museum. The first would be on Wednesday, February 22nd 1984, entitled *The Sculpture of Chelsea*, when the lecturer would be Dr. Charles Avery, Director of Sculpture at Christies and the second on Wednesday, March 28 1984, entitled *Chelsea Before 1700* to be given by David Le Lay, a member of the Chelsea Society.

Mr. Grimwade ended by saying it was his pleasant duty to thank Lord Chalfont for his admirable Chairmanship of the meeting. The Chairman declared the meeting closed and members adjourned for wine and to view a most interesting 15 minute film of the Society's River Trip shown by Mr. Grimwade.

The numbers present were about 100.

Chairman's Report

We are delighted that Lord Chalfont, our President, is here to chair the meeting and we warmly welcome him and Lady Chalfont.

There have been no changes of Officers and we are most grateful to them all for their services throughout the year. As we anticipated, our Editor Tom Pocock produced an excellent Report for 1982, his first one. Members may have noticed a few minor textual errors but these seem inseparable from today's printing methods, a great annoyance for the Editor but trivial in the whole achievement. We congratulate him on the interesting and well-balanced contents and eagerly look forward to the next Report.

To our regret we have to record the deaths of our last two Founder Members, Mrs. John Botterell and Mrs. H. S. H. Guinness. Their support and interest over more than fifty years is gratefully recognised. Our present total membership is 754, a rise of 29 on last year, but recruitment remains as important as ever. The more of us there are the more effectively we can operate in the affairs of Chelsea. We urge each member to try and get a friend to join.

2. *Planning Matters*

Our Planning Secretaries Eileen Harris and Mark Dorman have continued most faithfully to inspect the list of Chelsea Planning applications and, aided by our architect member Hugh Krall, to make representations in writing when this seemed necessary. We might make more if residents told us promptly of any threats to their amenities which cannot be seen from the street. We cannot go into houses and back gardens uninvited, and it is tantalising to hear too late of some objection which we might well have supported had we heard of it in time. Our members' vigilance is also invaluable when work is started on buildings before Planning Permission has been granted and, in some cases, even before an Application has been published. It would also be helpful if all Councillors, rather than the few shining exceptions, monitored planning applications in their own wards and joined us in warning the Planning Committee of questionable activities. Our Planning Secretaries send relevant copy-letters regularly to one member in each Chelsea ward, but only too rarely get a positive response.

Paradise Walk and Dilke Street. We were much relieved that an application for a major development here was refused. The residents put forward at a public meeting a very well-reasoned case, which we fully supported, against a scheme the type and magnitude of which would disastrously alter the character of a particularly choice Conservation Area. We hope that some more reasonable proposals will result, some degree of residential development appearing inevitable on the closure of the Securicor premises.

32 Burnaby Street. We noted last year that an application for a public house licence had been withdrawn after a Public Inquiry at which strong objections were voiced by residents in the Lots Road area. The applicants succeeded in obtaining instead the renewal of the license at the Balloon Tavern nearby, the re-opening of which is welcome. Nevertheless another brewery applied for a licence for 32 Burnaby Street and the Society again supported the well-presented local objections at a Public Inquiry. The application was refused after a long hot day in the Magistrates' Court at Highbury Corner but we understand an Appeal is pending.

Dovehouse Green. We are not at all happy about the present condition of the Green in spite of its delightful appearance in the Spring when the bulbs presented through the Joyce Grenfell Memorial Fund were flowering. The kerbing and planting paid for by the Society out of the balance of our original Appeal Fund are an improvement but we are distressed by fresh aerosol slogans on the monuments and by the amount of litter so often to be seen. Even more serious, we have had to complain several times of vans making deliveries to the rear of 250 King's Road by driving over the grass and paths laid out for pedestrians only. It has been represented by the proprietors of the Chelsea Farmers Market that these incidents occurred by mistake but the damage is the same however inflicted, and the practice is illegal. We have urged the Borough Council strictly to enforce the planning controls and to monitor the situation. The building of new lavatories in Sydney Street gives an opportunity to ensure proper access to the rear of 250 King's Road, so that there should be no reason to drive over Dovehouse Green. Up to the time of writing however the works in progress still appear inadequate for the necessary access. We regard this matter as very serious because the temporary use of the Heart Hospital site may continue for some years, and however welcome the Farmers Market may be within proper limitations we think the welcome is being presumed upon. (*See page 34*).

Coaches in residential streets. It has been brought to our notice that tourist coaches invade certain minor streets, to the disturbance of residents. We welcome information on specific incidents which may enable us to bring some pressure to bear. Accurate details of times, dates, registration numbers of offending vehicles, etc., are necessary, rather than vague generalisations however well-founded.

Lawrence Mansions, Lordship Place. We were also happy to support residents in their objections to colours proposed for the necessary painting of brickwork here. The landlords, the Freshwater Group of Companies, were however very co-operative and after receiving representations introduced a far more sympathetic scheme which has proved acceptable in this sensitive area of old Chelsea. All concerned may well congratulate themselves on this fruitful collaboration.

The Pheasantry. Members have complained of the untidy appearance of the forecourt at times, and the extension on to the pavement of ice-cream-selling, and advertisement boards. We realise that this brilliant summer has

encouraged all outdoor facilities for eating and drinking but we plead that the dignity of the beautifully restored frontage should not be obliterated in the surrounding King's Road vulgarity.

Handicapped Adventure Playground. A solution to one of the problems of the Chelsea Rectory site has happily been found. The playground has been allotted space at the south west corner of the Royal Hospital grounds, and planning applications for the necessary installations have been made. An Appeal has been launched by the organisers and we feel sure that those of our members who were deeply concerned for this cause are fully aware of this.

3. *Activities.*

Lectures. Arthur Grimwade organised two highly successful evenings at the National Army Museum, by kind permission of the Director. On March 16th he entertained us himself with his own slides and commentary entitled *A Cremorne Scrapbook*. This was a delightful evocation of the happenings and period flavour of the pleasure gardens which once occupied our westerly riverside. I hope the obvious pleasure of his audience made Arthur feel rewarded for all the time and trouble he took in developing his splendid idea. On April 13th Lieutenant-Colonel James Edgar, Curator of Carlyle's house in Cheyne Row, talked about *The Genteel Neighbourhood*, which the Carlyles made their home, to which they attracted so many famous contemporaries. The two lectures nicely balanced the intellectual and recreational resources of nineteenth century Chelsea and in their different ways opened up fascinating glimpses of the past.

The Summer Meeting. On July 12th at 5.45 p.m. about a hundred and fifty of us set out from Cadogan Pier on the launch *Abercorn* for a cruise upstream to Hammersmith, downstream to Vauxhall, and then back to disembark at Cadogan Pier at 8 p.m., refreshed by drinks and bar-snacks on the way. The Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, the Baroness Phillips, J.P., was a most welcome Guest of Honour, and we were also delighted to have with us General Sir Robert Ford, Governor of the Royal Hospital, and his wife. Our guests also included the Chairman of the River Thames Society and its Honorary Secretary, Mr. Parton, who shared with me the task of commenting on the route. A beautiful summer evening, and the kindy and efficient conduct of proceedings by Catamaran Cruisers Ltd. made it a most enjoyable outing, while we are especially grateful to our Council Member, Priscilla Playford, who made the necessary contacts for us.

4. *The Reginald Blunt Bequest.*

When he died in 1944 our Founder left to what was then the Borough of Chelsea a legacy of £50 on trust to purchase out of the income items of interest to the Library. He also bequeathed books, pictures and autograph letters, providing that any of the latter not specially relevant to Chelsea might be sold and the proceeds added to the Trust. By this means £37.41 was raised and in

course of time interest of £62.40 was accumulated. The Chelsea Society has now been able to add £442.50 net so that the present total is £592.31 now in the hands of the Royal Borough (following the merger of Kensington and Chelsea). How it happened was this: I found in the Society's archives a bundle of letters from, or connected with, Elizabeth Montagu, "Queen of the Bluestockings" (1720-1800). Although they were mixed up with the papers of the Society, of which Blunt was still Secretary when he died, I knew they must have been his, used for some of his own publications. With the help of our Council Member, Jane Dorrell, I listed them and consulted the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, which reported that the letters had once been in a larger collection and must have some market value. The Royal Borough's solicitor confirmed that they would have formed part of Blunt's original bequest, had they been found at the time, and could be dealt with accordingly. They were not particularly relevant to Chelsea so it was decided they might be sold through a highly reputable dealer, Winifred Myers Ltd. She offered them first to the British Library, which refused them, and they were then bought for £500 on behalf, we understand, of the Huntington Library, San Marino, U.S.A., to add to their existing collection of Elizabeth Montagu material. The price was satisfactory in relation to a larger collection of similar papers which had recently passed through the market. We hope that the Borough Librarian will soon spot an item of Chelsea interest suitable for purchase.

5. *Bronze Statues in Chelsea.*

In March an alert member reported that the female figure by Derwent Wood near the Albert Bridge was looking very odd, and indeed it was. On investigation we found that the bronzes of Carlyle by Boehm, *The Awakening* by Gilbert Ledward, *The Boy and Cat* by P. Lindsey Clark, *The Boy David* by Bainbridge Copnall (in fibre glass), and Ledward's fountain in Sloane Square, presented by the Royal Academy, had been similarly treated. By inadvertence a contract had been made through the Borough's Works Department, without due consultation at a sufficiently high level, for sandblasting the bronzes and spraying them with a polyurethane solution. The effect was to remove the patina created by the artist or by time, and to expose the unpleasant coppery colour of the untreated bronze. When sprayed the statues then looked like plastic reproductions rather than original works of art. The Leader of the Council immediately responded to our concern and after a meeting on site authorised the employment of a suitable firm to remedy the damage. The tender was accepted of the very well-known Morris Singer Foundry Ltd. and at the time of writing the work was well-advanced. It consisted of removing the polyurethane, which in itself had done no lasting harm, and then by chemical means restoring the former colouring. Fortunately no damage had been done to the actual surface or detail of the bronze but the "cleaning" had been so thorough that much treatment was needed to restore the patina. When this has been done the bronzes will be waxed for purposes of preservation and, judging from the Carlyle, on which work is completed, they will soon be looking their old selves again. This whole experience has been a shattering manifestation of one of the English diseases, a failure to appreciate sculpture. However, the

statues are now to be specially mentioned in the appropriate Conservation Area statements and we hope that some provisions for regular maintenance will be made so that they do not again sink into oblivion. They are *not*, repeat *not*, to be regarded as "street furniture".

6. *Some News Items.*

The National Army Museum. The extension was opened on June 29th 1983 and houses a remarkable exhibition, *Flanders to the Falklands.* Technological advance from horse-power to electronics will fascinate younger elements while a much older generation can see the grim detail of the trench-warfare so reticently endured by the soldiers of 1914-1918. The Director, our Council member William Reid, is to be most respectfully congratulated on his and his colleague's achievement.

The Chelsea Physic Garden. The public opening of the Garden attracted over 10,000 visitors between April and October. The Chelsea Society and the Chelsea Gardens Guild provided voluntary guides, and helpers in various capacities. Probably all would agree that it has been a pleasure to meet so many appreciative and, in many cases, very knowledgeable visitors. The Garden was open at £1 a head on Wednesday, Sunday and Bank Holiday afternoons, and for longer hours during the Chelsea Flower Show week. At other times many groups came by special arrangements, some from abroad. We hope that this good start, in this glorious summer, will be followed up by generous financial backing, such as to secure the Garden's future for at least another three centuries. Two gifts of garden seats were most gratefully received. One was from Miss Ethne Morris, a volunteer guide, and the other, as shown by a plaque, was given in memory of "Tim Badcock 1902–1983, a Resident of Chelsea, who loved this Garden". Miss Clough kindly made arrangements for this gift, subscribed for by twenty-two of Tim Badcock's friends.

Chelsea College garden. We are delighted to note that on September 16th the Mayor officially opened to the public part of the charming old garden of what was formerly Stanley House and then the College of St. Mark and St. John. We shall now be able to walk through from the Fulham Road to the King's Road, pleasantly reminded of the long and interesting history of this corner of Chelsea.

St. Stephen's Hospital. I was honoured at being asked to speak at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Hospital on March 23rd. In giving a brief outline of Chelsea's architectural history I was conscious that as a Society we have perhaps rather neglected that of this great institution near our north-western boundary. Increasingly respect for Victorian buildings makes us see the towers of St. Stephens as relief to a nondescript street-scene and symbolically as a fortress against poverty, illness and accident. I can thoroughly recommend the booklet, *The Hospital in Little Chelsea,* written by C. M. Howgrave-Graham and L. J. Martin for the centenary in 1978 and still available at the Hospital.

Chelsea Information Office. We received with great regret the news that our Information Officer, Mr. Gerald Johnson, is entering on well-earned retirement at the end of 1983. We must record our heartfelt thanks to him for all the help he has given to the Society and its Officers. He has provided invaluable liaison between us and those in Chelsea with whom we need to keep in touch, as well as informing us of activities in the Borough. All this has been accompanied by innumerable personal kindnesses and I would not know what we should do without him were it not that I feel sure his successor will keep up a high standard in looking after us. I only hope his spectacles will suit me as well as Mr. Johnson's and that he will also be able to lend me umbrellas, pencils and handkerchiefs in my hour of need.

Night Ban on Heavy Lorries. In the discussion last year on the Resolution opposing the inclusion of Cheyne Walk in a West London Relief Road, Jonathan Wheeler, Chairman of the Planning Committee, expressed hopes of further traffic controls. Since then the Wood Report has emerged from the Independent Panel of Inquiry into the effects of Bans on Heavy Lorries in London. On September 21st this Report was considered by the Greater London Council's Transport Committee, which unanimously agreed to formulate proposals for night and weekend bans. These would be considered at the next meeting of the Transport Committee and bans might be implemented at the end of 1984. It is our responsibility to encourage the remarkable all-party support for this which already exists, and to urge action on local and Greater London councillors. Great credit is due to West London Traffic Reform and its Co-ordinators Betty Woolf, May Maguire and Michael Bach, for the time and expertise devoted to collecting evidence and monitoring proceedings. This went beyond anything the Chelsea Society could have done alone, and as one of the forty or so constituents of WLTR we must help to keep up the pressure which has resulted in the most promising move towards alleviation which we have yet seen. The impact of traffic still remains the greatest single threat to the amenities of Chelsea and I am glad therefore to end my Report with something relatively cheerful on this vital topic.

