THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

THE ANNUAL REPORT 1957

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Price Five Shillings

THE AWAKENED CONSCIENCE

The last picture Holman Hunt painted at Prospect Place.
A full description is given on page 26.

In the possession of Sir Colin Anderson by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

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Address

THE HONORARY SECRETARY,
THE CHELSEA SOCIETY,
46, Tedworth Square, Chelsea, S.W.3.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

(1) To maintain all features of Chelsea having beauty or historical interest, unless a proved necessity requires their removal.

(2) To preserve the open spaces for the health of the community.

(3) Where clearances are necessary, to promote the construction of substituted buildings that will be a credit to Chelsea.

(4) To prevent the disfigurement of streets and open spaces by ugly advertisements or otherwise.

(5) To protect the residents from smoke, noises and other nuisances arising from industrial premises; and generally.

(6) To preserve and amplify the amenities of Chelsea.

Early information is of the greatest importance for effective action, and members are asked to inform the Council at once, through the Hon. Secretary, of any plans or proposals of which they may hear that seem to come within the scope of the objects of the Society.

The Council would consider such matters, obtain further information, and, if thought advisable, make such suggestions or protests on behalf of the Society as seem to them desirable.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all who agree with the objects of the Society, on payment of either

(a) a life subscription without an entrance fee, of £10 10s. 0d.; or

(b) An entrance fee of 10s. and annual subscription of 10s. which, it is requested, might be paid by banker's order.

It is hoped that, whenever possible, more than the prescribed minimum subscription will be given.

The subscription year runs from the 1st February.

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THE MAYOR OF CHELSEA

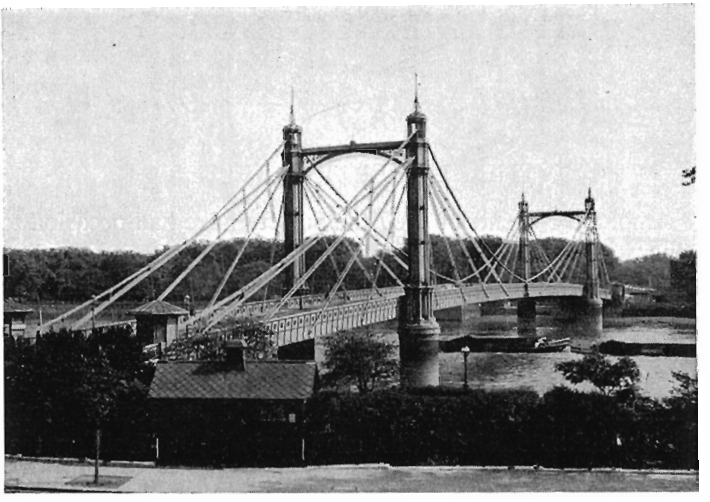
Among the events of 1957 the Society have had occasion to congratulate yet another of their members, Mr. Basil Marsden-Smedley, on becoming Mayor of Chelsea. Like nearly all his predecessors, Mr. Marsden-Smedley was a member of the Society and, like them, he has agreed to become a Vice-President of the Society; but, unlike other Mayors, Mr. Marsden-Smedley had been a member of the Council of the Society since 1934 and Chairman since 1945. Holding that the duties of Chairman of the Council of the Society were incompatible with the office of Mayor of the Borough, he resigned the Chairmanship in April 1957, but happily remains a member of the Council of the Society.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

In April, 1957, the Council of the Society appointed Lord Conesford to succeed Mr. Marsden-Smedley as Chairman of the Society. As Mr. Henry Strauss, Q.C., M.P., Lord Conesford served on the Council of the Society from 1946 to 1951, when he resigned on accepting office as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. He rejoined the Council of the Society in 1955, when he left the House of Commons and the Board of Trade on becoming a peer.

ALBERT BRIDGE

The gravest and most anxious problem with which the Society had to deal in the past year concerned Albert Bridge and the proposals of the London County Council for its destruction and replacement. (See *Annual Reports*, 1955, pages 23 and 24 and 1956, page 69).



ALBERT BRIDGE IN 1957

On the 14th May 1957, without consultation or giving the Society any opportunity of expounding the views expressed in previous correspondence, the London County Council decided to proceed with the demolition and reconstruction of Albert Bridge and instructed engineers in the matter. They then invited a number of interested bodies, including the Chelsea Borough Council, the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Chelsea Society, to a meeting at County Hall on June 6th, 1957, in order to explain the proposals so far considered and thus to enable the bodies concerned after the meeting to make considered representations in the light of the information given them. The Chairman and the Joint Honorary Secretaries represented the Society at the meeting, at which the L.C.C. explained two schemes (Scheme A and Scheme B) which they had prepared. The L.C.C. greatly preferred Scheme A on which they invited the bodies represented to send in their considered comments.

Before doing so, the Council of the Society thought it advisable to obtain a copy of the Plan and answers to a

number of specific questions designed to elucidate the proposals. After careful study of the proposals in the light of the information given at the meeting and in the subsequent letter, the Society sent the following letter setting out their considered views and conclusions:—

The Chelsea Society,

5th July 1957

Dear Sir,

Albert Bridge

We have now given further consideration to the L.C.C. proposals in the light of the Plan which the Chief Engineer has kindly furnished and the information which he has given in his letter of the 26th June 1957. Our comments in accordance with the wishes of the L.C.C. are directed to Scheme A.

We are convinced that the execution of these proposals would inflict great injury on Chelsea and that, far from improving the flow of traffic, they would make it worse.

It is on those two aspects of your proposals that we wish mainly to comment and not on the decision to pull down Albert Bridge and to build a new bridge in its place. While we hold strongly that this should only be done if the condition of the existing bridge makes it necessary, we do not claim any technical knowledge on this point.

If, however, it could be shown that the existing bridge was, or soon would be, unsafe, it would not follow in the least that it ought to be replaced by a wider bridge designed to attract a much greater volume of traffic. That would be sensible only if town planning considerations made increased cross-river traffic at this point desirable. This is not the place, in our opinion, which would be selected for a greatly increased cross river traffic, if town planning considerations, including traffic considerations, were given proper weight. Further a wide bridge here would involve the destruction of the two gardens on the south side of the Embankment next to the bridge, which we should deplore unless it were proved to be necessary.

We now come to your proposal to deal with the northern bridgehead by an underpass and the other consequential changes. These proposals are so disastrous to amenities which the L.C.C. themselves have recognised and said they wished to preserve, and so impracticable from the point of view of traffic, that we cannot believe that the L.C.C. have fully considered them or will wish to maintain them.

The fate of Cheyne Walk will depend not on the good intentions of the L.C.C. but on the consequences which must in fact follow the adoption of their proposals. Cheyne Walk will not survive merely because its buildings are listed or because the L.C.C. recognise their value. For the houses to survive as dwelling houses, and as one of the most beautiful terraces in London, it is also necessary—(1) that the road between them and the public garden in front of them should not be used as a main artery for heavy traffic, and (2) that the public garden itself should be preserved.

Let us consider separately the fate of the Eastern and Western

sections under the L.C.C. proposals.

First, as to the Eastern Section:—

The heavy traffic (with no limitation of weight) crossing the new bridge from the south and wishing to proceed towards Westminster, and the traffic coming down Oakley Street and wishing to do the same, will both be compelled, for the first time in the history of Chelsea to use the narrow road between the houses and the public garden. This road, which must continue to serve the Cheyne walk houses themselves, will prove obviously insufficient to carry all that traffic, and nothing will then remain but to destroy the public garden itself.

Secondly, as to the Western Section:—

The heavy traffic diverted along Cheyne Walk here including presumably the 49 bus service, would destroy the amenities of the adjoining buildings and render impossible the continued use for its present purpose of the Spastic Centre at the Cheyne Hospital.

None of this destruction of amenities would lead to any improvement in the flow of traffic. That does not mean, of course, that an underpass is not an excellent thing in a proper case. It can be excellent, for example, where provision is required only for two streams of traffic at right angles. It can be useful too where its construction still leaves room either for a clover-leaf or for other methods of accommodating the traffic wishing to turn. Neither of those conditions applies here.

At present all the traffic in the area is controlled by one set of traffic lights at Albert Bridge. The L.C.C. proposals will certainly involve at least one other set at the junction of Royal Hospital Road and the Embankment at the eastern end of Cheyne Walk. The problems and delays that will arise at this point do not appear to have been considered at all.

We do not think that the difficulties or the phasing of the lights at the bridgehead have been considered either. It appears for example, from the Chief Engineer's letter of the 26th June, 1957, that traffic coming from Westminster along the Embankment to a destination in Cheyne Walk (East) will have to do a right about turn at the bridgehead itself.

The great obstruction to the flow of Embankment traffic is at Vauxhall Bridge where a two level intersection is clearly needed. Further, the delay at Chelsea Bridge and at Battersea bridge is far Greater than at Albert Bridge, and it is reduction of the delay at those bridges that is required to enable a phased lighting system to be used along the whole Embankment route from the King's Road at the Western end to Vauxhall Bridge.

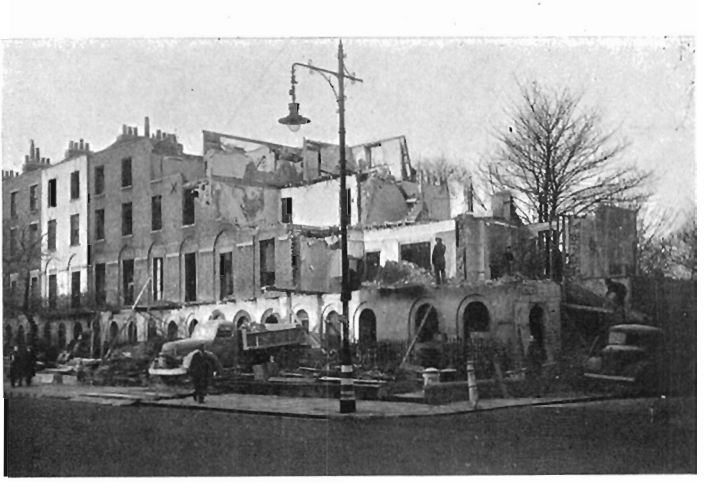
In conclusion I would add that we may submit further observations later or comment on any modification of their proposals which the L.C.C. may notify to us.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) HILDA REID.

The Clerk of the Council,
London County Council,
The County Hall,
Westminster Bridge, S.E.1.

