

# Chelsea: More Than Meets the Eye

by Josephine Kloch

The London neighbourhood of Chelsea is known for many things, but there are plenty of interesting parts that most people miss, too. Let's take a quick tour...

## History

A simple online search tells us that the name Chelsea comes from the old Saxon words "cealc hythe," which roughly means "chalky landing place for boats." However, if you dig deeper you'll learn that the name Chelsea is also the 917<sup>th</sup> most popular baby name for girls! Most people know that Chelsea is part of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Fewer people know that when the borough was created in 1965, the official name was supposed to include only Kensington. But after so many Chelsea residents protested, its name was added. Chelsea is known for having some of the fanciest homes in London. However, not everyone knows that many of those homes are actually owned by one family – the Cadogans.

## Geography

If you've driven in Chelsea, you've probably been on the King's Road, known today for shopping, dining, and culture. However, you may not know that it was named after King Charles II in the 1600s and was a private royal road leading from St. James's Palace to Kew until 1830. The King's Road passes through Sloane Square, one of the most famous squares in London. But did you know that Sloane Square is named after Dr Hans Sloane, who also invented chocolate milk? One other interesting bit of trivia: even though London has about 270 tube stations, *not one* of them is located in Chelsea (Sloane Square station sits just outside).

## Landmarks

Maybe Chelsea's best-known building is the Chelsea Royal Hospital for old soldiers, which opened in 1692. But not as well known is that the same person who designed it also designed St Paul's Cathedral (Sir Christopher Wren). Another familiar landmark is Chelsea Bridge, built in 1937, which connects Chelsea with Battersea Park. Less familiar is that the original bridge built there in 1858 was named after Queen Victoria, but was so unstable that authorities removed her name. And I have to mention my school, Redcliffe, which has been teaching children in Chelsea for 71 years. Surprisingly, some of my classmates don't know that Daniel Radcliffe, famous for playing Harry Potter, was once a student at Redcliffe!

## Culture

Chelsea today is known for posh neighbourhoods and international residents. But only a few decades ago, it was home to many struggling artists, writers, and musicians, and it wasn't so expensive to live in. Over the years, many famous English people have lived there, like JRR Tolkien and the Rolling Stones. But as an American, I was interested to learn that almost 7 out of every 100 people who live in Chelsea are actually from the United States! And you can hardly write about Chelsea without mentioning Chelsea FC, one of the world's most famous football clubs. But ironically, Stamford Bridge, the team's home stadium, isn't even in Chelsea (it's next door in Fulham).

So whether you're studying Chelsea's history, geography, landmarks, or culture, it's easy to see why Chelsea is worth learning more about!