Queen Elizabeth I as a girl in Chelsea

by Elizabeth Longford

Kensington Palace unquestionably stands in a "Royal Borough". But the ghost of Henry VIII's vanished Manor House gives a passing substance to the idea of "Royal Chelsea". Princess Elizabeth, Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn, lived in Chelsea Manor House during a dangerous and turbulent period of her adolescence. It may have influenced her and, through her, English history more than people today imagine. "Royal Chelsea" may have a historical, if no longer visible, meaning.

The history of Henry's Manor House is quickly told. The King acquired the manorial rights of Chelsea from Lord Sandys in 1536. He then built on the banks of the Thames where now runs Cheyne Walk, a typical Tudor manor, castellated and quadrangular with cellars, halls, parlours and kitchens, drawing-rooms, bedchambers, closets and a gallery. The gallery will feature prominently in our story. Today all that remains of Chelsea's Tudor palace are some russet bricks in the garden walls of Cheyne Walk between Oakley Street and Chelsea Manor Street; and, beyond the end wall of Cheyne Mews, some mulberry trees which were possibly planted by Queen Elizabeth I. However, as a girl living in Chelsea Manor House, Princess Elizabeth was to do many more exciting things than plant mulberries.

There is no better beginning to the story of Elizabeth and Chelsea than the words of John Bowack, Chelsea's earliest historian, written a hundred years after Elizabeth's death.

They have an excited ring:

> *'Twas here the renowned Princess Elizabeth* (afterwards Queen) *was Nurst* (which would) *for ever render this Place Famous, and make its name out-last Time.*

The "nursing" of Princess Elizabeth was not altogether an easy task, especially in regard to her teeth. Her governess Lady Bryan wrote:

> *God knoweth my lady hath great pain with her great teeth and they come very slowly forth, which causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her will more than I would. I trust to God an' her teeth were well graft, to have her Grace after another fashion than she is yet, so as I trust the King's Grace shall have great comfort from her Grace.*

But Henry VIII was at present bent on getting "comfort" from his subsequent wives rather than his daughter, having executed Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. Indeed he neglected Elizabeth so shamefully as a child that she had "neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen." As for her teeth, we hear of them causing Queen Elizabeth I much agony in old age also. Possibly her noted abstemiousness over food was due in part to permanent toothache. By the time she was six her father had grown into a mountain of fat. She may also have picked at her food in order not to become like him.

Meanwhile her early education was faring much better than her teeth. At six she could read English well and began Latin, besides being proficient with her needle. Her religious life was in full swing next year, so that it is not surprising to find her composing her own miniature Book of Devotions thirty years later. What is surprising about this tiny volume (the copy in the British Library is 3 × 2 inches) is the tone of melancholy. For instance, this extract from one of the two English prayers in the book:

> *Thou seest whereof I came of corrupt seed: what I am, a most frail substance: where I live in the world full of wickedness: where delights be snares, where dangers be imminent, where sin reigneth, and death abideth. This is my state. Now where is my comfort? In the depth of my misery I know no help but the height of thy mercy . . .*

Her troubled childhood may have made its contribution to this typical prayer.

Elizabeth could dimly remember her mother; her second stepmother, Jane Seymour (her first, Anne of Cleves, had been quickly put aside by Henry) died after the birth of Elizabeth's half-brother Prince Edward. To be sure, things began to look up when the attractive young Catherine Howard, Elizabeth's first cousin once removed, became Henry's fifth wife; we hear of Elizabeth receiving two small presents of jewellery from her while at Chelsea. But eighteen months later it was discovered that Catherine Howard had been no "Virgin Queen" on marriage, and had had lovers afterwards. Like Elizabeth's own mother, Catherine lost her head in a bloody public execution at the Tower. The little princess, her cousin, was only eight. But she told Robin Dudley, a boy companion of her own age, that she would never marry.

No doubt marriage in general was becoming synonymous in the child's mind with death. But it was her father's sixth wife, Catherine Parr, who was to brief the adolescent Elizabeth in the intensely personal horrors of marital unhappiness — not with Henry VIII, who died in January 1547, but with Thomas Seymour, who married Henry's widow while aspiring to be Elizabeth's husband.

Henry's marriage to Catherine Parr had taken place in 1543. Parr was the bride's maiden name, her brother being Earl of Northampton. In fact she was already an immensely rich widow with the added attractions of chestnut hair, a tall athletic figure, a good intellect, a merry wit and ardent nature. To Henry she seemed just what he needed. To her, Henry was a sacred vocation. She deemed it her duty to marry him once he proposed marriage. In her own words, Henry's sixth wife would be a good woman at last — "none adulterer, nor fornicator, and so forth." (Though what more heinous crimes the 'so forth' stood for is obscure!)

Nevertheless Catherine was passionately in love with another man and he with her. The other man was Thomas Seymour, uncle of the future Edward VI, but for the present still only a country gentleman.

For some three or four years, the young Prince Edward and Princess Elizabeth seemed to have a mother again in Catherine Parr. Elizabeth gave her a beautifully embroidered book made by herself as a New Year's present for 1545. Besides being a mark of affection for her stepmother it was also a testimony to the progress the Princess was making in her education, thanks partly to Catherine's interest. Hitherto Elizabeth had been taught by her lady-in-waiting, Mistress Catherine Ashley, a well-educated and much-loved friend whom she called Kat. But now she was allowed to share her half-brother's tutors; first the Rev. Richard Cox and then the great Cambridge scholar, John Cheke.

Elizabeth's love of learning was such that Cheke soon recommended a tutor for the Princess' sole use, Grindal, another Cambridge scholar but still in his twenties. The Princess's tutors were all serious, devout Protestants. No card-playing, no dancing for this child, though later on by the time she was sixteen this had changed and the Princess was to learn "in the Italian manner to dance high". She would always enjoy dancing, whether high or low. At Chelsea her gayest moments were probably spent outdoors, for she liked to be as much as possible in the open air. The qualities of Chelsea air were famous and the waters of the Thames were sweet and flowed softly. Elizabeth's schoolroom curriculum would have been Greek and the New Testament in the mornings and Cicero or Livy in the afternoons, with French and Italian fitted in somehow.

Suddenly there was a hiccup in this excellent "royal progress". Her father died when she was in her fourteenth year. Her half-brother became the boy-king Edward VI. And the Seymour family took over the government, albeit without a firm grip, Thomas Seymour's elder brother Edward becoming the Lord Protector Somerset, while Thomas landed the powerful prize of Lord High Admiral and the title of Baron Seymour of Sudeley.

Thomas's ambitions were higher than the Admiralty. The obvious next step was to acquire a valuable wife. Even during Henry's lifetime he had set his cap at more than one great heiress but he was still a lusty bachelor in 1547 and not out of his thirties. Handsome, with brilliant small eyes and a bushy beard, he had a way with women. His language was as full of oaths as it was of jokes, both of them imbued with characteristic Tudor coarseness. He would lard his dialogue with blasphemous references to "God's precious soul" and once sent a messenger to Kat Ashley with the request to know 'whether her great buttocks were grown any less or no?' Soon Seymour would be able to see for himself, for he was to live in the same house as Kat Ashley and her young mistress, the Lady Elizabeth, for many pregnant months.

After Henry's death, Seymour stepped up his quest for a wife with an audacity that created many rumours but also a certain amount of mystery. It was said that he considered Mary Tudor and then half-sister Elizabeth, but could not get permission to marry either from the Council. Then he tried Anne of Cleves, again without success; and finally returned to the courtship of his old, well-endowed love, Queen Catherine Parr. Two potential queens and two ex- or former queens — not bad going at all.

Catherine's passionate temperament responded with ardour to their first clandestine meetings; clandestine, because it was essential for them to get married before telling the Council they had done so. They would thus face the Council with a *fait accompli*.

In the early spring dawns Seymour would glide through the wicket gate to the north of Chelsea Manor, having silently crossed the fields that surrounded the house. He would find the Queen waiting for him in her bedchamber. In another bedroom the Princess Elizabeth and Kat Ashley were quietly sleeping, with the Princess's personal maids not far off. There was also the tutor, William Grindal, somewhere in the house, and her cofferer Thomas Parry, as well as a retinue of servants. But no one was the wiser when some time in April — the date is still uncertain — the Lord High Admiral secretly married Queen Catherine Parr and came to live with her in Chelsea Manor House.

The presence of this boisterous incarnation of masculinity under a hitherto chaste roof could hardly fail to influence the young Princess. She was at a sensitive stage of adolescence. Her most recent biographer, the American historian Carolly Erickson has drawn a beguiling portrait of the Princess at this age, in her *The First Elizabeth* (1983):

> *She was growing tall, and acquiring the watchful self awareness of a young woman, part vanity, part defensiveness. A portrait painted some time in early adolescence catches a hint of steely vigilance in her grave, unsmiling stare — or perhaps she was merely trying to look regal. We who know what her future was to hold can read much into that tight-lipped countenance: self-control, resolute modesty, even defiance. The forced maturity in the expression is touching, for the face has not quite lost its childish contour. Still, what is telling about the portrait is how the intelligent power of Elizabeth's expression overwhelms all else — the elegance of her crimson kirtle and embroidered gown, her restrained adornments of pearls and jet, her sloe eyes, bright red hair and milk-white skin, clear and free of the pimply 'wheals' that 'disgraced the faces' of sixteenth-century adolescents, even her remarkable hands, their long spider-thin fingers holding a velvet-bound book.*

Elizabeth would need all the "vigilance" and "defensiveness" of which she was capable. For Seymour was no sooner established in Chelsea as a married man than he began visiting her in her bedroom before she was properly dressed. His early morning greeting would be a jovial slap "upon the back or on the buttocks". Kat Ashley, who slept in the same room, would

shout, "Go away for shame", while Elizabeth blushed with a mixture of embarrassment and excitement. Her household soon noticed that she coloured and smiled at any mention of his name. Kat's role seems to have been ambiguous. Though apparently shocked by Seymour's behaviour, she was careful to tell Elizabeth that Seymour had wanted to marry *her — for herself.*

Elizabeth at first defended herself against Seymour by getting up earlier and earlier. But Seymour was not to be defeated. One day he burst in with his wife in tow and together they tickled Elizabeth in bed until she screamed with hysterical laughter. Another time he besieged the Princess and her dressers behind the bedcurtains, calling to her, "Come out." The scandal grew; particularly as the Lord High Admiral had taken to barging in wearing no uniform but a dressing-gown — "barelegged in his slippers."

It was in the gallery that Kat Ashley at last tried seriously to put a stop to a deteriorating situation. She met Seymour by appointment in the gallery and told him that his brazen conduct was damaging the Princess's fair name: her own chastity was being called in question. The big man's reply was bluster and a volley of "God's-precious-soul".

Meanwhile his wife Catherine was pregnant. Possibly her judgment was affected by the difficult time she was going through physically, for she tried to protect Seymour by telling Kat that Elizabeth was being seduced not by Seymour but by *another man.* Seymour, she said, had "looked in at the gallery window, and saw my lady Elizabeth cast her arms about a man's neck." Elizabeth denied the story and Kat believed her. In fact there were no suitable candidates for a seductive scene in Chelsea Manor House but Seymour himself. The Princess's tutors were all too high-minded; especially Roger Ascham, who had by now taken Grindal's place. The famous Ascham had come from Cambridge to Chelsea like Grindal before him. Though Ascham's appearance was cheerful he tolerated not the slightest interruption to his pupil's studies. It was her excellent mind that he admired, and through him she was to emerge from the Seymour cauldron into the clear light of learning.

As Catherine's time drew near, the suspect pair — her husband and step-daughter, grew more reckless. At last the crisis broke. Catherine found Elizabeth and Seymour alone one day, Elizabeth in his arms. The Princess's period of residence at Chelsea came to an abrupt termination. She left for the shelter of Sir Anthony Dening's home in Cheshunt, where she remained in poor health throughout the summer. The unfortunate Catherine's health, however, was a thousand times worse. Her miserable pregnancy ended in the birth of a girl and the death of the mother, perhaps from puerperal fever. She expired on 5th September 1548, denouncing her unfaithful husband in a frenzy of grief. Two days later Elizabeth reached the age of fifteen.

After Catherine's death the fever seemed to transfer itself to her husband. He was believed to be plotting to seize power after committing three murders — of the delicate young king, his brother the Protector and Princess Mary — and marrying Elizabeth. He was caught shooting a guard-dog in the King's palace, sent to the Tower and executed.

The backwash of scandal and terror for a time besmirched Princess Elizabeth, particularly as her lady Kat Ashley and her cofferer Thomas Parry were also sent to the Tower, for questioning. Slanderous tongues asserted that Princess Elizabeth was the "Little Whore" just as her mother Anne Boleyn had been the 'Great Whore'. It was said that she too was in the Tower, pregnant by the Lord High Admiral. A midwife could even be cited who had already delivered her of Seymour's child, which was then 'miserably destroyed'. Elizabeth replied to an inquisitorial storm with outraged denials and growing power and confidence. By the end of 1449 she was welcomed back to her half-brother's court with colourful splendour.

Princess Elizabeth, however, had been through the fire and a bright worldly image was no longer her choice, or indeed safe. She returned as a modest maiden preferring to wear simple black or white rather than elaborate fashions and a dazzle of jewels. No longer would she bridle and blush at the mention of any man's name. She was deeply religious, almost a "born-again" Protestant, but with the self-knowledge born of suffering.