The Chelsea Borough Council and the Royal Fine Art Commission also submitted their criticisms of the proposals. Fortunately the London County Council themselves have now given further consideration to the matter and the proposals have ben indefinitely postponed. The Society will not relax their vigilance.



THE LAST OF KINGS PARADE

Soon after World War II the London County Council began to demolish this Regency Terrace to make way for the fire station which has not yet been built.

From the Richard Stewart-Jones collection of Chelsea papers and photographs presented by his widow to the Chelsea Public Library by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

THE CHELSEA CAR MART

In March 1957 a car mart was suddenly established on a vacant site on the north side of King's Road near Chelsea Town Hall and opposite the 18th century terrace which includes Argyll House. Before the war the L.C.C had acquired the site, then part of the pleasant Regency terrace with gardens at the back and front, formerly called King's Parade,

THE OUT-OF-PLACE CAR MART

Local indignation was aroused when the London County Council Town Planning Committee gave permission to enable another of its Departments to let this site in the heart of Chelsea for the sale of second-hand motor cars.

for the purpose of building a fire station. After the war, although to the regret of Chelsea they demolished the dwelling houses, they did not start to build the fire station, for which indeed the location appears to most people to be singularly unsuitable. Chelsea was, therefore, both surprised and indignant, when the L.C.C., which both owned the site and, as planning authority, had the duty of controlling its development, allowed it to be developed for a purpose which conflicted with the development plan, was opposed by the Chelsea Borough Council, was resented by the local residents and blatantly injured amenities. Nor was their indignation diminished, when it became known that the tenant who was allowed or encouraged to develop the site in this way was a man against whom the L.C.C. had commenced legal proceedings in another part of London in order to remove him from the site which he there occupied and which they wanted.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley wrote a letter to *The Times* and Lord Conesford put down a Question in the House of Lords to be answered on March 26th 1957. The Minister's Answer revealed that the tenant acquired his interest in the site on January 14th, 1957, applied for planning permission on January 16th and was given permission, subject to conditions, on March 25th, the day before the Answer was given in Parliament. The condition which alone gave some satisfaction to Chelsea was that the permission was given for a limited period expiring on April 1st, 1958. It has recently been extended for a further period. Comment seems superfluous.

CHELSEA STREET LIGHTING

The Society have been very much concerned about Chelsea Street Lighting. (See *Annual Report*, 1956, pages 41 to 48). The Chelsea Borough Council have selected for Class A roads a light of which an example was first shown in the King's Road near the Town Hall. They have also set up in Chelsea Manor Street two examples of a hexagonal lantern which is under consideration for Class B roads.

The Council of the Society have given careful consideration to both these lights. They consider that the one chosen for Class A roads is practical and well engineered and that within the architectural limitations imposed by the use of fluorescent tubes it would be difficult to improve upon it. The Borough Council, in their opinion, are to be congratulated on their choice.

The hexagonal light suggested for Class B roads, on the other hand, is, in the opinion of the Council of the Society, badly proportioned and pretentious. It has neither traditional elegance nor modern functional efficiency. If the Borough Council have decided that they must erect new lights in all Class B roads, it is of the utmost importance, for the reputation of Chelsea and the preservation of its amenities, that they

should find a light of far better design than that now suggested. In this task the Society have offered to help in any way they can.

HOLY TRINITY, SLOANE STREET

Members of the Society who agree with Mr. John Betjeman will appreciate how important it is that Holy Trinity Church should be fully restored. An account of this beautiful late Victorian Church and its most original design and embellishments appears on pages 36 to 39.

The Rector and Churchwardens are trying to raise the sum of £20,000. The principal items for which the money is required are the roof, the organ, the central heating, a new loud speaker system and the Church Hall.

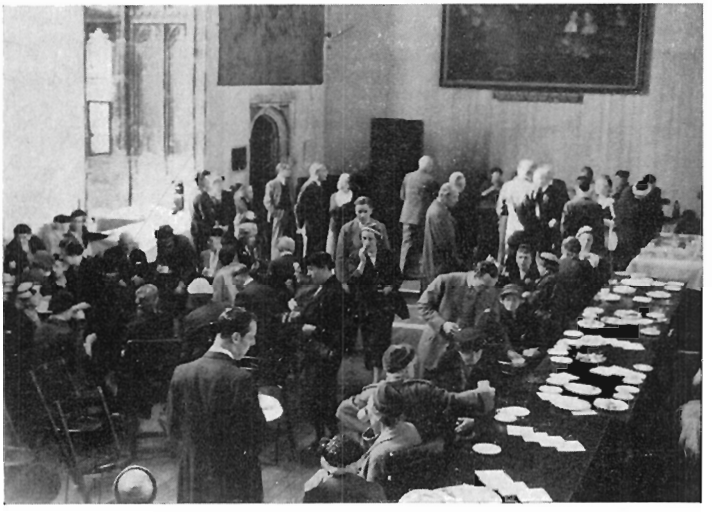
The roof, it will be remembered, was destroyed by enemy action and although replaced is in no way in keeping with the original building. A contribution will be made by the War Damage Commission, but, if the roof is to be restored in its original form, a substantial sum will have to be subscribed from other sources. The organ is in a very dilapidated state, although the war damage caused by flooding was partially repaired. The Church Hall also is suffering from accumulated dilapidations. A loud speaker system of modern design is essential on occount of bad acoustics.

Cheques should be made payable to the Holy Trinity Sloane Street Fund and addressed to:—

The Earl Cadogan, M.C.,
28 Cadogan Square,
Chelsea, S.W.1.

THE SUMMER MEETING

The Society held their Summer Meeting on September 21, 1957 at Thurston's Billiard Table Factory, No. 33, Cheyne



SUMMER MEETING, 1957
Tea at Crosby Hall.

Walk. The visit was kindly arranged by the two directors, Mr. Mock and Mr. Mitchell, to mark the centenary of the firm's connection with Chelsea. An account of the factory appears on pages 43 to 49. After the visit to the factory the meeting adjourned to Crosby Hall for tea and a discussion on the subject of Albert Bridge.

THEFT OF CHELSEA CHINA

Not only members of the Chelsea Society, but all Chelsea citizens, and indeed people all over the Country and abroad, were shocked and horrified to learn, from the national press, of the theft, on May 18th, 1957, of six out of the seven Chelsea china pieces which formed the Dorothy Palmer gift to the Chelsea Public Library. These beautiful things have been referred to in an earlier report (See *Annual Report,* 1953, pages 12 and 13). Miss Palmer, a member of the Society, had

generously presented them so that they would be in a place in the Borough where ordinary members of the public could see and study examples of Chelsea's most famous product.

The pieces were remarkably beautiful, and consisted of three birds, two of which were fully described, together with an account of the origin of their design from Volume II of Edwards' *Natural History of Uncommon Birds*, 1743, in an article on Chelsea birds in the *Annual Report*, 1954, pages 39 to 41. They had all been exhibited at a meeting which the English Ceramic Circle held at Crosby Hall in conjunction with the Society on October 22nd, 1953. They had also been an admired exhibit at the Exhibition of Chelsea China in 1922 at Chelsea Town Hall, organised by the Society's Founder, Reginald Blunt, and were illustrated in *The Cheyne Book of Chelsea China and Pottery* which he edited. Besides the three Chelsea birds, the three other pieces from the Dorothy Palmer gift, which were stolen at the same time, were as follows:— two Goat and Bee jugs, of unusual decoration and colour; and a beautiful little figure, at times called a "Turkish Boy", which was exhibited at the 1922 Exhibition, and also at the Tournai and Chelsea Exhibition at the Belgian Institute in 1953, where it was described as "Figure of a Blue Clad Boy with a puce turban, playing a violin, on white mount, with many flowers in relief. Height 6 inches. Red Anchor Mark".

How the pieces were taken, and who took them, is still an unsolved mystery. Their loss was widely advertised and so important in the ceramic world were these pieces considered that the unprecedented course was taken of announcing their loss and their description from the rostrum at Sotheby's during an important sale of porcelain. But up to the time of writing there has been no trace of them. One only, a pretty figure, but a little broken, was left in the case. Somewhere to-day the six others must be hidden, and the people of Chelsea, so honoured by Dorothy Palmer's generosity, are

deprived by this crime of the enjoyment of these beautiful things made in their Borough.

Nothing can quite replace these specimens but the Society will have noted with interest that the sum of £2,495 has been paid by the insurance company to the Borough Council and has been placed on deposit in case any of the pieces are recovered and the amount appropriate to each piece has to be refunded. It is to be hoped that, when it is considered right to draw out this money, it will be expended on the purchase, on the best advice obtainable, of a representative collection of Chelsea China, and that the Borough Council will also obtain expert advice on the kind of show case which will best meet the requirements of display and security.

ACTIVITIES

Several visits to Chelsea have been arranged from outside organisations during the past year. On these occasions, members of the Society have met the visitors and shown them many of Chelsea's most interesting places. In every case, Mr. or Mrs. Marsden-Smedley or Miss Hilda Reid, together or in turn, conducted the party or joined them at tea at Crosby Hall and spoke and answered questions of Chelsea interest.

Two outstanding events of this kind were linked with other countries. In the early spring the Belgian *Société Royale d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* led by the Comte de Borchgrave, Curator in Chief of the Royal Museums of Brussels, visited the Physic Garden (by kind permission of the City Parochial Charities), and in the Autumn members of the Franco-British Society did the same, and also saw other places of note. On this last occasion, the Mayor entertained the party to tea in his Parlour at the Town Hall and they were joined by a larger number of members of the Chelsea Society than usual.

Visits were also received from members of Women's Institutes in Surrey, and Sussex, a Woman's Guild from Thornton Heath, and a party of schoolboys from Dorset.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley was invited to attend a meeting at Crosby Hall of the Franco-British Society on July 5th and to deliver an address on its history. It was mainly as a result of the interest aroused at this meeting that the further visit to the Physic Garden referred to above was arranged.

CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF REGINALD BLUNT

This year marks the centenary of the birth on September 19, 1857 of the Society's founder, Reginald Blunt. It would be an interesting, but depressing, exercise to try to picture the Chelsea that would exist to-day but for Reginald Blunt's eloquent advocacy and sturdy battling for Chelsea and its amenities. We too easily take for granted the existence of all we admire to-day -every graceful tree, every building of architectural or historic importance and every well-loved Chelsea vista. Many such things would have disappeared but for his persuasive powers and the universal respect in which he was held.