Many years later she was to compose a sad love poem celebrating a recently broken romance, of which the following was the first verse:

When I was fair and young and favour graced me,
Of many was I sought their mistress for to be,
But I did scorn them all and answered them therefore,
Go, go, go, seek some other where,
Importune me no more.

Today Elizabeth's harrowing experiences between the ages of thirteen and fifteen would be considered quite enough to prevent her ever afterwards from making a happy marriage. Added to that was the fact that in her child's memory, marriage more than once meant the block. The Tower and Chelsea between them were enough to redirect the royal line through the descendants of James I; and to preserve Elizabeth in celibacy and safety as the Virgin Queen.

When a King's Road fantasy came true

by Tom Pocock

The story is so romantic that, while it would have made a wonderful plot for an old Hollywood musical, it is not the sort that is told nowadays, let alone believed. It begins with an impoverished young music-teacher trudging the streets of Chelsea, dreaming of one day conducting his own orchestra and reaches a climax only three years later with him actually conducting that orchestra before wildly applauding audiences in New York with all the world before him. It is a ridiculously romantic story but it also happens to be true. It is the story of the Chelsea Symphony Orchestra.

The young man was, and is, Nicholas Dodd. After graduating from the Royal College of Music he had taken a part-time job teaching ten students at Chelsea College. He had accepted the job on two conditions: one, that he could recruit other young musicians to join them, perhaps those recently graduated, like himself; the other, which was regarded as quite remarkably vainglorious, was that the group of musicians should be called not just the Chelsea College Orchestra, but the Chelsea Symphony Orchestra. He got his way; his enthusiasm was infectious; and, two years ago, he was conducting his orchestra at the Old Town Hall in the King's Road.

But orchestras need more that musicians and enthusiasm: they need money. In order to raise more for the hire of the hall and the other expenses, Nicholas Dodd used up his own savings and even sold his precious electronic musical instruments, which would be so valuable in composing incidental music for films, which was another ambition of his. Then, inevitably, Dodd and his orchestra ran out of money and at the end of 1981 they held their last concert — or so they thought.

They had begun to collect a regular, devoted audience and this last concert at the Old Town Hall was packed. But one member of the audience was there for the first time for, until a poster advertising the event had caught his eye, he had never heard of the Chelsea Symphony Orchestra. This was Martin Summers, who had lived all his life in Chelsea and had just moved into a splendid studio-house in Glebe Place and ran the Lefevre Gallery in the West End. He was enchanted by the music and by the musicians' youth and enthusiasm. So when, at the end of the concert, it was announced that there would be no more for lack of money and there followed one, final, despairing cry for financial help, he cocked a sympathetic ear.

What followed was pure Hollywood. Summers and Dodd met and liked each other. Summers paid the orchestra's debts, guaranteed a future and was made its President. Dodd kept his orchestra alive and planned another season of concerts. Martin Summers also set himself the task of getting the orchestra

better-known and, to this end, he gave magnificent parties at his house in Glebe Place; parties in the old, high style of Chelsea when prosperous artists lived and worked there. His guests, a mixture of the well-to-do who might also be inclined to help financially and Chelsea people, who could help in other ways, were entertained by young musicians from what was becoming known just as "the CSO", playing in a great studio that made a magnificent music-room.

Through the last winter season, the Old Town Hall — and then St. John's, Smith Square — attracted capacity audiences. But something even more remarkable was to come. Last spring the city of New York was the scene of the "Britain Salutes New York" festival in which some of the best of British theatrical and musical talent was to take part. Martin Summers was determined that his orchestra should be there, too, and it was.

Through influential and generous British and American friends and with the help of Pan-American Airways, sixty-five musicians and Martin Summers flew to New York. A report of their visit reads, "The concert took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of April 22nd. It was warmly praised in the *New York Times* the next day and the reviewer was particularly taken with Nicholas Dodd's *Orchestral Fanfare*. The romantic programme harmonised beautifully with the museum's "Belle Epoque" exhibition, through which the audience passed on the way to the auditorium. After *God Save the Queen*, the orchestra played the *William Tell Overture*, Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. The soloist was Barry Douglas, whose performance was greeted with wild applause.

"During their visit, members of the orchestra also played at the Botanical Gardens, at private parties, at Bloomingdale's and at the Pan American Pavilion at Kennedy Airport in recognition of the generous support given by the airline for the trip."

Now was this all. The celebrated Alistair Cooke wrote about them: "This phenomenon — an orchestra of young musicians of high quality, recruited from the neighbouring music colleges and fired by the ambition of melding into a musical team — is the brainchild of Nicholas Dodd. . ."

Now they are back home again and are well into their winter season at the Old Town Hall, St. John's, Smith Square, and the Queen Elizabeth Hall. They have now reached the stage of making professional recordings of their concerts and can claim that the initials CSO are known far beyond the borders of Chelsea. But their foundation is still here at the Old Town Hall, in the Glebe Place studios, where they are promoted, and at Chelsea College, where they rehearse.

All concerned with the creation of the orchestra and its performances can be proud of their achievement. Chelsea people can be proud of the orchestra that bears the name of their quarter and, if they continue to give it the support it deserves, they can be proud of themselves, too.

Some CSO concerts for 1984

Saturday February 4th.
St. John's Smith Square.
Beethoven – Overture: King Stephen.
R. Strauss – Oboe Concerto (Soloist Alan Garner)
Bruckner – Symphony No. 4 (The Romantic)

Thursday March 15th.
St. John's Smith Square.
Beethoven – The Ruins of Athens op.113.
Grieg – Piano Concerto. (Soloist, Alan Kokosovsky)
Brahms – Symphony No. 1.

Monday May 7th.
The Queen Elizabeth Hall.
Beethoven – Overture: Egmont
Brahms – Violin Concerto (Soloist, Luigi Bianchi)
Beethoven – Symphony No. 7.

Paradise Lost, 1983

"There was a time within living memory when a walk down the King's Road was an enjoyable experience, a remote period of girls trying to look like Julie Christie, and Italian restaurants, decorated with clean, white lavatory tiles, in which film producers in gold bangles and safari suits waved and twittered harmlessly at each other.

For some years I have avoided the thoroughfare, and a return to it came as a shock, for a journey down the King's Road now seems like a trip on the ghost train in an extremely tacky and ill-kept provincial fairground. It was not only the bedraggled, whey-faced and lethargic punks, disconsolately lobbing beer cans at each other among the push chairs on the benches in the square; it was not even the fact that the waxwork models in the windows of the clothes' shops were smoking joints; what finished the King's Road for me was the Hitler T-shirt. . . ."

John Mortimer in the *Sunday Times*, 20th November, 1983.

Points of view from Cheyne Walk

by Michael Bryan

If the view is worthy of it, our holiday snaps usually include one or two taken from a bedroom window. It is very satisfying to rent, or borrow, a good view, even for a short time, but a permanent record of it can be a never ending source of pleasure to the photographer, reviving old memories, even if, on occasions, boring old friends.

The photograph, of course, had still to be invented at the turn of the last century, so a pen and ink or pencil sketch — perhaps a modest watercolour — had to satisfy amateur topographers who desired to keep a memento of their holidays. For most of the population, who never travelled more than a few miles from home, views were provided by professional artists via engravers and print-sellers. It was therefore in everybody's interest for the artist to seek out a good view and record it. Sketching tours covering great distances and often endured in extreme discomfort, were obligatory, and there were few villages outside London, which provided more of the essential ingredients that make up a good picture, than Chelsea.

There was the river, a good deal wider and more irregular than it appears today, and very much a working waterway. There were several windmills, one of which was Captain Stephen Hooper's Horizontal Mill — all of one hundred and forty five feet high — situated close to St. Mary's Church on the south bank and of very unusual and eccentric design. This had been built in 1778, only one year after the Church itself, and was to remain there until 1844. There were famous houses, riverside inns and the eminently paintable wooden bridge which linked Chelsea with Battersea. In the summer months regattas were held on the river and the annual rowing race for the coveted Doggett's Coat and Badge was another attraction. Only a short distance to the east was the Royal Hospital. It was therefore a most rewarding destination for any landscape artist, and many now famous names made the trip.

Thomas Girtin came in 1800, giving us *The White House, Chelsea,* to be seen in the Tate Gallery, a superb watercolour completed when he was twenty five with barely two years left to live. (One wonders who gave it its title as the White House to which the eye is drawn is so clearly in Battersea).

Peter de Wint's watercolour of the Battersea waterfront, with the Horizontal Mill dwarfing the church, is blandly titled *An English river scene* in the catalogue of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Perhaps a better description than another artist's *River view with fantastic tower,* so described recently by one of our distinguished sale rooms. In the same museum is John Varley's *Cheyne Walk* of 1811 — a magical work by the great drawing-master looking west towards the Old Church along Prospect Place. It is worth a journey to Norwich Castle Museum just to see John Sell Cotman's

watercolour taken from the future site of Cadogan Pier with the houses at the beginning of Cheyne Walk glimpsed through trees and the Swan Inn jutting out into the Thames.

David Cox, the bi-centenary of whose birth we have just celebrated, preferred Battersea Fields, or even mid-river from which to take his views of river life with fishermen in boats laying, or pulling in, their nets. Even John Constable passing through on 6th August, 1816, felt compelled to stop and sketch Captain Hooper's Mill.

The list of artists is long but one name is unaccountably missing: Joseph Mallord William Turner — not missing, of course, from the list of artists who visited Chelsea, nor from the list of those who painted in Chelsea. The astonishing fact is that the great man never painted what was under his very nose or, if he did, his pictures have not survived and are not recorded. The doubt is too slight to deserve much benefit.

It is a pleasure to contemplate a good view from the window, but to own one is a privilege and for an artist, a privilege not without its responsibilities. So to forgive Turner is difficult. It is true that he was already seventy-one when he set up house with Mrs. Booth at No. 6 Davis Place (now 119 Cheyne Walk). That was in 1846 and he was to die there only five years later. But he may have owned his little cottage for rather longer. According to Leopold, John Martin's son, Turner had invited both men to walk with him across the market gardens down to the river to view his secret house. If, as Leopold Martin remembered, that walk really did take place in 1838, Turner may have had a presence in Chelsea for a lot longer than has been generally believed. But what of his more youthful years? We know that he was studying with Girtin at that great patron of artists Dr. Thomas Monro's house when both young men were nineteen and even then were drawing the Thames. In the decade to 1806 Turner alone painted Old London Bridge, Old Westminster Bridge, Kew Bridge and Walton Bridges to mention but a few so he wasn't exactly averse to Thames bridges. So why not Battersea?

To say that Turner never painted what was under his nose in Chelsea makes a point but does ignore the fact that he very definitely and often painted what was above his head. Either from his own roof, from the wooden bridge, or from Battersea, he painted the sky and particularly the setting sun. He had discovered that the dust and smoke in the atmosphere produced dramatic effects of light and, to view these phenomena to very best advantage, had Charles Greaves row him across to the church on the south bank. There, seated on the Bishop's Chair in the little vestry above the west door, he surveyed the scene through the oriel window and began to work. Charles Greaves waited patiently for the "Admiral" (Turner often carried a telescope), or Old Puggy Booth as he was known, to reappear, never guessing the real identity of his passenger until years later when he would regale his two sons, Henry and Walter, with stories of his friend Turner. Was it perhaps this association that encouraged Walter, the younger brother, to take up painting even before Whistler came to live in Lindsey Row? It would be nice to think so.

If Turner, arguably our greatest artist and a Cheyne Walk resident, who had wonderful views from his window, failed to record them he was not alone.

John Martin had also come to live in Chelsea three years before Turner died and his view from Lindsey House was, if anything, more complete. But already, around 1850, tastes were changing and increasingly, at the Royal Academy, romantic topographical landscapes were being overshadowed by ever larger canvasses depicting historical, allegorical and biblical subjects. So we have no Chelsea views from Martin, or from William Dyce, or Daniel Maclise, who were all Cheyne Walk residents at different times. William Holman Hunt living at No. 5 Prospect Place (now the site of the Cheyne Hospital) painted two of his most famous pictures there between 1850 and 1854, *The Light of the World* and *The Hireling Shepherd*. The Pre-Raphaelites indeed almost colonised Chelsea over the next fifteen years or so. William Bell Scott was to establish himself at Belle Vue House, (92 Cheyne Walk) and by 1862 Dante Gabriel Rossetti was already at No. 16, where he was to remain for twenty years. Towards the end of his tortured life it is hard to think of Rossetti even looking out of his windows, let alone painting what he saw — and yet, next door to him at No. 15 lived a young artist of great potential who rarely gets mentioned as a Chelsea artist or, indeed, as one who lived in and painted Cheyne Walk. His name was Cecil Gordon Lawson.

William Gaunt in his admirable *Chelsea,* published in 1954, wrote that Charles Keene rented rooms from Wilfred Lawson in Paradise Row and that Wilfred had a brother "who painted several pictures of Cheyne Walk and neighbourhood, being considered, in his own time, of unusual promise" — but went no further. Two years later, in 1956, Richard Edmonds in his *Chelsea from Five Fields to World's End,* moving from house to house along Cheyne Walk, records two naval gentlemen living at No. 15 at different times but fails to mention the Lawson connection. Similarly there was no recognition from Thea Holme in her *Chelsea* of 1972.

Cecil Lawson was born at Wellington, Shropshire, on 3rd December, 1851, sixteen days before Turner died, the fifth and youngest son of William Lawson, the portrait painter. The entire family was involved in art and Cecil was probably drawing before he could read. He arrived at No. 15 in 1869 with his parents and exhibited *Cheyne Walk, Chelsea* at the Royal Academy the following year when he was nineteen. It did not sell at the Exhibition but was admired and enabled the artist's work to be seen outside his own circle of friends for the first time. That circle was by no means humble and included Frederick Walker, George John Pinwell and Arthur Boyd Houghton. He had been in their company since he was fourteen. They were a tragically ill-fated group, all three died in the same year, 1875, and Cecil Lawson himself only survived them by seven years. None reached the age of forty and Cecil died six months before his thirty first birthday.

In the course of his short life, he knew what it was like to be lionised, ignored, and treated once again as a major discovery.

In 1871, he exhibited two pictures *The river in the rain* and *Summer evening in Cheyne Walk*. They received unanimous praise at the RA and both sold on private view day. Some commissions resulted from this exhibition but the following six years saw his work largely rejected, and if accepted, remaining unsold. What was the reason for this? The answer probably lies in

the unsentimental nature of Lawson's work — the same slightly disturbing quality which seemed to pervade Pinwell's drawings. In Lawson's figures the Pinwell influence is most evident, although his approach to composition, which now seems almost French, was unmistakably his own, particularly in his Cheyne Walk subjects. As with many artists who are ahead of their time, he worried the contemporary art establishment and they skyed his canvasses, or turned their backs on them.

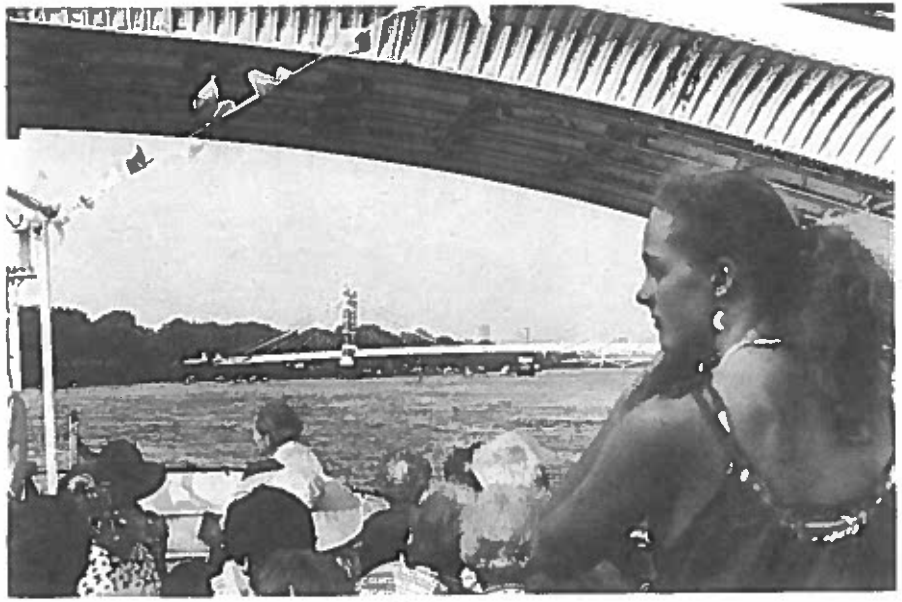
Then suddenly in 1878, the Grosvenor Gallery, long the champion of the under-dog, announced the emergence of a great landscape painter and, on 4th May, Cecil Lawson found himself as Edmund Gosse tells us, ". . . the lion of the hour. One of the most venerated names in English Art" (name not mentioned sadly) "took him by both hands and said 'You have done with ease what I have striven all my life in vain to do'. The critics easily awarded him the honours of the year". Gosse in his memoir of Cecil Lawson writing with extravagant enthusiasm of his *The Minister's Garden,* stated, "It is probably the greatest English landscape of the second half of the nineteenth century and our painters for the next eighteen years will have to exert their highest powers if it is not to remain so".

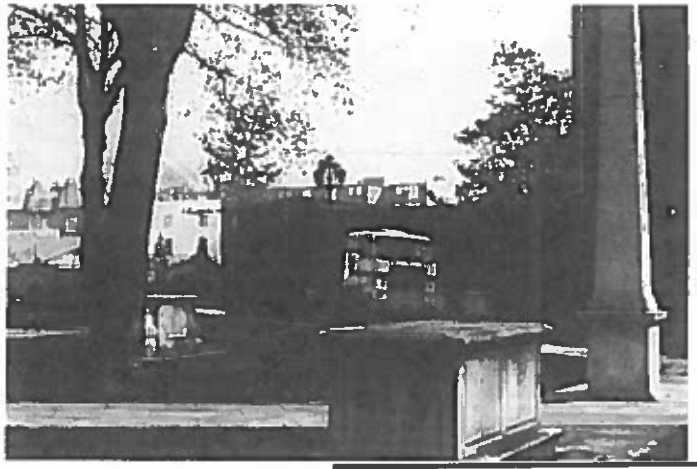
Thus was Cecil Lawson appreciated four months after his death and even Jimmy Whistler, then up the road in Tite Street, was sufficiently moved to etch the artist's unfinished picture *The Swan and the Iris* for inclusion in the memoir — a considerable bonus for those fortunate enough to have a copy of that rare work so elaborately produced by the Fine Art Society in 1882.

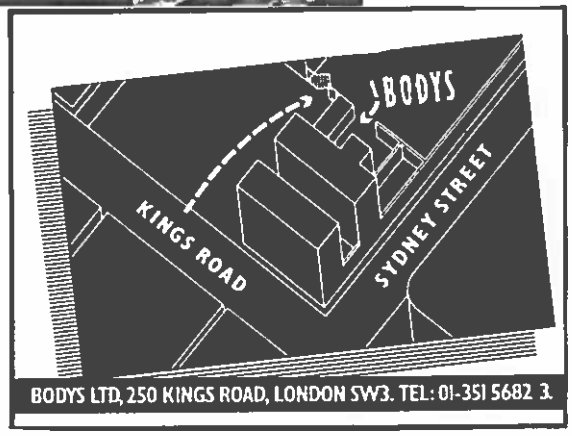
No Chelsea artist recorded his own river views more assiduously than Cecil Lawson but he also painted Chelsea's Trafalgar Square "again and again in a rapture of imagination", as Gosse put it, "The ordinary pilgrim will certainly walk around this dingy little enclosure seeking in vain what Lawson saw in it" — but we won't, as it came down to make way for Chelsea Square. Did he, one wonders know Mrs. Helen Allingham — who lived there? They certainly had mutual friend in, the watercolourist, Fred Walker and her husband William Allingham was a frequent visitor to Rossetti at No. 16 — but that is another story.

The author lives in Cheyne Walk and is proud of his view. He is an art dealer and is mounting an exhibition entitled In Cheyne Walk and Thereabout *(with acknowledgement to Reginald Blunt), which will be held at the Alpine Gallery, 74 South Audley Street, W.1. from January 31st to February 18th 1984.*

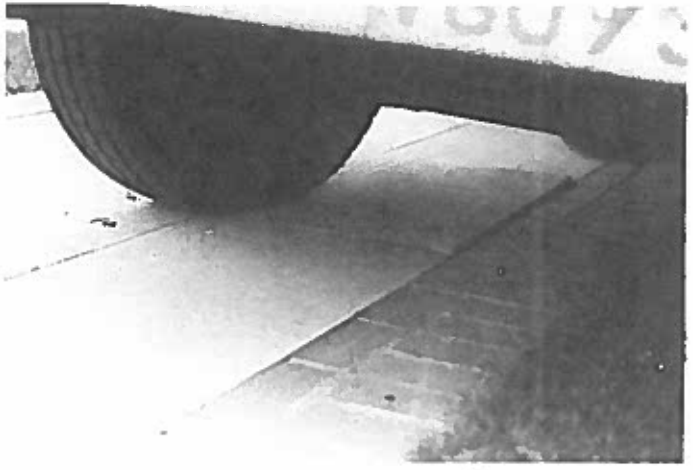
A summer's evening: the Society's jaunt on the river. Awaiting departure at Cadogan Pier (right), and (below) passing under Battersea Bridge in the wake of Whistler.



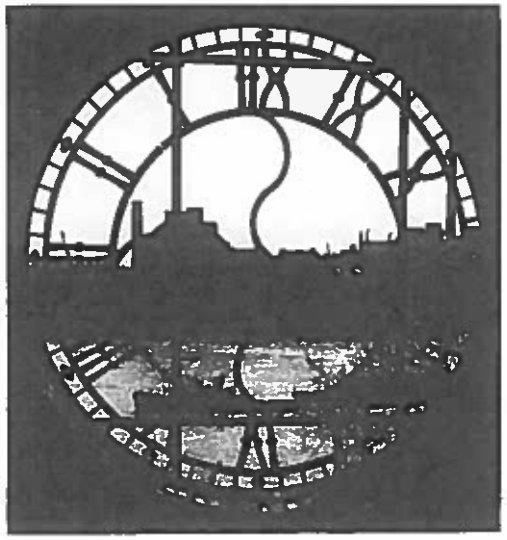




Intruders on Dovehouse Green. A published advertisement (right); a lorry that took its advice (above); a paving-stone that took the brunt of it (see Chairman's Report).



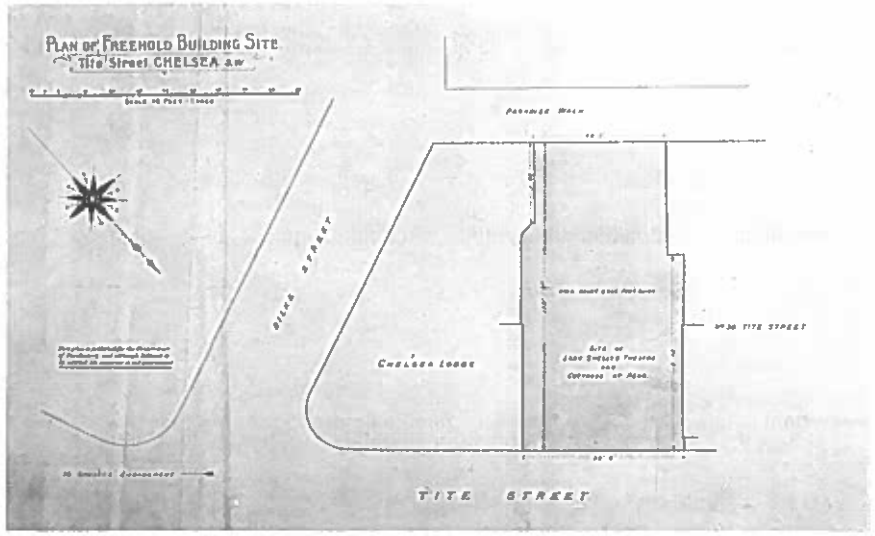
A Chelsea window? Tissot's painting of a Chelsea pensioner in Reading the News, *which sold for £183,000 at Christie's this year (see page 46).*

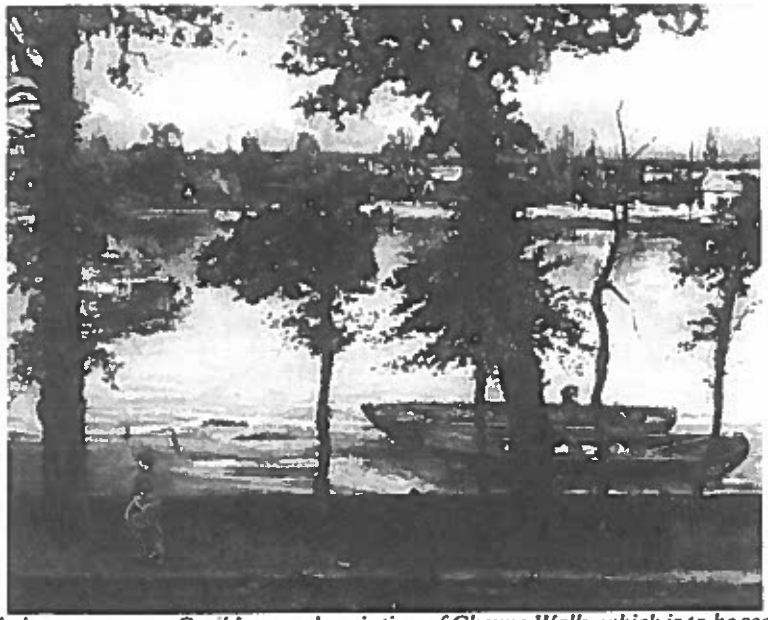


Chelsea people and places remembered through John Bignell's camera. The vanished Battersea riverside seen through the clock-face of the rebuilding Chelsea Old Church in 1952 (see page 55).

And then there were only two: Lots Road power station (right), when its four chimneys dominated Whistler's Reach. A breath of fresh air: the late Hester Marsden-Smedley emerging from a Chelsea manhole after a tour of inspection in the sewers.

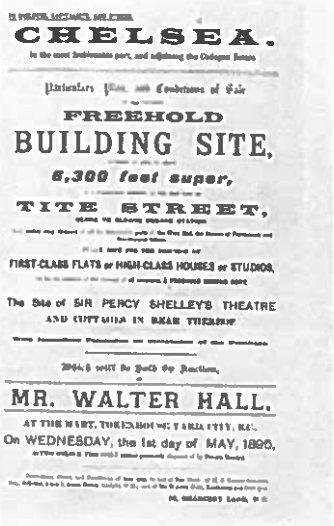
The late Sir Charles Wheeler, Chelsea sculptor and President of the Royal Academy, at work in his studio.





Chelsea on canvas: Cecil Lawson's painting of Cheyne Walk, which is to be seen at Michael Bryan's forthcoming exhibition (see page 29), and (below) A Corner in Chelsea *by Charles Ginner, which fetched £30,000 at Sotheby's this year (see page 46).*

The lost Shelley Theatre: the plan and advertisement for its sale in 1895 (above and left); and (below) Sir Percy Shelley (see page 47).



CHELSEA.

Particulars, Plan, and Conditions of Sale

FREEHOLD

BUILDING SITE,

6,300 feet super,

TITE STREET,

FIRST-CLASS FLATS or HIGH-CLASS HOUSES or STUDIOS,

The Site of SIR PERCY SHELLEY'S THEATRE AND CURTAIN IN REAR THEREOF

MR. WALTER HALL,

On WEDNESDAY, the 1st day of MAY, 1895,

The Peakes of Chelsea. Mervyn Peake among his canvases at Trafalgar Studios (above) and Maeve Peake, drawn by her husband in 1940 (see opposite).