HONOURS

During the year under review, Miss Dorothy Macnamara received an O.B.E. in the New Year Honours; and, among the Birthday Honours, a Knighthood was conferred on Sir Charles Clay, C.B., F.S.A.

OBITUARY

The Society will have learned with deep regret of the death of Mrs. N. Jago, Sir Christopher Warner, Miss Ruth Loch, Mr. Kenneth D. Harris, Mr. Oliver Hoare, Sir Michael McDonnell, Miss Helen McKie, Miss Gertrude Pohlman, Mr. Richard Stewart-Jones, to whom a tribute appears on page 50, and Mrs. Tunbridge.

Prospect Place and the Spastic Centre

by HILDA REID

Church Row and its Tenants

Three years ago, a centre for young children suffering from cerebral palsy opened in that part of Cheyne Walk which was known first as Church Row and later as Prospect Place.

The Row, a terrace of five houses stretching between the Old Church and Lawrence Street, was in the opinion of Mr. Walter Godfrey probably built soon after 1686, when the local landowner Sir Thomas Lawrence (whose handsome family mansion stood on about the site of Monmouth House in Lawrence Street) came home from Maryland where he had been Secretary to the Colony. Its two remaining houses, Nos. 62 and 63 Cheyne Walk, are therefore among the oldest in Chelsea. Both have been extensively altered, but the graceful Regency balcony of No. 63 with the much earlier doorway of No. 62 can be identified in old prints. Of the other three houses (Nos. 59, 60 and 61) nothing is left; they were destroyed when the Children's Hospital was built.

In 1635 tenants of the Row included James Salter at No. 59, Mrs. Anne Shadwell, widow, at No. 60 and Dr. Atterbury at No. 63—all of them eminent in their own way.

James Salter, better known as Don Saltero, opened here a coffee house "noted for good conversation" as well as for a very extraordinary collection of curiosities which he afterwards carried to No. 18 Cheyne Walk, where his name still appears on the gate.

As for Mrs. Anne Shadwell, Mr. Randall Davies suggests, very plausibly, that she was the actress wife of Thomas Shad-

well the Poet Laureate, who died in 1692 and may have lived in this Row. Shadwell wrote or adapted seventeen plays, including several which furnish good material for the social historian as well as for the historical novelist (Scott and Macaulay both made use of his *Squire of Alsatia*), yet he is chiefly remembered on account of his quarrel with Dryden, who named him as the obvious successor to Flecknoe, the reigning king of bad poets:—

> "The rest to some faint meaning make pretence
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
> Some beams of Wit on other souls may fall,
> Strike through and make a lucid intervall.
> But Shadwell's Genuine Night admits no Ray,
> His rising Fogs prevail upon the Day;
> Besides, his goodly Fabric fills the Eye
> And seems designed for thoughtless Majesty;
> Thoughtless as Monarch-Oaks that shade the Plain
> And spread in solemn State supinely Reign."

Shadwell's goodly fabric rests either in the Old Church itself or in the adjoining churchyard. He was not too dull to choose the winning side in politics. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 he ousted Dryden, a Catholic and a Royalist, from the Laureateship, apparently earning his preferment as a witty talker rather than as a writer. Still he owes his immortality, such as it is, to Dryden's couplets.

Atterbury lived at 63 Cheyne Walk till 1703, when he moved to Danvers Street. Later he became Bishop of Rochester, and readers of *Esmond* will remember him as a faithful adherent of the Stuarts. Accused in 1720 of plotting in their favour, he was imprisined for a while in the Tower and eventually died as an exile in Paris.

Mr Godfrey gives in Volume II of *The Survey of London* a long list of subsequent tenants of Nos. 62 and 63 Cheyne Walk. The most interesting of these is Nicholas Sprimont, formerly of Liége, who lived for a year at No. 63, conveniently close to

Chelsea China Manufactory which was situated on the West Side of Lawrence Street. Sprimont's connection with this manufactory (first as manager and then as sole proprietor) coincides with the height of its fame and artistic achievement. It lasted from 1749 to 1769 when he sold the business to James Cox. Sprimont was a friend of Roubillac, the sculptor, who modelled for him a number of large figures.

Holman Hunt at Prospect Place

By the middle of the nineteenth century Church Row had become Prospect Place; and to No. 5 Prospect Place (59 Cheyne Walk, at the corner of Lawrence Street) came in 1849 William Holman Hunt. He was the fore-runner of the Pre-Raphaelite invasion of Chelsea, and William Allingham the poet describes in his diary a visit paid to him in 1850 by some of the Brethren. "With Woolner, two Rossettis and Buchanan Reid in omnibus to Chelsea to Holman Hunt's lodging, large first floor room looking out on river near the Old Church. Deverell—much talk on pictures etc; we have coffee and fruit; some lie on the floor smoking".

There were jokes and stories, and Hunt's picture *Claudio and Isabella* was discussed. "He has to be at the Royal Academy every morning now at seven, copying for somebody. As it was now late and his guests showed no wish to depart, Hunt lay down on three chairs for a nap; but they only made merry of his drowsiness, proposed to sit on him, etc., and so the time lounged on till dawn was broad upon the river and its trailing barges, and D. G. Rossetti (usual Captain on such occasions and notorious night bird) uprooted himself at last from some cushion or easy chair, and all departed after three o'clock, save myself to whom Hunt kindly offered a spare bed."

Hunt was copying pictures because he was hard up. His *Rienzi* had hung in the Royal Academy, he had sold it for £100 and, on the strength of that, had been to France and

PROSPECT PLACE A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

This very early photograph shows Prospect Place as it was in the time of Holman Hunt.

From the Richard Stewart-Jones collection of Chelsea papers and photographs presented by his widow to the Chelsea Public Library by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

Belgium with Rossetti. Since his arrival in Chelsea he had finished and exhibited the *Christians escaping from the Druids,* which is now in the Ashmolean Museum. One of his models for this picture was Miss Siddal, not as yet discovered by Rossetti; but the critics did not like it, and nobody would buy it and (what with the numerous models required) it had been an expensive picture to paint. Indeed Hunt was soon reduced to such straits that he had begun to think seriously of giving up Art, when just at the moment when he was unable to buy so much as a postage stamp, he happened to

thrust his hand between the back and seat of a chair and found half a crown which cheered his spirits and tided him over for the moment.

His life at Prospect Place, according to his biographer A. C. Gissing, was full of such incidents: bitter disappointments with sudden interventions of Providence to save him from complete despair. An older artist commissions some drawings. Hunt sits up all night to finish his design for *Claudio and Isabella* (now in the Tate), and the indignant patron throws it back at him exclaiming at its hideous affectation. Hunt staggers out of the house and remembers genial, sensible Augustus Egg. Egg, at breakfast in his cottage in Queens Road (now the Royal Hospital Road), listens sympathetically, commissions a small picture for twenty-five guineas and offers to write out a cheque at once.

Millais had found good friends at Oxford- Mr. and Mrs. Combes of the University Press. He persuaded an uncle of Mrs. Combes who wished to give her a present to buy the *Christians escaping from the Druids* for a hundred and sixty guineas; so in October 1850 Hunt could go to Sevenoaks with Rossetti to paint the background of his *Valentine and Sylvia* in Knowle Park. But this picture (now in the Birmingham Art Gallery) met with such a poor reception, both from the Academy (which hung it very badly) and from the critics (whe treated it still worse), that Hunt was again on the point of giving up art when two letters from Ruskin appeared in *The Times* praising his picture for their "marvellous truth in detail and splendour in colour" and declaring that there had been "nothing in art so marvellous or so complete since the days of Durer". Only he complained that the wrong type of model had been chosen for Sylvia's face—poor Miss Siddal!

This was very pleasant, but it did not sell the picture; and Hunt indulged in thoughts of emigrating to some colony or other as a breeder of cattle, till Millais insisted on lending him money and dragging him off, first to rural Surbiton, and then

to Worcester Park Farm near Malden, where Hunt set to work on *The Hireling Shepherd* (Manchester Art Gallery) and Millais on *Ophelia* (Tate).

While he was painting his *Shepherd* Hunt had an idea for another picture, *The Light of the World.* There was a suitable orchard near the farm house, and on moonlight nights in the late autumn he would sit till five in the morning painting by candlelight in a little shelter of straw and hurdles, protecting his feet from the cold by putting them in a sack of straw—and cold indeed it must have been, since during part of the time there was skating in the valley. For company he had the village policeman who would stop on his rounds for a chat and a smoke.

Other visitors were the Combes of Oxford, who invited Hunt to spend Christmas with them; and he accepted, and ate at high tables, and found the Dons sympathetically inclined when he spoke of Pre-Raphaelitism, though they would not hear of Tennyson as a poet.

The Hireling Shepherd, which hung on the line in the Academy of 1852, sold pretty soon for three hundred guineas, and Hunt's early trials were over. Troubles in plenty he would meet later; but at least he won recognition in Prospect Place, and he had known moments of happiness there. After working all night, he could run across the road and plunge into the river for a refreshing dip, or jump into a wherry and scull a friend up to Hammersmith and back, or pawn a picture for six and eightpence in order to be able to join another friend on a sailing holiday. Now to these simple pleasures he could add grander ones- -being received as an equal by G. F. Watts and Thackeray, or even receiving his neighbours, the Carlyles, who had heard of his growing fame and came to inspect his pictures. Carlyle approved of *The Hireling Shepherd.* "A really grand picture. The greatest picture I have seen painted by any modern man". But he hated the"papistical fantasy" which Hunt finished in that first floor corner

room with the aid of a lay figure holding a lantern, hidden behind an elaborate arrangement of curtains and screens, with a small peephole through which the artist could study "the dark effect".

Perhaps it is on account of this method of getting the dark effect that, although thousands of people have cherished reproductions of *The Light of the World*, and although Ruskin announced in *The Times* "For my part I think it one of the very noblest works of art ever produced in this or any other age", yet to others, including some more papistically inclined than Carlyle, it is no less repulsive than it was to him. Hunt's pictures seldom are easy on the eye. They are uncomfortable pictures, and their painter was an uncomfortable man. Not quarrelsome, he was yet a born fighter. Earnest, obstinate, with an overriding sense of mission, a rebel and an individualist, yet intensely "contemporary", he has some affinity with an outstanding artist of our own age—Stanley Spencer. Their very likeness veils their similarity for, steeped in the idiom of their own so different ages, they naturally adopt very different conventions in the treatment of the human form; but the dock leaves, the dandelions and the nettles that tend to steal their pictures from the human actors are observed in much the same way and painted with much the same kind of loving, patient, meticulous accuracy. In the work of both painters we feeel the struggle to express moral and spiritual truths by means of a faithful delineation of material objects, and they both lay on their paint very smoothly with small brushes.

Their subjects are similar. Stanley Spencer has spent many years of his life bringing Christ to Cookham Regatta. Hunt brought Him to an orchard at Worcester Park, but could not stay with Him there. Hunt was impelled to use his powers in order to "make more tangible Christ's history and teaching", and though Rossetti argued that attention to costume, racial types etc. are "calculated to destroy scriptural subjects", Hunt could not believe it. He knew that "truth, whatever it

be, is above all price" and as soon as he could afford the journey he had to go to Palestine in order to paint sacred subjects "with more exact truth than could otherwise be done". He contended that this additional truth was distinctly called for by the additional knowledge and longing of the modern mind, and that it was not outside the lines of the noblest art.

One cannot but regret his decision when one examines the last thing he painted at Prospect Place (see *frontispiece*). *The Awakened Conscience,* depicting a stucco love nest (located, according to the present owner, in Park Village West) is contemporary not only in feeling but in every detail. A. C. Gissing describes it as a companion picture to *The Light of the World,* explaining this surprising pronouncement by going on to say, "In *The Light of the World* the door of conscience is firmly shut and sealed; in *The Awakened Conscience* a still small voice speaks to a human soul and the closed door has been loosened, allowing a ray of light to penetrate into the dark interior. And this is the way in which it happens: a girl has been sitting at a piano with her seducer, singing a song to his accompaniment. The title of the piece can be read; it is 'Oft in the stilly night'; the words have penetrated into her heart, and she has started up dismayed by the sudden realization of her past life, while he continues to strike the keys in ignorance of the change that has taken place in her. The shining newness of the furniture suggests by contrast the complete severance from the old home, the recollection of which the words of the song:

> Fond memory brings the light
> Of other days around me

have brought like a flash into her mind. And behind the chair is a cat from which an injured bird is struggling to escape—a symbol of the struggle that has begun in the girl's mind. These are some of the ways in which the meaning of one of the most powerful tragedies set on canvas in modern

times has been expressed." In a footnote, Gissing records Hunt's regret that, at the request of the owners, he consented to modify the expression of agony on the girl's face.

All this is interesting because it reminds us that Hunt is treading here in the footprints of an earlier and very much better painter -William Hogarth. If he had stayed in Chelsea he might have left behind him a series of morality pictures comparable as social documents, if not as works of art, to *Marriage à-la-Mode*. But the spirit of the age was driving him away, and he lingered through the first foggy days of 1856 only until a gleam of sunshine should enable him to finish this newest painting, which had been commissioned by a friend of Augustus Egg.

It came on January 16th. The last touches were applied upon the canvas, the bags were packed, and Hunt without waiting to eat his dinner rushed off to the station accompanied by Millais, who just had time to dash to the buffet, snatch up what food lay to hand and toss it into the moving carriage.

So Hunt set out on the first of his journeys to the Middle East, to wrestle with the Powers of Darkness in the shape of Arab landlords, models, neighbours, servants and brigands, together with a climate even more unsatisfactory than that he left behind him; and to return after each campaign with some appalling trophy—*The Scapegoat, The Shadow of Death, The Triumph of the Innocents, The Miracle of the Sacred Fire*—each to our eyes more hideously presaging Cecil B. de Mille, Glorious Technicolour and the wide screen, though doubtless they will be enormously admired again one day. He never came back to live in Chelsea. He went to Pimlico and then to Campden Hill and finally worked his way up to that Valhalla of late Victoria artists, the Melbury Road.

Before leaving Chelsea he had sold his *Light of the World* for four hundred guineas to Mr. Combes, whose widow afterwards presented it to Keble College, Oxford to hang in the

College Chapel. Several replicas of this picture exist, both large and small, for in later life, whilst waiting for a buyer for his latest masterpiece, Hunt would keep the pot boiling by painting a replica of some established favourite. He had special reasons for adopting this plan in the case of the *Light of the World;* he had learnt that the college authorities were charging the public sixpence to look at it—a practice of which he disapproved. His last replica was finished as late as 1904, and his eyesight failed him when he was at work on it, so that he had to seek assistance of his friend Edward Hughes. The picture had been commissioned for exhibition in the Colonies and eventual presentation to St. Pauls Cathedral, where it hangs to-day.

Meanwhile his Chelsea lodging had undergone a complete transformation.

The Cheyne Hospital for Children

In 1875 a hospital of an unusual kind was opened in Cheyne Walk. It received patients for whom the General Hospitals could not provide—children requiring surgical treatment for diseases when believed to be incurable or so "deep-seated" as to require expert attention for months or even years. Such patients had to be nursed at home, and not all of them had homes, let alone suitable ones.

Among the people who deplored this state of things were Mr. and Mrs. Wickam Flower of Old Swan House. They owned Nos. 46 and 47 Cheyne Walk, and at No. 46 they started what was to become the Cheyne Hospital for Sick and Incurable Children. It began in a very small way—one ward with four beds; but the need for more accommodation became so immediately obvious to so many people that in 1876 a strong Committee was formed with the Rector, the Rev. Gerald Blunt, as chairman; and the Wickam Flowers (who for many subsequent years served on that committee as hon. treasurer and hon. secretary) offered No. 47 rent free for an extension to the hospital.

Their Annual Reports may be studied to-day at the Public Library. Many familiar names occur in the lists of subscribers, among the earliest that of Mr. W. de Morgan of No. 8 Great Cheyne Row. Parents or friends were supposed to contribute four shillings a week towards the keep of each child, but in 1878 money was raised to endow a free cot in memory of the previous Rector, the Rev. Charles Kingsley (father of the novelist), and this example was followed throughout the years by many who wished to commemorate a relative (usually a child), or by various schools in Chelsea or Kensington whose pupils were encouraged to contribute towards the upkeep of some cot and to take a special interest in its inmate. Gifts in kind were welcomed, especially linen, and presently God-mothers and Godfathers were recruited, each of whom had to undertake the responsibility of finding clothes for one particular child and looking after its welfare.

The two houses together could at most accommodate thirty-three cots, and by 1885 it was decided that they were not altogether suitable. The Committee resolved to build a proper modern hospital, and so they acquired Holman Hunt's old lodging with the two houses next to it in Prospect Place.

The building they erected on this site is still there. Thackeray's daughter described it in a brochure as "a tall, bright Dutch-looking sort of house", and the West London Press acclaimed it as among the finest of the new blocks of buildings "now going up in Chelsea". The architects were Messrs. Beasley and Barrows of Victoria Chambers, Westminster. It was opened unobtrusively for the transfer of patients from the old premises in 1889, and more formally in the following June, when the Prince and Princess of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra) honoured it with an Inaugural Visit. Among other visitors was Mrs. Holman Hunt, for Hunt took an interest in the place, presenting a steel engraving of *The Light of the World* to be hung in one of the wards, with a beautifully lettered inscription.

The new hospital with its fifty beds presented new problems of organisation, and a new secretary was appointed to deal with them. This was the Rector's son, Reginald Blunt, founder of the Chelsea Society. His connection with the Cheyne hospital was to last for fifty-five years. He was secretary till the death of his father in 1902, when he resigned to be succeeded by Henry Kemp Welch, an original member of the Committee of Management. Mr. Blunt continued to serve on the Committee till his own death in 1944, and from 1926 to 1944 he was chairman of the Finance Committee.

The years up to 1914 were years of expansion. The freehold of a plot of land at the back of the building was bought in 1894, that of No. 62 Cheyne Walk in 1898, that of No. 63 in 1900, and the Cross Key's Yard was acquired a year later. So there was room at the back for an isolation ward and a garden ward, as well as for the porter's lodge with the studio above it, (built in 1915); and the nursing staff found accommodation in No. 62 Cheyne Row, while 63 was let. These two houses were renovated in 1907 with a regard for their original appearance that one cannot but attribute to the influence of Reginald Blunt. But the most ambitious extension was the addition of a Country Home (opened in 1910) at St. Nicholas-at-Wade in Thanet, where a house with a garden was bought and converted to receive twenty-six patients. All this was made possible by generous legacies left to the Hospital by early friends and benefactors, notably one of £30,000 left by Mr. Flower.

After the first World War things became more difficult; the cost of living had risen, and a number of new expensive treatments had been evolved. By 1921, in spite of a very handsome legacy from Mrs. Flower, a special appeal had to be launched in order to wipe out an annual deficit of about £2,500. After this the story is largely one of efforts to raise money—Pound Days, Charity Balls and so forth. One such effort deserves special mention. It was held in connection with an appeal launched to commemorate the Hospital's

Jubilee in 1925, and it took the form of a very important loan exhibition of Chelsea china and pottery at the Town Hall. There were a few specimens of Elers Ware because it could be proved that one branch of the Elers family had settled in Chelsea, there was a magnificent collection of masterpieces produced in the Chelsea China Factory in the days of Nicholas Sprimont, there were specimens of the dinner service made in Chelsea by Wedgewood and Bentley for Catherine II of Russia, there were pots by William de Morgan, and pottery by Gwendolen Parnell, Charles Vyse and other leading potters living in Chelsea. The exhibition, which was visited by Queen Mary, attracted so much attention that the Organising Committee (whose hon. secretary was Reginald Blunt) were able to hand over to the Cheyne Hospital more than a thousand pounds. The Catalogue, with illustrations, essays and notes, was afterwards published in the form of a noble quarto which has been the joy of collectors ever since and has made that exhibition a model for others, notably for three exhibitions held in or near Chelsea since the second world war; *The World's End Exhibition of Old Chelsea* (May 1948); *The Chelsea China Exhibition* 1951 held at the Royal Hospital, and *The Tournai and Chelsea Porcelain Exhibition* 1953 held at the Belgian Institute in Belgrave Square.

As a result of the Jubilee appeal the Cheyne Hospital acquired a new operating theatre and a roof ward of fifteen beds for the treatment of rickets. The Light Cure Room was enlarged and two years later it was provided with a set of titanium ray lamps, the first to be seen in any hospital in Britain.