Memories of bohemian Chelsea

by Maeve Peake

If Chelsea can no longer be described as the artists' quarter of London, many of their studios still stand, even if put to other uses, and memories remain. The late Maeve Peake, a painter herself, and the widow of Mervyn Peake, the remarkable writer and artist, recalled their lives in Chelsea studios and wrote this article while recovering from an operation in the Charing Cross Hospital last June, a few weeks before she died. Her portrait as a girl, by her husband, is opposite and her obituary on page 59.

Her memoir of their lives together, A World Away, ***has recently been republished by Methuen in paperback.***

In the early 1940s, we had moved from London to a village, rather appropriately named Warringcamp in West Sussex and, for the first time, had no foothold in Chelsea. However, on one leave, Mervyn had found time to frequent some of his old haunts: possibly the Six Bells, the Markham Arms, or anywhere that he might find friends from his civilian life. It was on this occasion that he heard from someone that there was a studio going begging in Manresa Road: at Trafalgar Studios, more or less opposite the old Chelsea Library.

Mervyn must have been staying the night in London for, the next morning, he went to the Cadogan Estate office to find out if there was any possibility of his being able to rent it, because, so far as I remember, they were the landlords. His mission was accomplished successfully and he was allotted No. 3 Trafalgar Studios on a weekly basis of about 30s.; there was no lease, so I suppose he signed some kind of legal document to take up the occupation.

The studios were in a forbidding building, gaunt and black, which, even at that time, bore irremediable signs of decay. The entrance to the ground floor was up steps from the pavement into a long, dark passage. On the left hand side were the double doors which opened directly into the studio — and the suddeness of the transition from darkness into light hit one with a palpable body-blow. The whole of the wall facing north was window. It was all that a working studio should be; it made no concessions, except, perhaps, for the enormous black monster of a stove, standing upright in one corner of the room, which in future years was to eat everything it could to warm the enormously high-ceilinged studio and ourselves.

Across the dark passage, each studio had one other room which, rather like a village grocery store, provided for what amenities were thought necessary as an adjunct to an artist's social life: an ancient, black gas cooker; a bath, hidden, when not in use, under a table-top, and a wooden models' stand,

which with a matress on it, served as an extremely uncomfortable bed. The only articles to be moved into 3 Trafalgar Studios were the implements of an artist's trade, which had had to be stored at the beginning of the war.

The first dramatic incident happened not long after our taking the studio. Mervyn was on leave for a short time and we decided to spend a night or two in the studio with our son Sebastian, aged about two. He was put to bed in the all-purpose room across the corridor and dropped off to sleep at the blink of an eyelid. We decided to go for a short walk, although I must admit to a certain trepidation in leaving a sleeping child in such a dark and cavernous building. We were out probably less than ten minutes and the first thing we did on returning was to creep up to the room and shine our torch inside to see if all was well — but to receive the appalling message of an empty bed. There were few inhabited studios at the time and, after Mervyn had gone to ask at all those that were occupied if they had seen a small boy in pyjamas, and received negative replies, he went to the downstairs ones, which were reached by going down to the pavement and through an arch, which had a somewhat French feel about it, (but that was not the night to reflect on the layout and feel of the building!)

There were about four studios around a courtyard and no response to the knocking at three of them. At the fourth, the door was opened and a glimpse could be seen of a very happy small boy sitting on a man's knee, being read to by that man, who happened to be Dylan Thomas.

Sebastian looked up, pleased to see us but wishing to hear the end of the story and it was not until that happened that we were rewarded with a smile. It transpired that Dylan Thomas had been walking back to the studio in which he was staying and saw and heard the crying of the little boy lost. Not knowing who he was, he thought the best thing to do was to take him back to his place and hope that he would be found by his anxious parents, which is what transpired. The lesson was well and truly learned by us and we never again left him alone.

One other occupant of the downstairs studios was a monumental mason, who had just been commissioned to carve in stone for a convent what he called his "two-ton Mother Julie" and which, when it was ready for transport, was a major operation to transfer from its place of creation to a lorry which could bear her weight. In the only other occupied working studio was a painter called John Grome and we used to club together with other painters to hire a model for life drawing. One evening the person responsible for booking the model had gone to a fashion agency and the girl was horrified when she found she had to undress in front of a whole group of strangers and retain a pose for half-an-hour at a time. Although she had a marvellous figure in clothes, she had no natural ability to drape her body into the fluid poses that a life-class model's body could achieve.

The studio next to ours was occupied by one of Chelsea's great characters called Stanley Grimm, who was either Russian or Lithuanian, and was, I think, in the Navy at the time. Whilst on leave, when Mervyn was next door to him, his voice would rise and fall like the waves and would fill the whole neighbourhood with deep Slavic melancholy.

In mufti, he wore the traditional uniform of the artist of the time: a huge black hat and a flowing black bow tie; he had a resplendent beard and looked rather like Augustus John. His pictures were mainly quite conventional portraits and still lifes.

In our studio, the key was kept permanently on a piece of string through the letter-box and friends passing through London were told of this and would make use of it. There were few comforts but even a lumpy mattress can be a welcome relief to a tired friend on leave. Only once was something taken, a very special drawing cut out of a book that he was making for me since our marriage of drawings, poems and stories.

The studio was used during the war as a place of rest for Mervyn and where he could feel his real self again. The windows were far too large to cover with black-out material so that, once darkness had descended, we had to use the all-purpose room across the corridor, where the window was covered by ancient blankets and rugs and the room lit by candle-light.

By 1945, we decided to leave our cottage in Burpham, near Arundel, as it seemed that the war was nearing its conclusion and it would be safe to return to a London home. It is hardly believable today that Mervyn found a studio in Glebe Place with living accommodation for ourselves and our two young sons at a rent of around £250 per annum; we took this but we decided to keep 3 Trafalgar Studios, so that domestic life could sometimes be kept apart from work. It is inconceivable today that an artist could rent even one, let alone two, real working studios in Chelsea. We had accumulated a certain amount of furniture, which was moved into Glebe Place, together with paintings, drawings and books and a very large, magnificent Victorian easel.

The two boys had a little room above an alcove, where we slept and which was curtained off from the large, living-, painting-, working-room studio that was also kept warm by a huge black stove.

At the end of Glebe Place was a nursery school, housed in a little old house which local legend insisted had been a hunting-lodge belonging to Henry VIII. It had a small garden and a very happy atmosphere and I was able to take our two little boys there in the morning and pick them up after an early lunch.

Work and life were very much bound up in each other. Mervyn had read the proofs of *Titus Groan* and was awaiting publication day with a certain amount of trepidation. He had been commissioned to do a set of drawings for *Bleak House*, which gave him enormous pleasure as he had a great affinity with Dickens. He set about gathering his research into the clothes of the period and steeped himself in the world of Dickens and produced a magnificent set of drawings. But, before the project was finished, it had to be abandoned as the publishers found that it would be too costly with wartime restrictions still in force. It is very strange to relate that those drawings are being published this November, 1983, nearly forty years after having been commissioned.

Mervyn met John Brophy at this time, who became a very generous and warm friend. He admired Mervyn's draughtsmanship enormously but did not like the Titus books at all. One day he came to Glebe Place and bought two oils and several drawings, which was an enormous boost, not only to our morale

but also to our dwindling finances. He told us a rather funny story about one of the oils, which he had bought and had hung in a commanding position in his drawing-room. It was called *The Yellow Man* and was of a very kindly monster holding a small flower.

It was a dark painting but, to my mind, not a frightening one. There were glass doors into this room and once he caught sight of his cleaning lady, standing in front of the picture, sticking her tongue out at it as far as it could go. "I 'ates you!" she said and left it at that.

1945 was a year of change and hope and on VE-night some friends of ours suggested that they would baby-sit for us, as they had a newly-born baby and could not go up to Piccadilly to join in the celebrations but would join in the street party in Glebe Place. It was a unique and thrilling experience, dancing arm-in-arm with complete strangers all the way up from Hyde Park Corner to Piccadilly, and people were climbing up the street lamps — soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians. I don't remember what time we returned to Glebe Place but the bonfire which had been lit there had been subdued and our friends were asleep on a couch, their baby in its pram and our two sons upstairs in their little balcony room.

It was now that Mervyn met Tom Pocock and arranged to tour war-torn Germany and report on it in the *Leader* magazine. This is described in Tom's own book *1945: The Dawn Came Up Like Thunder,* which is to be published this year and describes the tragic things they saw. Tom was only nineteen and Mervyn thirty-three but they were extremely well atuned to each other and Tom has remained a friend ever since those days. Both must have returned very changed men, Mervyn with latent material for *Titus Alone* and the subject-matter for countless drawings and poems.

Back in Chelsea, we often used to go out for breakfast at a baker's shop called Lee's, where John Davenport, the writer, and his family also ate. For lunch we went to the Bar-B-Q, where Quentin Crisp was a customer. He was a startling sight in the drabness of wartime and immediate post-war Chelsea, with flaming red hair and one long red finger-nail on the index-finger of his left hand. He was extreme, charming and witty but was very much abused and insulted as he walked down the King's Road. He sometimes came to see us in the studio and, looking back, I am rather surprised that Mervyn did no drawings of him.

Then, in the autumn of 1945, came a wonderful surprise. Mervyn's brother Lonnie had been taken prisoner at Singapore and had spent the war in Changi gaol. We knew that he was safe but that, although he was a very big man, his weight had gone down to only six stone. He had also heard that he would spend the first few weeks of his freedom in India but, as his wife and two children had escaped to Australia and then gone to America, we assumed he would follow them. It turned out to be otherwise.

One early afternoon, when I was going to pick up the boys from their nursery school, a taxi drew up outside 72 Glebe Place and a tall, rather gaunt man carrying a kit-bag climbed out. Although I had only met Mervyn's brother once before, I realised it was he and as he tried to pay for the taxi, the driver refused the fare and drove off. The emotion was very great as he came

into the studio and put down his possessions and tears of joy were shed. Mervyn was out and I explained that I had just been about to pick up the boys from school. He said he would like to come with me, to see his nephews. So we walked down the street to collect "the pinky-orange boys", as my sons were known on account of the brightness of their clothes. They rushed out, with all the abandon of bulls into the ring, and drew up short at the sight of a stranger. Then Mervyn arrived and there was general rejoicing, tears and laughter; so much to say, too much to say. While waiting to join his family in America, he stayed with us. As an ex-prisoner of war, he was given double-rations and, as he recovered his strength, entered into our social life.

One evening, Graham Greene, the novelist, came to supper with us and, after we had eaten, suggested that we should play the telephone game, which was rather rudimentary and childish. You phone someone taken at random from the telephone directory and proceed to lead the recipient of the call on a wild goose chase. Lonnie's and mine were rather flat but Mervyn said he was a chimney sweep and was coming to clear the chimney. When the telephonee said that he had no such thing as a chimney, Mervyn said that he would bring his own — and the line went dead. Graham Greene's was very much more sinister, involving the smuggling of diamonds to Amsterdam, stolen passports, etc., and it sounded so much like a Greene story that we felt as though we were taking part in *The Third Man.* Lonnie didn't like it at all, feeling that someone, somewhere had been badly frightened.

Then Lonnie left for America and we ourselves left London to spend three years on Sark in the Channel Islands. But we kept a foothold in Trafalgar Studios so that Mervyn could use it as a market-place when he came over to see publishers, gallery-owners and theatre-producers, all the people connected with his work. Television began to play a part in this so that we needed to return to London, and, together with our new-born daughter, Clare, we moved back into Trafalgar Studios, Mervyn constructing a small tent-house in it for the baby. Clare tells me that her early childhood memories of the studios are impregnated by the smell of turpentine and of the fudge with which Mrs. Stanley Grimm kept the children supplied.

Trafalgar Studios had, apparently, been condemned before the end of the First World War, and now the Cadogan Estate decided to demolish them. The number of studios available to artists in Chelsea was now decreasing and their rents increasing, so this was a time of sadness. As I cleared the debris of our lives before we left, I knew that we would be closing the doors on a way of life in Chelsea that would never recur.

Art notes

Greaves again . . .

Since his discovery as an important artist in his own right, and not just as a picturesque disciple of Whistler's, Walter Greaves has come to rival his old master as the painter whose name comes to mind at the mention of Chelsea. Exhibitions of his work — oils, water-colours, drawings and etchings; some brilliant, some not, many topographically fascinating — have been held every few years but that soon to be seen at the Michael Parkin Gallery in Motcomb Street will be particularly beguiling.

These are not drawings and etchings that have been seen from time to time in the salesroom and in other exhibitions, for they were all recently discovered. For nearly sixty years, they had been in the possession of the heirs of William Marchant, the proprietor of the Goupil Gallery in Lower Regent Street, who knew all the great British painters of the last quarter of the last century and the first quarter of this. It was he who discovered Walter Greaves, the waterman turned painter, and established him as a Chelsea artist of renown amongst his friends, Walter Sickert, Wilson Steer and even Whistler himself. Appropriately entitled *Walter Greaves and the Goupil Gallery*, the exhibition, which will demonstrate to the delicacy of touch the artist could show, particularly when drawing or etching the river, the boats upon it and the old buildings on its shore where he lived and worked, opens on January 18th.

* * *

The London salesrooms offer a continuing sequence of exhibitions as pictures due for sale are seen on viewing days. Often, views of Chelsea — and, of course, work by Chelsea artists, past and present — can be seen and, of these, the most remarkable during the last year was surely James Joseph Tissot's *Reading the News*, which was sold by Christie's for £183,600 (see illustration, page 35). Curiously, the catalogue described the Chelsea pensioner, on whose cap the red initials "R.H." can clearly be seen, just as an "elderly man in uniform." The view from the window seems to be of the river and a bridge seen through the bare branches of trees.