The Cheyne Hospital kept its specialist character; in a brochure of 1922 the cases are described as being mostly paralysis or hip, spinal and bone diseases; and it is pointed out that such diseases are particularly ill-suited to home treatment because they make enormous demands on mothers, who under the strain of constant yet always inadequate nursing, cannot attend to other members of the family.

By this time the word "Incurable" had been deleted from the title of the Hospital, and in 1938 it could be claimed that, of the 3,100 children admitted since the place was opened, over 2,700 had been discharged in a cured or relieved condition—remarkable figures when one considers that in early years the deaths outnumbered the discharges, and that even in 1938 the average length of stay of each child was over six months. One important development of the 'thirties was the establishment of a Research Laboratory to investigate the causes of rheumatism in childhood.

The last addition made to the Hospital was a Nurses' Home, for Nos. 62 and 63 were now found inadequate to house the nursing staff, so a three storey building with sixteen bedrooms was erected on the site of the studio in what had been Cross Keys Yard. It was opened in April 1939, by which time the 65 patients had already been evacuated, though only for a week or so (Munich week), some to their homes and some to St. Nicholas-at-Wade. Just before the outbreak of the second world war they were evacuated again, first to St. Nicholas and then, in the following May, to Fanhams Hall near Hertford, which the Hospital retained till 1946.

The Second World War

Meanwhile the Borough Council requisitioned part of the building in Cheyne walk, to begin with as a First-Aid Post and later as a hostel for refugees (Belgian, Dutch, French and Polish), and after that as a Rest Centre to accommodate bombed out and homeless people from the dock area as well as from Chelsea itself. In February 1941 some of the hospital buildings were damaged by two relatively small and innocuous bombs which did barely £800 worth of harm; and in the following April all the buildings were damaged more or less severely by the parachute mine which destroyed the Old Church. Nos. 62 and 63 Cheyne Walk received the full force of the blast, especially No. 63 which afterwards had to be demolished. This event put an end to the Rest Centre, and

the Borough relinquished the hospital which remained empty for the next eighteen months, all but the secretary's office and one ward, which last was adopted as a chapel by the congregation of the Old Church who fitted it up with the altar and some furniture salvaged from the ruins and attended divine service there for nearly ten years.

Then came the crowning disaster, the Borough moved in again, on the instructions of the Ministry of Health, to establish a War Time Day Nursery for ninety-six children of war workers. Repairs were required, with some alterations, so the nursery was not opened till February 1944. By that time the Committee—like every Committee of a voluntary hospital—was working out plans for fitting in with the National Health Service whose advent had already been announced in a White Paper. Nothing could be done towards reopening the hospital till the war-time day nursery moved out of Cheyne Walk; and when the war was over the day nursery (now a London County Council Day Nursery) did not move out, for the Ministry of Health announced that they could not find alternative accommodation. Goaded to desperation the Committee took legal proceedings to regain their premises, a step which the Ministry countered by serving notice of requisition.

This looked like the end of the Cheyne Hospital for Children because the Committee could not afford to wait if they meant to integrate their hospital with the new Health Service; but other hospitals too were going through a difficult time, among them the Children's Hospital for the Treatment of Hip Diseases at Sevenoaks, which had lately been closed for want of staff. An offer of forty beds for the Cheyne children arrived from the Chairman of this hospital, it was gratefully accepted, and the two hospitals were eventually amalgamated at Sevenoaks, to be administered by the local Regional Hospital Board.

The Spastic Centre

Eight years later "the bright, Dutch-looking house" at

the corner of Lawrence Street became the scene of a new pioneer venture. The story is told in a book which should be familiar to all Chelsea people, *Spastics in Cheyne Walk* (1957) edited and compiled by Joan Saunders and Marjorie Napier. It is an interesting book, not only because it tells what nowadays can be done, and is being done, to help children suffering from cerebral palsy, but also because it sets out pretty clearly what part voluntary effort can and should play in a national service, both in bridging gaps and in carrying out experiments for which public funds are not available.

Cerebral palsy is a condition resulting, it is believed, from some injury to that part of the brain which controls the communication systems of the body. Its victims need not necessarily be less intelligent than other people, they may even be exceptionally intelligent; but they have often been classed as mentally deficient because they are unable to express themselves intelligibly. By the end of the second world war there was a growing conviction that treatment for such cases might be wholly effective if it was started soon enough. They are not very numerous; on statistical grounds it is thought that there may be a hundred spastic children between the ages of one and five in South West London.

The Centre for Spastic Children, Cheyne Walk, is a combined clinic and day nursery for these children. The idea sprang from a conversation between Mrs. Sims, a physiotherapist, and Admiral J. H. Godfrey, Chairman of the Chelsea Group of Hospitals. Mrs. Sims, in the course of private practice, had been called upon to treat spastic children brought to her from India, Norway, Cyprus and elsewhere; she felt the need of help and guidance, and she did not know where to turn for it. So in 1947 she discussed the question with Admiral Godfrey, who thought a case might be made out for opening a day clinic where spastic children could benefit by the best available specialist treatment, while the specialists themselves would have an opportunity of studying the whole

subject of cerebral palsy more effectively than they could hope to do in an ordinary clinic or hospital.

Such a project could not at that date be launched in five minutes; and even though Mr. Frank Elliott, Chairman of the South-West Metropolitan Regional Board, was sympathetic from the first, it took years of patient effort before the various financial and administrative difficulties could be overcome and the Centre could at last be opened.

This was not till April, 1955. The London County Council Day Nursery still occupied the upper floors of the main building, as it continues to do; but the basement and ground floors were repaired and redecorated in clear bright colours for the Centre, which also uses the four floors and the basement of No. 62, and two classrooms built out at the back on the site of a war damaged building. No. 63 had by that time been sold as a bombed ruin with a cost of works ticket attached, but it has since been acquired by the Friends of the Centre, who are keeping a couple of rooms there as their registered offices and letting the rest on lease as a dwelling house.

This League of Friends was formed in 1953 with the object of providing a link between the Centre and the community it serves, raising money to supplement its resources and finding that voluntary help which is always needed, in the shape, for example, of people who will undertake to escort children going to and from their homes by car. (Cars and drivers are provided). The Friends are there to fill any gap in the provision made for the Centre, just as the Centre itself was created to fill a gap in the Hospital Service, and the old Cheyne Hospital was founded to fill a gap in the voluntary hospital service of eighty years ago. It is an interesting illustration of continuity of English institutions, in spite of seemingly drastic changes, that among the distinguished people who form the Executive Committee of the Friends of the Centre is Mr. Wilfred Elliston, a member and former Honorary Treasurer of the Chelsea Society, who was Secretary of the Cheyne Hospital for Children from 1925 to 1951.

The Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts

By FRANCIS H. SPICER.

One damp October evening in 1957, a small gathering of people interested in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, foregathered in the Chenil Galleries to hear Mr. John Betjeman extol the beauties of the church. The occasion was the launching of an appeal for £20,000 to keep the church and its fittings in good repair.

Mr. Betjeman chose to entitle his talk "The Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts". The "Arts and Crafts" was no reference to Chelsea as an artists' quarter but to the "Arts and Crafts Guild" of which the architect for the church, John Dando Sedding was one of their early illustrious masters. But Mr. Betjeman was not the first to call Holy Trinity a Cathedral. An Australian Bishop, visiting Holy Trinity during a Lambeth Conference, declared from the pulpit that in his diocese the church was large enough, and such a beautiful place, that it would rank as a cathedral church.

Holy Trinity church is possibly the largest church to be built from Sedding's designs, but it is considered, by those in a position to judge, to be his best work and also one of the finest to be erected by any Victorian architect. For Holy Trinity it was unfortunate that he should die before it was completed, but his successor and assistant Henry Wilson ably continued the work with his own realisation of Sedding's idiom.

The church is 150 feet long and the nave is 40 feet 9 inches wide; nine inches wider than the nave of St. Pauls' Cathedral. Its gothic style has been evolved in Sedding's own way from his studies of the mediæval gothic, made in his younger days, both in this country and in France. The flowing arch mould-

ings dying off into the pillars, without the use of capitals, is one particular variant and would seem to have sprung from Seddings appreciation of the church of Notre Dame de bon Secours at Guingamp in Brittany.

Sedding was a man always willing to allow another artist to create and work with him and with this aspect in mind left countless opportunities for his church at Holy Trinity to be enriched by the efforts of others. The spandrels of the nave arches besides their decorated mouldings, have been left with a plain round boss for future sculpture. A particular instance of this can be seen in the arch on the south side of the choir. There is also the wide frieze that runs from end to end of the church on both sides of the nave. Sir Edward Burne-Jones was called in early during the progress of building the church to prepare schemes for the decoration of this frieze, only to have to confess that the task was not easy. But Sedding did not confine his own designing work to the church building. The high altar cross and candlesticks are by him while the church possesses two altar frontals designed by him. A third frontal which was in use when the church was ravaged by fire during the war, and failed to survive, was also of Sedding's design.

At the time of its construction the *Baldachino* to the north aisle chapel was probably the only one in an English church. The style is repeated in the pulpit. The low screen to the chancel, of green Devonshire marble, with its pillars supporting bronze angels and wrought iron gates are in accordance with Sedding's original intentions for the church. His crusade for helping other artists led him to employ F. W. Pomeroy for the creation of the angels and also for the bronze decoration of the choir stalls. Mr. H. H. Armstead, R.A. was the sculptor responsible for the exceptionally original design of the angel lecterns cast by J. Moon. A visit by Sedding to Ratisbon Cathedral resulted in the quotation on the choir stalls:—"Non vox, sed votum; non musica chordula, sed cor; Non clammans, sed amans: cantat in aure Dei."

Without making this short article appear a catalogue it should be mentioned that the artist for the altar front panel was Harry Bates; that for the reredos, John Tweedsmuir; for the decoration of the shaft to the onyx font bowl, Onslow Ford, A.R.A. The eagle lectern in the north chapel follows the design of one in Greystoke Church, Cumberland. John Williams, an artist member of the Church Crafts League, being responsible for the design detail and also construction, with the assistance of other craftsmen. Their names are noted on the brass ball of the lectern. The eagle is of unusual construction in that it was first carved from solid oak without feathers. The feathers were then cast, wrought and individually screwed into position.

A jewel indeed is the great east window of the church, epitomising the great array of the Church's Saints. The present window was inserted after the church was built. It is on record that Sir Edward Burne-Jones produced his first twelve designs for this window in 1894 and the remaining thirty-six designs for the second, third and fourth tiers in 1895. They were then entrusted, as were the majority of Burne-Jones' cartoons, to William Morris who made the window, filling in the background and other detail. It was Morris's custom to work designs of figures from other artists, rather than his own. The rich colouring of this window is Morris's hallmark and it is said that he could pass all the smaller parts of a large window, one by one, and never lose sight of the general tone of the whole window or of the relation of one part to another. As Morris died on 3rd October 1896 this window was probably one of the last to be made under his personal direction.

The three windows of the Lady Chapel were given by the fifth Earl Cadogan and were placed in position between 1904 and 1910, and are from designs prepared by Sir William Richmond. The centre window shows 'Youth' its sacrifice and joys, and the eastern window 'Charity'. Apart from the window in the Memorial Chapel all the remaining stained

glass windows are from the studios of C. W. Whall. One of the south side windows represents the Adoration of the Magi, and the other, an artistic conception of the Holy Spirit. For the clerestory windows, C. W. Whall prepared designs for them all as a representation of the "Angelic Hierarchy". The scheme has never been completed, but those already inserted are parts of the scheme as a whole. The representation, as planned for Holy Trinity clerestory, is as follows:--- on the north side from east to west: Seraphim (Heavenly Love), Dominations (Heavenly Rule and Justice), Principalities and Powers (Earthly Administration), Archangels and Angels; on the south side: Cherubim (Heavenly Wisdom), Thrones (Heavenly Counsel), Virtues and Powers (Heavenly Power and Subjection of Evil), Archangels and Angels. The first of these windows was inserted about 1904 and by January 1914 four had been completed while a fifth had been promised. Had sufficient funds been available the suggested treatment for the great west window was to portray the Judgement, Christ in Majesty seated on a throne supported by the tree of Jesse.

The Chapel on the south side of the choir was created as a war memorial after the war of 1914-18. Towards the end of 1917 the parish started to meditate on the form such a memorial should ultimately take. Several other ideas were discussed and abandoned for various reasons until in May 1920 the scheme for the present chapel was approved. Henry Wilson prepared some of the early proposals for the creation of the chapel but detail and responsibility for supervising the work devolved upon F. C. Eden. This chapel was finally dedicated on 22 June 1922 and has the names of the fallen inscribed on the walnut wall panels. The names of the fallen during the 1939-45 war have since been added.

How right were the authorities in including Holy Trinity Church in its list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, but what an anxiety this imposes upon the congregation to keep it so?

The Rebuilding of Chelsea Old Church

By C. E. LEIGHTON THOMSON

For those who know and love the Old Church these have been exciting months. It is not so much that the rebuilding has proceeded at sensational speed—rather the reverse!—but that the Church has now assumed a recognisable form.

It is steadily becoming its old self once more.

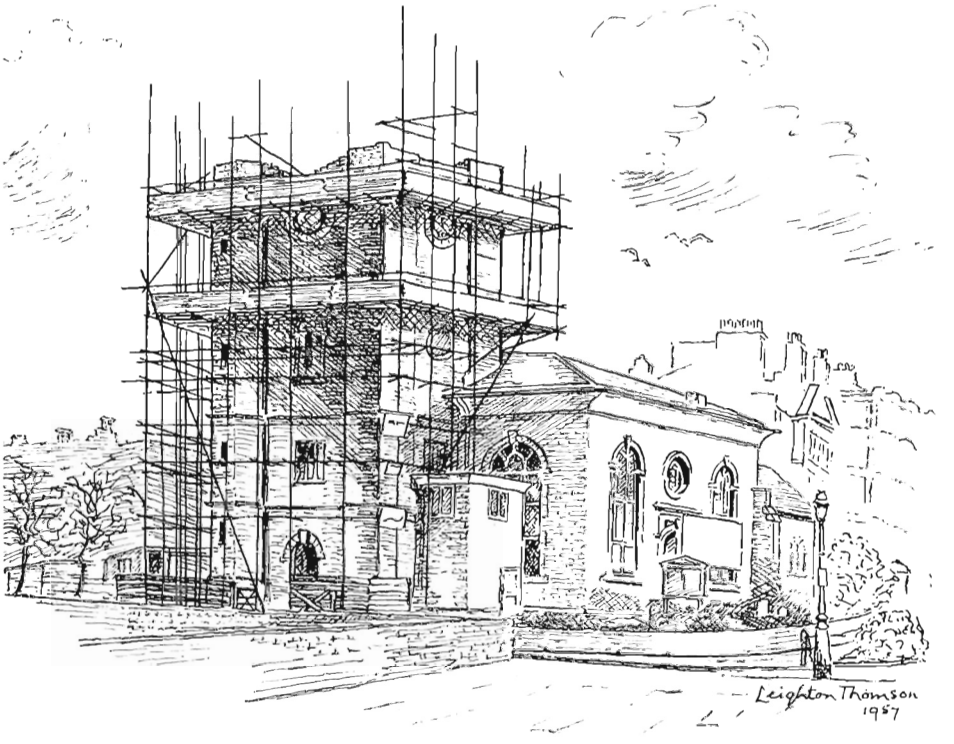
One likes to feel that its roots have given strength and life to that which is now proudly visible upon the same ancient site, and that the many things which essentially belong to it are being grafted back into the new and virile growth.

Of course bricks cannot grow (though builders say they can and should 'breathe'), and yet perhaps it was something of the same sentiment that prompted an observer, looking up at the rebuilt Nave, to exclaim: "The funny thing is that it looks as if it has always been there."

As the Tower nears completion this impression will no doubt increase. As the passer-by looks up at the clock, or hears the pealing of the bell, it may well seem incredible that for over a decade and a half they were absent; so familiar will they appear to those who remember them of old. But that is looking ahead a little.

Early in 1957 the inscribed stone slabs were brought in from the garden, where they had been stored, and re-laid upon the floor of the Nave, to form the aisles.

At the west end of the Church, under the porch of the



CHELSEA OLD CHURCH IN 1957
From a sketch by the Rev. C. E. Leighton-Thomson.

Tower, there has been built a Columbarium, a sepulchral chamber for the depositing of cremated ashes.

This has been covered over with Purbeck stone, with access to the chamber below.

Oak blocks were laid over the seating area of the Nave, and the new pews, also of oak, have been installed.

The pews are of simple design, having panelled ends and flat, classical, capping. They were used for the first time on All Saints' Day, 1957. The temporary brick partitions between the Chancel and the Nave had been removed, and the full ground seating area was made available for normal use.

The seventeenth century Font now occupies its former position. It was first used on December 22nd, 1673, and was presumably in constant use from that date until the last pre-bombing baptism on March 16th, 1941, and it was a moving moment to see the Font restored to all its earlier elegance.

Also in November, the new Organ, built and installed by Frederick Rothwell and Sons, of Harrow, was played for the first time.

Messrs. Fenning have been engaged in the work of restoring and re-erecting the tablets and monuments in the Nave. The late sixteenth century Dacre Monument now stands resplendent with its upper obelisks, balustrade and shields of arms in place; and over on the other side of the Nave the warmth of colour in the marble of the Cheyne Monument is gradually returning.

A number of generous gifts have been received in the form of furnishings and equipment for the Church.

The two fine chandeliers in the Nave, the processional cross, and the Churchwardens' staves are recent examples. As more gifts are to be presented it would perhaps be best if these could form the subject of a later and more detailed article.

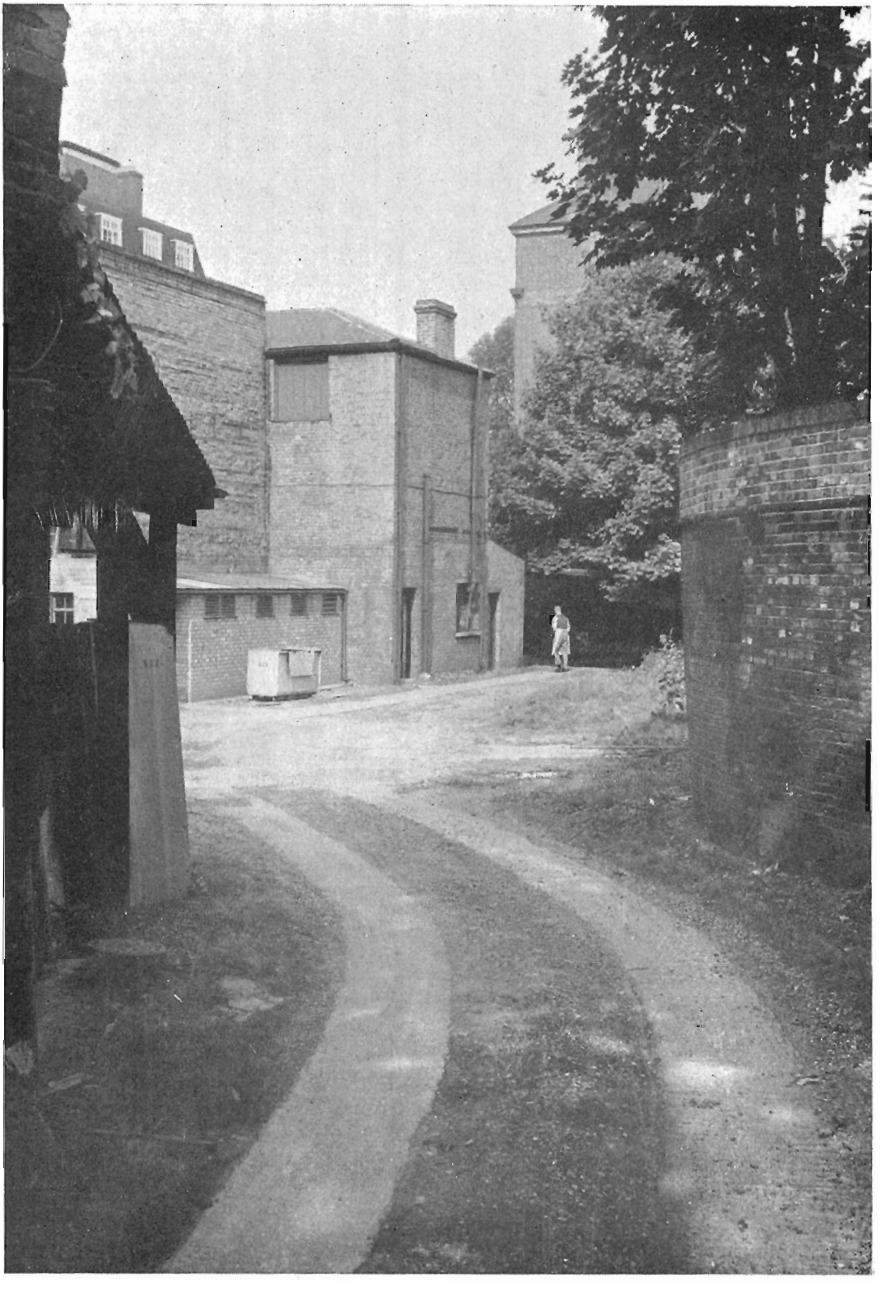
BILLIARD TABLE LEGS

One of the most curious and satisfying sights at Thurston's Billiard Table Factory was the large number of sets of eight billiard-table legs, many of them second-hand relics of the splendour of past fashions.