Was this painted in Chelsea? Perhaps this window belonged — or belongs — to a house in Cheyne Walk? Does anybody know?

Amongst other Chelsea pictures sold by Christie's were Maurer's oil painting of the Ranelagh rotunda in 1745, which was sold, together with the engraving which was made of it, for £1,944. And an odd little drawing by John Nixon of an old lady reading a naval recruiting poster on a wall of Chelsea College at the time of the Napoleonic wars (this fetched, together with two other small drawings £810).

Amongst Chelsea pictures sold by Sotheby's was an oil painting by Charles Ginner, *A Corner in Chelsea*, dated 1910, which sold for its estimated price of £30,000 (*see illustration, page 39*). Those living between Chelsea Green and St. Luke's church can try to identify the streets and houses shown and work out which have been replaced and which remain.

Chelsea's forgotten theatre

by W. L. Jacob

Although it is just over a century since fashionable theatre-goers alighted from their carriages for a performance in Tite Street, the memory of this has faded to the point of eclipse. No trace, and no known photograph, remain of the elegant little theatre that flourished briefly, but with style, across the road from Whistler's White House. It was named after its founder and builder, the Shelley Teatre.

Sir Percy Florence Shelley was the only surviving son of the poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley and the novelist, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. He was born in 1819 at Florence, three years before his father was drowned in his yacht, the *Don Juan*, sailing from Leghorn to Lerici. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, and inherited his grandfather's baronetcy in 1844. His country seat was Boscombe Manor near Bournemouth, but he had a town house, 7 The Grove, The Boltons.

In March, 1876, Sir Percy engaged Joseph Peacock to design, and Messrs Lathey Brothers to build, a residence which became 1 Chelsea Embankment. He named it Shelley House, and he and his wife moved in during November, 1877. On the 1st February, 1879, Sir Percy's solicitor enquired of the Metropolitan Board of Works about the conveyance of a site in Tite Street, just round the corner, for a theatre. He was told that a special covenant would be necessary and this eventually stated that "he, the said Sir Percy Florence Shelley, will not at any time hereafter use, or occupy, or allow to be used or occupied, the said premises, or any part thereof as a Public Theatre, Music Hall, Lecture Hall, Circus Amphitheatre, Aquarium, Skating Rink, Dancing Saloon, or as any other place of entertainment, amusement, exhibition, or for any public purpose of a like nature, and will not do or permit, or suffer to be done in, or upon, the said premises, or any part thereof, to be used or occupied in any other manner which might be, or grow to the annoyance, or damage of the said Board, or their successors, or any person claiming through, or under them, or any of them."

This covenant Sir Percy signed in May. He paid £880 for the site and commissioned Peacock to design the theatre. Lathey Bros., whose tender of £4445 was the lowest, were again engaged by Sir Percy to build it. He supervised every step of the theatre's construction and interested himself in the hot-water apparatus, the stage, the lighting, battens, floats, orchestra rail and dressing rooms. With the help of his solicitor's son, he painted the proscenium borders and wings, drop scenes, sky borders, tree borders and wings, rock wings and interior borders.

The theatre stood on a site 70 feet by 60, the latter being the width of the front in Tite Street. The *Building News* writes of its exterior architectural style as a sort of Free Classic or Queen Anne combination being adopted for the

front elevation, carried out in stock brick, with red cut brick dressings enriched in the central feature by stone pilasters and rusticated quoins. Externally there was nothing to indicate that the building was a theatre designed for the performance of stage plays, except an awning. To the rear was the green-room as well as painting-rooms and offices. There was also a carpenter's shop which had an entrance in Paradise Walk. Despite the anonymity of the frontage, the interior was fitted up as an ordinary theatre, having an auditorium of horseshoe plan. There was a stage 25 feet wide, footlights, drop scene, curtain, orchestra and dressing rooms for the actors and actresses. On entering the theatre it was found that there was no place used for the sale of tickets, or the receipt of money for admission, nor any box or checktaker's office, nor any of the other appliances for taking seats, or money used in a public theatre. Tickets of admission were given up at the entrance lobby to a person appointed to receive them.

For a description of the theatre's interior we are indebted to a correspondent of a theatrical paper who wrote: "As few of our readers have had the privilege of visiting Sir Percy Shelley's theatre erected in Tite Street, Chelsea, leading to the Chelsea Embankment, a short distance from Cheyne Walk, and on the westward side of Chelsea Hospital, a few descriptive remarks may be interesting as giving an idea of the remarkable elegance and good taste displayed in the erection and decoration of a theatre devoted to private entertainments. The theatre is nearly square so far as the outer walls are concerned, but the design that first meets the eye is semi-circular. The entire area is allotted to stalls gradually rising from the orchestra, so as to give each visitor a very distinct view of the stage. There are ten rows of stalls, and the sitting accommodation is provided by rush-bottomed chairs of the most roomy and comfortable kind. Above the stalls there is a balcony, arranged in a semi-circle and protected in front by light, graceful wooden rails. The roof of the theatre is at a considerable height above the balcony, and is painted of a subdued bluish green, and ornamented with a few golden stars. An ornamental border of carved wood runs round, forming a complete circle, so that the roof has something like the shape of a tent, which idea is carried out by bars of wood running from the centre, which is illuminated by a sunlight of gas to the extreme edge of the outer circle. The effect is very good indeed, and the colour of the roof harmonises admirably with the walls of the theatre, which are everywhere painted of a terracotta tint. The balcony is supported by slender iron columns, and the front of it is ornamented with carved wood, the same style being adapted for the proscenium, which is very elegant and chaste in design, without any gold or bright colours being used. On each side of the stage there are cosy private boxes, shaded with Japanese curtains, which are also used for some of the exits. The orchestra is an open one, separated from the stalls by a screen of carved wood-work, simple yet elegant in design, and a similar arrangement conceals the footlights.

"The proportions of the entire theatre are so admirably kept that it looks larger than it really is. On the stage there is the same good taste, and it is beautifully lighted. There is no glare and no gloom, but just sufficient illumination to make the characters stand out, as artists say, from the background of the scenery like the figures in a well-painted picture."

A critic writing of the opening performance prefaced the review of the plays by stating: "Sir Percy Shelley has done a great thing, for he has built a theatre complete in every respect and seating between two and three hundred people. I think Mr. Hollingshead will bear me out when I say that the Chelsea playhouse is unique and such as private enterprise has never before founded. That all the desired effects can be obtained we had ample proof in the storm seen to be raging from within the lighthouse. Judging by what I saw on Saturday night I should say that the machinery is perfect. The scenery was all painted by Sir Percy Shelley who is quite excellent in this branch of art, as witness his drop-scene, *The Poet Shelley's Last Home at Lerici.*"

It is important to state, in the light of subsequent events, that there was no secret in Sir Percy's aim in building the theatre. A statement appeared in a theatrical paper for all to read in June, 1879: "The theatre will be about the size of the Strand and will be chiefly devoted to amateur performances for charitable purposes." Horace Wigan, who frequently stage-managed plays at Sir Percy's theatre, stated that 16 performances took place at the Shelley, of which nine were for the entertainment of Sir Percy and his friends and the remaining seven were for philanthropic and charitable objects.

The Shelley Theatre opened its doors for the first time at the end of May, 1881. The programme consisted of two plays: *The Lighthouse* by Wilkie Collins and *A Romantic Idea* by J. R. Planché. In the former the lighthouse keeper was played by Palgrave Simpson, the playwright and amateur actor. Sir Percy himself was in the cast, probably playing the role of Samuel Furley, the pilot. In the latter play the part of Hans Skelter was performed by Sir William Wiseman, Bart.

The next production of which there is any record took place in March, 1882. This was *Two Loves and a Life* by Charles Reade and Tom Taylor. Palgrave Simpson was again in the cast, playing the part of Father Radcliffe, and Sir Percy, who painted half of the scenery, interpreted the role of John Daw, the schoolmaster at Ulverstone. He also composed the overture which German Reed arranged for two pianos, he playing one and Lady Shelley's niece the other. The stage manager was Horace Wigan.

The Builder reported that, "The compact and well-appointed little theatre which had been erected in Tite Street by Sir Percy F. Shelley for the delection of his friends, and may occasionally be hired by others having a like end in view, was filled with a brilliant audience on the night of the 26th May, 1882, gathered together at the invitation of Mrs. George Webb Medley. The pieces performed were *Dearest Mamma* by Walter Gordon and Planché's *Loan of a Lover.* A professional touch was given to the former play when Horace Wigan, standing in for an indisposed amateur, played the part of Browser with the dry quaint humour peculiar to him."

The Shelley Theatre had the distinction of being a private theatre where the first performances of two new plays were performed. Both are recorded in Allardyce Nicoll's *A History of English Drama.* The first occasion was in June, 1882, when Sir Charles Young, hired the theatre for two nights at £25 per night for the first representation of *The Countess,* adapted from the French of Adolphe Belot by Lady Monckton. Both she and Sir Charles although

amateurs, were no mean actors. One reviewer wrote: "Especially good was the scene with the graceful daughter in which the mother's tender love and pride in her has to be concealed. There was enough power here on the part of the actress to move the audience deeply, and the grief and passion of the wife when all was known, and when remorse for the past blended with her present love for her husband, produced a strong impression." Of Sir Charles, another critic praised him for acting with real power in the principal scene and rising to almost tragic force when the husband has forced from the reluctant wife the secret of her earlier life. The same critic added: "So successful an amateur performance we have seldom witnessed and the completeness of the stage arrangements called for unqualified praise. We are sadly bored at times by the efforts of amateurs, but our evening at Sir Percy Shelley's charming theatre was a night to be remembered with pleasure."

It was with the first performance of yet another new play that tragedy struck the Shelley Theatre. A public announcement appeared in the *Morning Post* on 5th December, 1882 that at Sir Percy Shelley's Theatre, in aid of the funds of the School of Dramatic Art there would be performed for the first time on Wednesday the 13th, and subsequently on the 15th and 16th, a new and original comedy in three acts entitled *Cousins* by Hamilton Aïdé. The stage manager was to be Horace Wigan and the performance under the author's personal superintendence. The announcement carried the list of patrons, headed by HRH the Prince of Wales, which included three royal dukes, an earl, a viscount, three barons, a knight and HE the Minister of the United States. Among the patronesses, headed by HRH the Princess of Wales, were five royal duchesses, two others not royal, two marchionesses, three countesses, two viscountesses and other ladies of high society. This glittering list of patrons and the charitable object of the performances did not deter the Hon. Slingsby Bethell, whose house, Chelsea Lodge, was next door to the theatre, from getting in touch with his solicitors. In no time C. & S. Harrison were writing to the clerk of the Metropolitan Board of Works, pointing out that the performance advertised in the press was to take place for hire, that Sir Percy's theatre was unlicensed, as was the play, by the Lord Chamberlain; that the theatre was built on a piece of land conveyed by the Board of Works in May 1879 by a conveyance which contained restrictive covenants against the user of the theatre in the way it was purposed to be used. By the time letters had passed between the two solicitors and the Board of Works the performances had taken place, one of which the Prince and Princess of Wales were said to have attended.

It was a tribute to the author, the scene painter, Sir Percy, and the stage manager as well as the actors and actresses taking part that the *Daily Telegraph* sent its critic to a private theatre to review the new play: "Mr. Hamilton Aïdé — who is no stranger to the regular stage, but well known as the author of *Philip* at the Lyceum — has followed in the wake of Scribe and the earliest plays of Sardou. He takes us down to a country house, where a weak but innocent wife is sorely tempted by a dangerous old admirer; and he shows how, by the tact of a clever woman, the dangerous conflagration can be extinguished by the wholesome damper of ridicule . . . The workmanship is neat, the scenes are lively, the situations are cleverly contrived, and Mr. Aïdé's

play only wants precision and glow of high-comedy acting to show how bright it is. Luckily for the author, he had secured for the moving spirit of the piece Mrs. Cecil Clay. She has comedy at her fingers' ends. She has point, expression, humour and pathos, and she kept the comedy together by those flashes of fun and quick touches of art that are born and not made. Next to her in the line of natural and unforced humour we should class Miss Mary Boyle, one of those ladies born with comic expression. Miss Boyle has the art of saying a funny thing without intention, and provoking peals of laughter by her very quaintness. She played the old maid, Miss Chattamour, to the universal delight of the audience. These two shone out conspicuously from the rest, but there were others of decided taste and promise."

Four days after the Shelley Theatre's dramatic and social triumph, the Hon. Slingsby Bethell's solicitor wrote to the Board's: "To bring the matter to a test we are instructed to apply to recover the penalties under the act: and we presume that on conviction the Board will not hesitate to enforce the covenants Sir P. Shelley has entered into."

Undeterred, and despite the impending prosecution, Sir Percy allowed the theatre to be used again to raise money for a charitable purpose, this time the Victoria Hospital for Children across the road in Tite Street. Someone devised a scheme, which in the event proved unsuccessful, to avoid a further summons under the Theatre Act: anyone making a donation of 10s. 6d. to the hospital received an invitation to attend an amateur performance of *The Parvenu* at the Shelley Theatre. Dramatically, it was a sad anticlimax after the sparkling presentation of *Cousins*, the acting being indifferent and undistinguished. And when the curtain came down at the end of the play, it came down never to rise again.

In February Sir Percy, Hamilton Aïdé and Horace Wigan appeared before the magistrate at Westminster Police Court to answer summons taken out at the instance of the Hon. Slingsby Bethell under the Theatre Act for offences specified on three days in December. There was a further summons against Sir Percy alone for an alleged offence of a similar character in January. Space prevents an account of the hearing, but the magistrate's opinion was that the Shelley Theatre was a theatre and it was kept open as a place of public resort for the public performance of stage plays. Further it was not a patent theatre or duly licensed as required by law. The magistrate did not consider the evidence strong enough against Mr. Wigan, but he was bound to impose the nominal penalty of 1s. (5p) each for each offence disclosed against the other defendants. Considering the benevolent motives of Sir Percy Shelley, he regretted in some respects that he had been obliged to come to that conclusion. Sir Percy appealed to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court where the conviction was affirmed. But "Shelley v. Bethell" became a famous case in legal history.