Thurston's Billiard Table Factory, 33 Cheyne Walk

By HILDA REID.

Thurston's Factory occupies a strip of land running up from the Embankment between that large new block of flats which bears the name of Shrewsbury House and the back gardens of houses in Oakley Street. The site formed part of the grounds of Winchester House, which was built in the middle of the seventeenth century "adjoining to" (in Faulkner's phrase) Henry VIII's New Manor House; so the wall of Tudor brick which divided the factory premises from those of the flats may well be the boundary wall which once divided Henry VIII's orchards and gardens from the property of his



THURSTON'S BILLIARD TABLE FACTORY

Before the Society's Summer meeting few people knew of the winding lane leading from the arch under No. 33, Cheyne Walk. This view shows the lane where it unexpectedly emerges into Thurston's yard.

faithful henchman, that Earl of Shrewsbury who built the original Shrewsbury House and suppressed the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Faulkner gives an interesting account of Winchester House, which owed its name to the fact that, for a century and a half, it was the palace of the Bishops of Winchester, whose ancient episcopal palace in Southwark had been plundered, damaged and built over during the Civil Wars and the Protectorate.

We have not discovered why, or even precisely when, the Bishops of Winchester left Chelsea. All we know is that Winchester House was pulled down in about 1828 (surviving Old Shrewsbury House by more than a decade and Henry VIII's Manor House by more than half a century) and that in 1857 Thurston's acquired, on a 99 years lease, the land they occupy at present. Till 1872, when their factory was transferred to Chelsea, they had only warehouses and a wharf here.

In 1857 Thurston's was already an old established firm. It was founded by John Thurston who set up, in 1799, as a Billiard Table and General Cabinet Maker in Newcastle Street off the Strand. His very interesting ledgers go back to 1818, by which time he had moved to Catherine Street and discontinued the making of anything except billiard and bagatelle tables and billiard furniture, except to oblige a very few favoured customers, such as Major Banks of York Street, St. James, for whom he made in 1818 a handsome mahogany secretary with pilasters, together with an elegant bookcase, mahogany, with pilasters and black ebony mouldings. In 1819 Judge Haliburton, off to Halifax in Nova Scotia, wanted his curtains cleaned, dyed and packed for the voyage, and Mr. Thurston undertook the business; but this is the last of such orders that the present writer has found in his books which are thenceforth exclusively concerned with equipment for the noble and fashionable games of billiards and bagatelle.

Many orders came, as they still do, from the Trade; for

example from Mr. Jacob Vicars of *The Red Horse*, Bond Street, and Mr. Shopland of *The Angel*, Islington, and Mr. Bryan of the *Billiard Rooms*, Nottingham. They came from Clubs, *The Harmonic Club* at *The George and Vulture*, Cornhill, and *The Royal Naval Institute*, 30 Albermarle Street; and from coffee houses, *The Grecian Coffee House* in the Temple and *The Orange Tree Coffee House* in Chelsea, which was managed in August 1818 by Mr. Zeciani and in January 1819 by Mr. Hughes.

The private orders shed a good deal of light on the social history of the period. A surprisingly large number of them came from women. In 1918, for example, Mrs. Newton of Little Lyme, Dorset, got a "six foot bagatelle complete, packed in matts" for £4 4s. 0d, and so did Mrs. Admiral Taylor of Judd Street, Brunswick Square. We cannot, of course, be certain that these ladies were not merely providing amusement for their grandsons; certainly another female customer, George IV's Mrs. Fitzherbert, was always kind and considerate to young people. But women could be enthusiastic players, and there is independent evidence to prove that among the enthusiasts was Queen Caroline, who bought several billiard tables from Mr. Thurston.

Clergymen played too; in 1819 the Rector of East Ilsley, Berks, bought a second-hand billiard table and the Rev. J. Hale of Lyde House, Zion Hill, Bath spent £12 on a 6 ft. table, with cues, maces, balls, marking board, rests and rules. A similar outfit went to Henry Western, Esq. of Exeter College, Oxford, and at Eton College the Earl of Burnford was buying cues.

"A Gent." of Chelsea bought a second hand cue; and readers of his Diary will be glad to Learn that "—Croker, Esq., the Admiralty" bought two maces at 5s. 6d. each on April 12th, 1819.

The Services naturally furnished Mr. Thurston with many

customers (for example, Rear Admiral Foote at Cheltenham and Captain Elphinstone at Plymouth), and so did the Peerage (The Rt. Hon. the Earl Onslow, Clandon Ho., Guildford, Surrey) and High Finance (N. M. Rothschild, Esq., Stamford Hill); and even to-day it seems not unnatural to think of a billiard room at Stanway House Broadway, Worcestershire, or at 36 Piccadilly, or even at 35 Bloomsbury Square. But Mr. Thurston's ledgers open up strange vistas of vanished suburban delights, and one would like to know very much more than one ever is likely to do about -Robinson, Esq. (who installed a 12 ft. billiard table at Crab Tree Cottage, Fulham) and T. Lill, Esq. of Commercial Road Lambeth, and Frederick Bowman, Esq. of Wandsworth Lodge, Upper Tooting.

Then as now, Thurston's supplied customers overseas; in 1818 H. E. Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Hamilton, Bart., Governor and Commander in Chief of Newfoundland, ordered a 9 ft. portable billiard table, while Jacob Goodridge, Esq. of Bridge Town Barbadoes, was charged £62 for a 12 ft. "mahg" (shorthand for mahogany) table with turned legs and silk pockets- quite apart for what he had to pay for Packing, Wharfage, Freight, Duty and so forth.

In 1819 Mr. William Darling ordered "for the 20th Regiment of Foot, St. Helena", an "Excellent mahg 12 ft Billiard Table with 12 Cues, two Maces, a Sett of Balls, a Marking Board, one long Cue and one half butt", costing in all £78 15s, as also 60 extra cues at 6s. each, an extra superior green cloth at £9 and other more usual extras, such as sets of balls and pockets, a Treatise on Billiards, a Billiard Brush, a Box Iron, a mahogany level plummet, a brown Holland Cover and Rollers and three strong packing cases.

This entry is exceptional because towards the end it becomes confused—it is obviously a draft. On another page it is repeated, and now the order is from "Mr. Andrew Darling, St. Helena, and Mr. Wm. Darling, 40 Princes Street,

Soho." What follows is very odd indeed; the price of every item is stepped up; £75 15s. 0d. becomes £95, the "extra superior green cloth" costs eleven guineas and even the treatise on billiards, which features on almost every page of the ledger at nine shillings a copy, goes up to ten shillings. The Darlings are obviously agents working on a commission basis, and they aim at getting a handsome commission—probably not from the Regiment, since, according to the traditions of the firm, this billiard table was made for Napoleon Bonaparte. And we know from other sources that the Emperor's insistence on the submission of detailed accounts gave his purveyors endless trouble. There is nothing to suggest that John Thurston himself made more profit than usual out of the transaction.

Fourteen years later he received the Royal Warrant of King William IV, and those of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V were granted to his firm in due course. In 1835 he introduced the rubber cushion (superseding the list cushion) and in 1836 the slate bed. After that, little development was possible in the manufacture of billiard tables, except the vulcanized rubber cushion (1845) and the improved vulcanized rubber cushion (1869) and the "Stanfast cushion" (1924). In 1851 the firm was awarded the prize medal at the Great Exhibition, and the label from over their stand (exquisitely inlaid in rare woods) may still be seen at the factory. In 1892 they designed and made the original "Standard" Billiard Table, which was officially adopted by the Billiards Association and is still the only pattern recognised. In 1901, having lost their premises in Catherine Street (compulsorily acquired by the L.C.C. and demolished for street improvements) they moved to Leicester Square, building showrooms and a Match Hall which were wrecked by a German bomb in 1940.

Relics from the debris of the Leicester Square premises are preserved in the Chelsea factory, among them a charred cheque signed by Charles Dickens. There are other interest-

ing things here too; lighting equipment, electric or gas, contrived for the green tables before the invention of strip lighting; and rows of billiard table legs, oak or mahogany, Tudor or Classical in style, with at least one set designed by Frank Brangwyn, who took a great interest in the factory. His table legs are decorated with rectangular plaques of metal worked in a distinctively Celtic style—the *art nouveau* of the first decades of this century.

The billiard table legs are not just museum pieces, they are waiting to be assembled; for there is still a brisk demand for billiard and bagatelle tables, new or second-hand, not so much in this country nowadays, but overseas in many parts of the world. So work goes on at Thurston's and members of the Chelsea Society were able to watch it on the afternoon of September 21st; since although it was a Saturday, the staff had kindly consented to stay in order to demonstrate the various processes connected with their craft.

There is little mechanization at Thurston's except in the form of a few drills and lathes, for the flatness and smoothness and detailed perfection of a billiard table is something that no robot can achieve; and those of us who saw the fitting and smoothing of great slabs of slate from Portugal, the stretching of green cloth of superfine quality, and the planing of silky, rose-pink mahogany with its subsequent treatment to give it the orthodox texture and colour, can bear witness to something which seems scarcely credible to-day—the skill of craftsmen whose precision of hand and eye defies the competition of machinery.

ALL THAT REMAINED OF CHELSEA OLD CHURCH AFTER THE BOMBING

This photograph of the More Chapel and the Dacre Monument is taken from the Nave after the bombing when nothing remained above floor level. The church might never have been rebuilt but for the campaign in which Richard Stewart-Jones took a leading part.