It appears that an unnamed member of the committee of the Shelley Society at a subsequent date asked Sir Percy if he could have the theatre for a performance of Shelley's tragedy, *The Cenci*. Sir Percy wrote back saying he would have been glad to give him use of the theatre if possible, but added it was not possible and thought he had made him fully comprehend why that was so.

He added: "If you cannot prevail upon some of the people whom you have applied to to accede to your wishes, you will have to postpone the performance of *The Cenci* — at any rate I cannot let you have the theatre." Thus an exciting event, another first performance, Shelley's drama performed at his son's theatre bearing his name, never took place. Sir Percy died in December, 1889.

In 1891, Lady Shelley's solicitor wrote to the LCC stating that the building as a private theatre was then quite useless, but on account of the covenant in the conveyance the theatre could not be pulled down, or altered unless Lady Shelley was released from the covenant. The LCC did not object to the theatre being demolished but plans had to be submitted to the Council. It was this submission of plans that was to be a stumbling block for a whole series of developers. The theatre was eventually sold by Lady Shelley in December, 1891, the execution of the indenture witnessed by Hamilton Aïdé. The purchaser, a speculator, sold the building on the same day that he bought it. In 1894, Percy Fitzgerald wrote: "It stands now as it did, and as it has done for years — closed." The *Chelsea News* did not exaggerate in 1896 when it wrote there seemed to be no end to the vicissitudes of the Shelley Theatre. It was constantly up for auction and rumours of its demolition were frequent. Eventually it was bought by Sir Charles Oppenheimer. He, too, was frustrated by the Building Act of 1894 and the LCC These difficulties were eventually overcome and at the beginning of 1899 the residential flats on the site of the theatre had been completed and were referred to in a deed of October, 1900, as "All that messuage or tenement and building recently erected thereon and known as Shelley Court or No. 38 Tite Street."

About 1884, Sir Percy and his wife ceased living at Shelley House and moved to Wetherby Gardens. The house was later owned by Mr. C. H. St. John Hornby, proprietor of the Ashendene Press, which was moved to No. 1 Chelsea Embankment in 1899. In 1912, he demolished Sir Percy's original house, as the theatre had been demolished and had erected on the site another residence, designed by Warren, in 1913. He retained the original name and thus to this day Shelley House and Shelley Court commemorate and perpetuate the name of Shelley, poet father and baronet son.

William Gaunt's and Thea Holme's histories of Chelsea have long been out of print and to satisfy the demand for a guide to local history and topography, Leo and Philippa Bernard of Chelsea Rare Books have taken action. They have written and published their own book, *Chelsea — A Visitor's Guide*, which is readable and just what its title implies. The price is £2.75 but members of the Chelsea Society, who buy their copies direct from Chelsea Rare Books, 313 King's Road, SW3, will only be charged £2.25.

They lived in Chelsea
The Blue Plaque Quiz

As we go about our business or pleasure in the village of 'Chelchethe' we must all be aware, from time to time, of the blue porcelain plaques so interestingly provided, first by the London County Council, and then by its now threatened successor, to mark the homes of the famous or notorious in past days. In such a characterful neighbourhood as ours you may probably not be surprised to learn that there are some two dozen of these memorials to be seen within the boundaries of the old borough, as well as other similar examples, not blue plaques and apparently set up independently. And so we are happy to present readers of the Society's Report with a little competition. Here in two alphabetical lists are the men and women of Chelsea of the blue plaques only and the addresses where they appear — but not of course matching. Can you sort them out? To add to the fun two names (other than the Brunels) belong to the same address, which is the reason for 27 names against 26 addresses. So match the number of the name with the letter of the address.

Arthur Grimwade

1.	Sir George Alexander, actor-manager	A.	75 Cadogan Square
2.	Arnold Bennett, novelist	B	9 Chelsea Embankment
3.	Hilaire Belloc, author	C.	96 Chelsea Park Gardens
4.	Marc Brunel and his son Isambard Brunel, engineers	D	24 Cheyne Row
5.	Thomas Carlyle, historian	E.	4 Cheyne Walk
6.	Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), American humorist	F.	16 Cheyne Walk
7.	William de Morgan, potter and novelist	G.	96 Cheyne Walk
8.	Sir Charles Dilke, politician, M.P. for Chelsea	H.	98 Cheyne Walk
9.	George Eliot (Mary Ann Lewis), novelist	I.	104 Cheyne Walk
10.	Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin	J.	109 Cheyne Walk
11.	George Gissing, novelist	K.	20 Danvers Street
12.	Walter Greaves, artist	L.	23 Draycott Place
13.	Leigh Hunt, essayist	M.	16 Lawrence Street
14.	Earl Jellicoe, Admiral	N.	13 Mallord Street
15.	Charles Kingsley, divine and novelist	O.	33 Oakley Gardens
16.	A. A. Milne, author	P.	56 Oakley Street
17.	Sir Alfred Munnings, P. R. A.	Q.	56 Old Church Street
18.	George Rippon, Viceroy of India	R.	127 Old Church Street
19.	Dante Gabriel Rossetti, artist and poet	S.	155 Old Church Street
20.	J. F. Sartorius, sporting artist	T.	57 Pont Street
21.	Robert Falcon Scott, explorer	U.	18 St. Leonard's Terrace
22.	Tobias Smollet, novelist	V.	38 St. Leonard's Terrace
23.	Philip Wilson Steer, artist	W.	76 Sloane Street
24.	Bram Stoker, novelist	X.	23 Tedworth Square
25.	Graham Wallas, Founder of London School of Economics	Y.	34 Tite Street
26.	James McNeil Whistler, artist	Z.	22 Upper Cheyne Row
27.	Oscar Wilde, dramatist and wit.		

New at the Library

The Annual list of new aquisitions drawn up for us by the Librarian at the Old Town Hall.

Books added to Chelsea Library stock since September 1982

BARR, Ann. *Harpers and Queen Official "Sloane Ranger" Handbook.* Ebury Press, 1982.

BIGNELL, John. *Chelsea Photographer.* Studio B, 1 Beaufort St. SW3 1983.

CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN. *The Chelsea Physic Garden: History and Guide.* Trustees rev. ed. 1982.

COTTESLOE, Gloria & HUNT, D. *The Duchess of Beaufort's Flowers,* Webb & Bower, 1983. (Paintings of flowers commissioned by the first Duchess of Beaufort as a record of the plants grown in her gardens at Badminton and Chelsea).

DURNFORD, Vice Admiral J. W. *Vice-Admiral John Walter Durnford C.B.* Mayor of Chelsea 1963-64. Scrapbook compiled during his year of office. MS 21705.

FITZGIBBON, Theodora. *With Love:* an autobiography 1938-46. (gives an account of her life in Chelsea during World War II) Century Publishing, 1982. In stock in the Lending Library only.

GREAVES, Walter. *Exhibition catalogue of oil paintings watercolours and etchings* by Walter Greaves 7 May — 6 June 1980. Michael Parkin Fine Art Ltd. 1980.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA, Borough. *Cheyne Conservation Area* proposals statement. Draft. June, 1983

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA, Borough. *Thames Conservation Area* proposals statement. Draft. June 1983

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA, Borough. *District Plan.* Adopted June 1982.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA, Borough Town Planning Service. *Kings Road Character Study.* 1983

MEARS, Brian. *Chelsea: the real story.* Pelham books, 1982. (story of Chelsea Football Club's crisis since the late 1970s)

MOYNIHAN, John. *The Chelsea Story.* Arthur Barker Ltd. 1982. (History of Chelsea Football Club since 1905)

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND. *Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881.* Catalogue of an exhibition held in Edinburgh to mark the centenary of Carlyle's death in 1981.

ORMOND, Richard & COOPER. J. *Thomas Carlyle* 1795-1881. Catalogue published for the exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery 25 Sept. — 10 January 1982.

WILLSON, E. J. *West London Nursery Gardens:* the nursery gardens of Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington and a part of Westminster, founded before 1900. Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society, 1982.

Book Reviews

Sir Thomas More's second wife Alice was a considerable personality, and Ruth Norrington's retelling of the great man's story through her biography reveals new facets. Herself well-born and well-endowed, she had many illustrious descendants from her first marriage to John Middleton, Mercer of London and owner of much property in Yorkshire and elsewhere. For Chelsea readers there is special interest in the chapter entitled "The Great House at Chelsea" and examination of some old plans has given us a charming picture of the domestic scene presided over so efficiently by Alice More. The room in which the family portrait at Nostell Priory is set is indeed plausibly related to one on the plan. More's imprisonment in the Tower, his farewell to his family at Old Swan Steps, Alice More's courageous and astute conduct of his affairs and her continuing residence in Chelsea after she lost the Great House add much to what was previously known of the family's connections here. How far the rather fanciful design and format are suited to the author's serious research is perhaps doubtful, but this is an attractive and well-illustrated book which compels attention throughout and should appeal to a considerable range of readers.

Lesley Lewis

In the Shadow of a Saint, Lady Alice More by Ruth Norrington is published by the Kylin Press, Darbonne House, Waddesdon, Bucks., at £12.50.

Seen in the King's Road, the tall, bearded figure of John Bignell might be the ghost of a Chelsea artist, the breed that almost vanished some thirty years ago. This is exactly what he is, although he records his impressions on photographic film rather than canvas, and it is appropriate that he should have made the now-distant years of Chelsea as the artists' quarter his most evocative subject.

John Bignell has produced, or contributed to, several books of Chelsea photographs but his new handsome volume *John Bignell: Chelsea Photographer* is his most ambitious. He will say that his work has been influenced by that of the French photographers Cartier-Bresson and Brassai but that he does not claim to be quite in their league. Nevertheless, he had produced some marvellous pictures that will appeal particularly to those to whom the Chelsea of the immediate post-war period now seems like a charming, fading dream. (*See pages 36 and 37*).

Guy Topham

John Bignell: Chelsea Photographer is published by Studio B, 1 Beaufort St., London, SW3 5AQ, price £21.

Obituaries

Miss Mary Glasgow

Miss Mary Glasgow, who died on October 31 at the age of 78, had been closely involved in the fortunes of the Arts Council of Great Britain in its early days after the war, having been from 1939 founding secretary of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, from which it sprang.

After leaving the Arts Council, of which she was the first secretary-general, in 1951 she played a vigorous role in educational publishing.

Mary Cecilia Glasgow was the eldest child of Edwin and Eva, both scholars, and he an accomplished painter and later the Keeper of the National Gallery.

She was born in Snaresbrook, Essex, but she was educated at the Central Newcastle High School and then, as senior scholar at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

As a junior civil servant with the Board of Education she was appointed Founding Secretary of CEMA, which was, under the chairmanship of John Maynard Keynes to become the Arts Council after the war.

Her close association with Keynes and the profound influence which he had on her was to continue for the rest of her life. It led to a close working relationship with Keynes College in the University of Kent. Her election to its senior common room in 1981 was an honour which pleased her enormously.

After leaving the Arts Council she turned her talents to work as a translator, literary agent, writer and a film censor — all at the same time.

Then coming late to publishing, she founded Mary Glasgow and Baker, soon to become Mary Glasgow Publications, in 1956 in order to introduce sparkle and enjoyment into what was then the rather dreary area of modern language teaching. Her language magazines for schools which sold worldwide, her work for television and her films all bore the imprint of her desire and ability to make both children and teachers enjoy learning a language.

On her retirement as chairman and full-time executive of MGP at the age of seventy, she once again rechannelled her energy into an extraordinarily diverse field of activities.

She invested in an aeroplane and took flying lessons; she indulged her passion for opera in her generous support of the Opera Players and, somewhat ironically, commissioned that company's first new opera after the Arts Council withdrew its support. She fired the Modern Language Association, as chairman, and the Institute of Linguists, as president with new drive and, to her most importantly, founded the Language Trust, which bears her name and which under her direction broke wholly new ground into such areas as the Caribbean languages and Chinese.

She was appointed CBE in 1949 and was a Chevalier of the French National Order of Merit.

Despite increasing disability and pain she drove herself and others on in the advancement of these causes and numerous others with enthusiasm and a zest for life.

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Mary Glasgow

Mary Glasgow was involved in the arts, as both patron and participant, in the best Chelsea tradition. At the charming house in Justice Walk, where she lived for nearly forty years, she would entertain those of similar inclination and sometimes display the work of a new-found artist, or sculptor, or promote that of a musician. Her span of such interests was wide and for an idea to be new, or its advocate to be young, was to gain immediate advantage in her estimation. Indeed, like her close friend Dame Sybil Thorndike, the encouragement of youthful talents was among her most valuable achievements.

Although she was a life member of this Society and chose to live in the cosiest corner of Old Chelsea, she was not a conservationist in the usual sense. She seemed to care little for the preservation of old buildings (for one to be modern was enough to gain sympathy for its architectural merit) but she was passionately concerned about the continuing development of the community. Differences in social background meant nothing to her and, in this, she was a true daughter of Chelsea, where, by long tradition, ability and character, rather than ancestry or wealth, have been the criteria of regard. Hers was an original, trenchant, independent spirit which enhanced all those whose lives it touched.

Tom Pocock

Mr John Glen

John Glen, who died on 6th. October, suddenly after a short illness, at the age of 62, was born in Shanghai. His mother was a missionary with the China Mission at the same time as the Rev. Leighton Thomson's mother was similarly engaged. His father was a captain of sailing ships before the days of steam and later became a pilot on the Yangtse river. When he retired, the family settled in West Vancouver, where John and his sisters were educated. John finished his education at the University of British Columbia, where he graduated in English Literature.

It was whilst he was at university, that he formed lasting friendships which later continued in England and he discovered his love for poetry. His teacher was Ira Wilworth, whose *Anthology of Twentieth Century Verse* became a lifelong companion. Two of his contemporaries at UBC were Arthur Hill, who later came to this country with his wife Peggy Hassard, where they

established themselves as actors of great quality before they moved to the United States, and Patrick Keatley, who joined the staff of *The Guardian* when it was still the *Manchester Guardian*.

John Glen started to work professionally as an actor before joining the Royal Canadian Air Force. He came to England in the back of a Liberator bomber with an old friend, John Beard, one of the twin sons of Edna Best by Seymour Beard.

When he finished his war service, he was demobbed in Canada but returned immediately to this country, with which he had fallen in love. He worked in various theatrical companies: the Manchester Library, the Glasgow Citizens, where John Casson was resident producer, and the Bristol Old Vic. When he returned to London, he worked for the Company of Four at the Lyric, Hammersmith, where he appeared in his first play by Christopher Fry, *Thor with Angels*. John became fascinated by the verse plays of Fry and, later, when he appeared in *The Dark is Light Enough* with Edith Evans, he became convinced that he was one of the great verse playwrights.

At the time he was chosen to play the male lead in *Tea and Sympathy*, he formed a partnership with a fellow-actor to open a small restaurant in Old Church Street called L'Aiglon and the first night of the play was also the first night of the restaurant. L'Aiglon became a popular eating-place for the residents of Chelsea and also for many actors and actresses. Laurence Olivier was a regular visitor and he asked John and his partner to run the restaurant for the Chichester Festival Theatre, which was then being built. This they agreed to do and continued to do so for the twenty-two years the theatre has been open.

Although John still acted when possible, he became more and more involved with the catering industry. He was a founder member of the Restaurateurs' Association of Great Britain and, when Madame Prunier retired, he became vice-chairman. He also became chairman of the National Catering Federation, as well as serving on various committees dealing with the different aspects of catering. He was particularly concerned about the recruitment of young people into the industry and to help this he arranged seminars for careers officers.

He was deeply fond of his way of life in England and particularly in Chelsea and he resented any destruction of the essence of the quality of that life. He will be remembered by his friends for his kindness and tolerance, his balanced judgement and his humour.

David Enders

Mrs H. S. H. Guinness

Alfhild Guinness, who died in January at the age of 92, was born in Oslo, then named Kristiania, Norway. In 1913, she married Sam Guinness, the banker, and they had one son, who died young, and three daughters.

A founder member of the Chelsea Society, she lived nearly all her married life in Chelsea; first in Tite Street and for the last fifty-five years in Cheyne Walk. She worked indefatigably for the Victoria Hospital for Children as

chairman of the Ladies' Association and continued her work after it left Tite Street.

She and her husband were both air raid wardens during the Second World War and combined this with her work as vice-chairman of the Norwegian Red Cross, for which she travelled the country looking after the welfare of Norwegian refugees. In 1947, both she and her husband were created Chevaliers of the order of St. Olav, Norway's highest honour.

In later years, although increasingly immobilised by arthritis, she retained her kindness, generosity and sense of humour. During and after the war, she kept chickens and a bantam cockerel in her garden in Cheyne Walk, which suprised neighbours at cockcrow.

Marit Aschan

Mrs Maeve Peake

Maeve Peake, who died in August, 1983, was the youngest daughter of the late Dr Eugene Gilmore. She had originally wanted to be a musician, her preferred instrument being the harp. Dr Gilmore however believed that girls should be trained for something — in his eyes — more useful; however Maeve's mother, a sensitive and sweet-tempered person, encouraged her daughter to become a sculptor, and Maeve duly went to the Westminster School of Art in 1936.

It was here, during her first term, indeed on the very first day of that term, that she met Mervyn Peake, who was an instructor there; and, after an idyllic courtship, was married at St James's Church, Spanish Place, in 1937.

Thence begun a literary partnership that spanned the total years of their life together, until Mervyn's death in 1967. But even after his death, she continued on her own to promote Mervyn Peake's work, which during the long years of his illness had been ignored; and brought it renewed recognition. There followed fifteen years of intensive work: new editions of the books and short stories, foreign editions to be agreed, theatre productions, exhibitions in this country, the United States and France, talks and lectures, and even film contracts to be negotiated. Indeed the work went on almost to the day of her death.

Yet, at the same time she was able to continue her own work, having switched from sculpture to painting, and had a number of exhibitions of her paintings. She brought out with Kenneth Welfare, a delightful children's book called *Captain Eustace and the Magic Room* (published by Methuen's Children's Books), which featured her home in London and the many knitted dolls which she started making for the amusement of her grandchildren. It is to be shortly televised on Yorkshire Television.

She was blessed with a loving and devoted family, two handsome sons, a beautiful daughter and an ever increasing number of grandchildren. She was, as one of them noted: 'one of those generous and creative people the world cannot do without.'

John Watney

Correspondence

Sir, I am looking for information on Margaret Robbinson (née Stage), born in Edinburgh in the 1820s, who sat to Daniel Maclise as Ophelia in *The Play Scene from Hamlet*, exhibited at the Royal Academy 1842. One review mentioned that Ophelia 'looked like a barmaid.' Could this be a clue to her job in London before she met Maclise? Maclise altered the painting and Ophelia now appears as a very demure young lady in the Tate Gallery collection.

Margaret became a pupil of Maclise and exhibited a number of paintings at the Royal Academy and elsewhere from 1854 onwards but appeared to stop painting after Maclise's death in 1870.

Margaret Robbinson was known by this name in the 1851-71 census returns as head of the household at 12 Lincoln Street, Chelsea firstly as "annuitant" then as "artist." Maclise came to live nearby in Cheyne Walk, where he died in 1870. In his will he left her a fair proportion of his estate and called her his "esteemed friend."

When she died in 1879, her death certificate named her as Margaret Stage Robinson (with only 1 "b"), widow of Charles Robinson, mariner. No trace of this elusive man has been found except in a directory of the 1850s as living at 12 Lincoln Street. In her will, she wrote of herself as "Margaret Stage, spinster, who has for some years past used and been known by the appellation of Margaret Robbinson, which I have assumed with reference to my profession of an artist." She left to her sister Elizabeth's daughter, Dora Rowena Bessie Hingston, the emerald ring "which belonged to my late friend the said Daniel Maclise." Dora married a Mr Martin of whom nothing is known.

I am greatly intrigued by Margaret, who was my husband's great grandfather's sister, and I would dearly like to find out more about her, possibly the whereabouts of her paintings and even the emerald ring.

Yours sincerely,

EILEEN R. STAGE
150 Fulwell Park Avenue, Twickenham, Middlesex

Sir, I was delighted to hear that the "Trees for Chelsea" Fund will help to provide protection from lead poisoning by planting trees and hedges along the Cheyne Walk gardens.

I think it should be placed on record that the success of this fund, which was instituted as a memorial to the late Basil Marsden-Smedley, owed much to the untiring efforts of Richard Edmunds, who was chairman of the original Appeal Committee. After a number of trees had been planted, the balance of the fund was handed to trustees, John Yeoman and Colonel Goldring, who have been carrying on the good work ever since.

Yours faithfully,

ROLAND CLARKE
(former Treasurer of the "Trees for Chelsea" Appeal Fund),
150 Rivermead Court, London S.W.6.

Treasurer's Report

Those of you who have been reading the accounts during the run-up to this meeting will have seen that yet again I am able to report a surplus of income over expenditure for the year, amounting to £1,216.61. Even though this is a drop of £362.30 against the surplus for the previous year, it is still very satisfactory.

The reduction in the excess of income for the year under review is attributable to the following factors:—

1. Donations for the year were down by £109.00.
2. The cost of the Summer Meeting showed a loss of £262.08. This represents the costs of the meeting at the Mansion House over and above the catering for which the members attending paid. It was decided by the Council before-hand that the fixed costs of this meeting would be born by the General Fund. I am sure everyone who attended that meeting would agree that the decision was correct to enable the Summer Meeting to be held in the Mansion House when the Lord Mayor was a Chelsea Resident.
3. Income from Advertising in the Annual Report fell by £102.50 to which I referred in outline in my last report.

I now thank, on behalf of the Society, all those members who have sent donations during 1982, with a very special "thank you" to the Trustees of Mrs. L. Smiley's Charity Trust for making the same donation to the Society in 1982 as they gave us in 1981. I would add that this Trust has repeated the donation in 1983 and we are very appreciative of the Trustees continuing generosity and support.

I said in my report last year that I hoped to be able to hold the Subscriptions at their present level for at least two more years. One of those years has passed and as of now, I see no reason to alter the view which I expressed then.

I again wish to remind the members who pay their subscriptions annually direct to me, to do so as soon as possible. Alas, I had to send out some sixty-three final reminders in April this year. The work and costs involved in this operation is considerable and with your co-operation, could be avoided.

For the second year, I have been fortunate to secure the services of Robert Dove in preparing the Society's accounts. He is unfortunately away on business at the present, but I would like to record the Society's and my own thanks to him for his very ready help and assistance.

Finally, on behalf of the Council of the Society and myself, I wish to thank our Honorary Auditors, Frazer Whiting, very sincerely for carrying out the audit of the accounts so efficiently and also for all their help to me in printing them.

WILLIAM HAYNES
Hon. Treasurer

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1982

Income and Expenditure Account — General Fund

			1982	
			£	£
Income	Annual subscriptions	... ...		1,658.10
	Donations received	... ...		601.50
	Donations received from Jubilee Fund	...		—
	Donation received from Joyce Grenfell memorial trust	... ...		230.00
	Surplus of receipts from meetings over costs of meetings	... ...		—
	Income tax recovered on covenants	... ...		97.71
	Advertising revenue in 1982 annual report	...		660.00
	Deposit interest received	... ...		228.68
	Sundry sales	... ...		13.28
				3,489.27
Less:	*Expenditure*			
	Cost of Annual Report	... ...	1,475.22	
	Stationery, postage and miscellaneous expenses	... ...	88.25	
	Cost of annual general meeting	... ...	159.11	
	Donations to other organisations	... ...	13.00	
	Cost of summer meeting	... ...	262.08	
	Donation towards bulbs on Dovehouse Green	... ...	230.00	
	Cost of improving Dovehouse Green	...	—	
	Deficit of receipts from meetings over costs of meetings	... ...	45.00	
				2,272.66
	Excess of income over expenditure for the year	...		1,216.61

Income and Expenditure Account — Life Membership Fund

	Balance of Fund at 1 January 1982	... ...	1,776.56
Income	National Savings Bank account interest	...	334.75
	Balance of fund at 31 December 1982	... ...	2,111.31

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1982

Current Assets				
	Debtors	... ...		588.89
	Balance in National Savings Bank accounts	... ...		2,582.37
	Balance at Bank — current account	...		1,916.16
	— deposit account	...		2,864.21
				7,951.63
Less:	*Current liabilities*			
	Creditors	... ...	1,475.22	
	Subscriptions received in advance	... ...	133.00	
				1,608.22
	Net assets	... ...		6,343.41
	Represented by:			
	Balance of Life Membership Fund	... ...		2,111.31
Add:	Balance of General fund 1st January 1982	...	3,015.49	
	Surplus for the year	... ...	1,216.61	
				4,232.10
				6,343.41

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: July 1983
London EC2A 1EP

FRAZER WHITING & Co
Chartered Accountants

Whistler and the Physic Garden

Continuing concern about long-term plans for the Physic Garden, and its need for financial support, are reflected in a little-known letter from Whistler, who, of course, lived nearby in Cheyne Walk and Tite Street. It was discovered many years ago by the late Hilda Reid and published in her history of Christ Church, *One Hundred Years in a Chelsea Parish,* and had been written to the Hon. Conrad Dillon, who had arranged a public meeting on 16th. July, 1890, to discuss the future of the Physic Garden. There was much concern since the Society of Apothecaries could no longer afford to maintain it.

Whistler replied from 21 Cheyne Walk:

Dear Sir,

I much regret that I am unavoidably prevented attending the meeting myself today, as I warmly sympathize with its object.

I sincerely trust that the Committee may rescue the historic Garden from the impending destruction and that, in spite of the new combination of Physic and Philistine, they may succeed in saving the Cedar of Chelsea.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

J. McNeill Whistler.

A Government enquiry then ensured its continued use by botanists.

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GEORGE WEST, ESQ.
D. V. WEYER, ESQ.
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*JONATHAN WHEELER, ESQ., M.A., B.SC., F.R.I.C.S.
*LEONARD WHELEN, ESQ.
DR. D. WHITTOME
MRS. D. WHITTOME
R. J. WHITWORTH, ESQ.
*MRS. HENRY WHYHAM
G. H. WIGGLESWORTH, ESQ.
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MRS. NORA WILLIAMS
MRS. D. C. WILLIAMSON
PETER WILLIAMS-POWLETT, ESQ.
MRS. P. WILLIAMS-POWLETT
MISS J. K. BAKER WILBRAHAM
*HIS HONOUR JUDGE R. B. WILLIS, T.D.
*MRS. R. B. WILLIS
*MRS. P. WINER
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M. L. WOLFE-BARRY, ESQ.
MRS. M. L. WOLFE-BARRY
LORD WOLFENDEN, C.B.E., M.A., D.LITT.
MRS. E. WOLFF
MISS HAZEL WOOD
*MRS. JOYCE M. WOOD
DR. J. C. WOOLF
MRS. J. C. WOOLF
*SIR MARCUS WORSLEY, BT.
*THE HON. LADY WORSLEY

JOHN YEOMAN, ESQ., M.A.
MRS. JOHN YEOMAN
MISS M. ELIZABETH YOUNG

*MISS E. A. ZIEGLER

Answers to Quiz

1—T; 2—A; 3—I; 4—H; 5—D; 6—X; 7—R; 8—W; 9—E; 10—K; 11—O; 12—I; 13—Z; 14—L; 15—Q; 16—N; 17—C; 18—B; 19—F; 20—S; 21—P; 22—M; 23—J; 24—U; 25—V; 26—G; 27—Y.