From the Richard Stewart-Jones collection of Chelsea papers and photographs presented by his widow to the Chelsea Public Library by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

Richard Stewart-Jones

When Richard Stewart-Jones died suddenly on September 22, 1957 at the age of forty-three, Chelsea lost one who had probably done more for local amenity than any other person of his generation. Many very moving tributes appeared in the national and local press, notably those from Mr. James Lees-Milne and Lord Esher.

Among the national organisations to which he dedicated so much of his life were The National Trust and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Many historic houses and buildings of architectural interest, now visited and en-

joyed by the public in ever increasing numbers, might never have been seen at all, or at any rate not in their present state, had it not been for Richard's energy and selfless striving after perfection. His contribution to these causes was at once boundless and inimitable. He died in this crusade.

Here, however, we are principally concerned with his life in Chelsea. When one considers the work of a local amenity society and all those imperfect individuals and bodies whose attitude towards amenities is so sadly in need of correction it springs to one's mind that Richard was the model of the amenity society's "perfect citizen".

Let us begin with the model citizen's first entrance into the Chelsea scene. In 1935, Richard, then a 21 year old bachelor, received a legacy. There must be many ways in which a 21 year old bachelor might spend a legacy, but only one for Richard; he acquired in quick succession three Chelsea houses of great architectural and historic interest.

The first of these was No. 94, Cheyne Walk, a fine 1776 house. It was to this house that Richard moved in 1935 accompanied by a few friends as paying guests. Next, the combined Nos. 95 and 96, known as No. 96, Cheyne Walk, was put into the market by Mr. Bryan Guinness, now Lord Moyne. Here was indeed an architectural and historic prize. In point of architecture, two houses (out of the seven into which the great mansion, rebuilt by Lord Lindsey in 1674, had been divided in 1777) had been reconstructed in the early years of the present century by Lutyens to make the single magnificent residence so admired by Chelsea people and a much wider public. In point of history, it will be remembered that it was to Lord Lindsey's great mansion that Count Zinendorf brought his Moravian Sect in 1750; and it was in No. 96 that James McNiel Whistler lived and worked from 1866 to 1876. Richard seized the opportunity to purchase and, with a few more paying guests, arranged that his mother and brothers and sisters should move to No. 96 from Carlyle

Square. In 1936 he bought No. 97. Later acquisitions included No. 93 Cheyne Walk, which he bought in 1943 and sold in 1948 and No. 102, which he bought in 1945 and sold in 1948; No. 101, being the most westerly house in Lindsey Row, was acquired in 1946 by his sister Mrs. Pulford; and, in 1950, he bought the combined Nos. 99 and 100, known as 100.

He thus constituted himself a sort of one-man National Trust for the preservation of these magnificent Chelsea houses of architectural and historic interest.

It was originally his aim to acquire all the seven houses into which the great mansion had been divided; he did in fact acquire six of them, No. 98 being the only one he never owned. Nevertheless, it appeared obvious after World War II that his purpose could more effectively and permanently be carried out by the National Trust itself and he began to make arrangements with that body to preserve for all time these historic buildings.

So much for the bricks and mortar; but an even greater contribution to Chelsea was the community he founded centring on No. 96. Chelsea's great houses have been famous for their happy family life and their neighbourliness, beginning with Sir Thomas More and his family. In 1935, Richard, his mother, his brother Edward and his two sisters moved into No. 96 from Carlyle Square. This was the nucleus of that notable Chelsea community that was to have so profound an effect on so many Chelsea organisations and movements. Gradually he collected friends who came to stay on a paying-guest basis; and it is remarkable how many members of this vigorous and intelligent community have since those days made great names for themselves in their several spheres. Though the ballroom in No. 96 could be hired for dances and weddings, it was, when not in use, the centre of this community; moreover, it was constantly lent free of charge to almost every voluntary organisation in Chelsea. From 1935

to 1939 the Chelsea Society held its Annual General Meetings in this room. There were concerts, large and small; exhibitions; and every kind of lecture, meeting or social gathering. Behind it all was "the community". No. 96 soon became a sort of centre in Chelsea for individuals and organisations interested in social welfare and the field of music, art and letters.

It did not take Mr. Reginald Blunt, our Founder, long to see that here was the perfect recruit for the Chelsea Society: and within a few months Richard was duly enrolled, an occasion for which every member of the Society should be profoundly grateful. In 1937 Richard became a member of the Council of the Society and in the same year he was elected a Borough Councillor; he resigned from the Borough Council in 1943.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, it was typical of Richard to enlist straight away as a private soldier. Later in the war he rose to the rank of Captain and fought on many fronts in Italy and elsewhere.

Before the war, the Stewart-Jones family had been regular members of the Old Church congregation. To them, as to so many others in Chelsea, the destruction of that Crurch by bombing had been a bitter blow. One leave, Richard came home and found that children were scribbling on the stone and carrying off wood and bricks; and even less excusably adults were stealing lead to sell and wood to burn. There are many ways in which a soldier can spend leave; but not every soldier would have chosen as Richard to take the initiative in having the site fenced and then to organise a concert at No. 96 to pay for it.

During the war his Mother died and his sisters married. Nevertheless, after the war, he returned to the position in which he ran the community in No. 96 and adjacent houses. It was at this time that he became Honorary Secretary of

the Chelsea Society and began that spate of activity which had such splendid results.

Of these, the rebuilding of the Old Church, where he had so often worshipped before its destruction, was nearest his heart. It is not generally realised that until 1947 the Diocesan re-organisation proposals ruled out the possibility of rebuilding either a temporary or a permanent church; abolished the office of Minister-in-Charge; abandoned the faithful congregation and made no provision for the return to their appointed shrine of those historic sepulchral masterpieces, which had miraculously survived the bombing. Richard brought into action the full force of his dynamic personality in a campaign to reverse this decision and restore the Old Church. He began by collecting the protests of Chelsea people and a much wider public and channelling them into quarters where they might prove effective. Wherever he went his presence, his arguments, his vitality and his friendliness persuaded individuals, learned societies and authorities that the Old Church must be rebuilt. His arguments were considered and accepted by everyone; everyone, that is to say, except the diocesan authorities. But at last even they were forced to relent by the rightness of Richard's cause and the weight of the ever-increasing "snowball" of informed public opinion.

Richard's friends may agree that one of his most endearing qualities was his ability in whatever he did to form a little party around him. He seemed to have the magic which made each individual experience real joy, whether it was a gardening party, clearing out an attic or visiting a friend. So when the permission to rebuild the Old Church did come through, but did not envisage a start being made at once, Richard organised a party of volunteer bricklayers who began to rebuild the Old Church with their own bare hands. The joy of these builders working for a great cause in Richard's company had to be seen to be believed. It has been said that the rebuilt Old Church is Richard's Memorial; but it is

equally true that for many Chelsea people his memorial is the happiest of memories of the time when they were partners in his achievements.

In 1948, when the organising Committee of the first Chelsea Week asked the Chelsea Society what their contribution would be, it was Richard who thought at once that, whatever it was, it should be located at or near the World's End district which at that time was still incredibly drab and war-scarred. Then began one of the most wonderful exercises in co-operation that can be imagined. A joint Committee consisting of members of the Chelsea Society and the local inhabitants met frequently in the World's End public house and decided that their joint contribution to Chelsea Week should be the now famous "World's End Exhibition of Old Chelsea". The Committee delegated its work to sub-committees and in a short time literally hundreds of people in that area were busily engaged on brightening up the locality and putting together the Exhibition. Richard was here, there and everywhere. He almost always arrived late for a meeting, but just when some crucial matter was under discussion. The moment he came into the room faces that had frowned lighted up and immediately there was a warm and friendly feeling. Moreover he usually had a solution to every difficult problem. Thus it came about that an enthusiastic party of volunteers started to put the blitzed and derelict St. John's Mission Hall into repair. Glass, still at that time unobtainable for ordinary use, was taken from Richard's garage roof and the boarded-up windows were re-glazed. The hall, which had not been used since the bombing, was scrubbed out and fitted with stalls and sideshows. Everyone was enthusiastic and happy. The joy was contagious and as a result the scope of the Exhibition widened. Richard formed a Committee of local inhabitants to see what could be done to brighten the houses surrounding the World's End open space and called in Oliver Messel to advise. As a result every window was decorated. The fame of the operations of the

joyful throng doing up the blitzed mission hall and brightening the World's End neighbourhood spread further afield until that wonderful character Her late Majesty Queen Mary heard of it. She at once offered to lend as part of the Exhibition the best pieces from her splendid collection of Chelsea china. Not only that, but Her Majesty graciously signified her intention of being there on the opening day, which happened to be her birthday. She came and, if looks could tell, enjoyed every minute of it. Protocol got a little out of hand in the crowded mission hall and people from every walk of life came up and were presented or even presented themselves. At one moment Her Majesty was laughing merrily while comparing ages with the oldest inhabitant; and at another was almost uproariously amused at the famous Chelsea men of past ages dressed on female plastic models kindly lent by Messrs. Peter Jones. Richard, the mainspring of the whole operation, kept himself strictly in the background; but his day of triumph was complete when Her Majesty finally emerged from the Mission Hall and the whole populace outside greeted her by singing "Happy Birthday To You".

The World's End Exhibition Committees were just one of innumerable ways in which Richard drew friends from every section of the community; and he had an endearing habit of making his friends' problems his own. In the immediate post-war period, the most acute problem confronting his World's End neighbours was housing. Richard threw himself wholeheartedly into the work of the Chelsea Housing Improvement Society. It was his firm belief that there were many acts of common sense and humanity that a Housing Society could do that could not be done by the somewhat hide-bound powers of a Local Authority. As a result there are many in Chelsea now decently housed, who would not have been, but for Richard's work.

The hive of activity which centred about Richard and 96, Cheyne Walk in the post-war years was a source of admiration and astonishment to the whole neighbourhood. Yet No.

96 was not quite the same as in pre-war years when Richard had just attained his majority and his mother and sisters formed that happy family life which will long be associated with Lindsey Row. In the post-war years No. 96 was always crowded with friends; but there was now no "family" life there and Richard was in his thirties. Moreover his health wanted more attention than his friends could supply. In spite of all his friends and the life he had made for himself in Chelsea, there was something lacking.

Late in the evening of January 31, 1951, Richard informed his close friends that he was to be married to Emma Smith the novelist, at the Old Church early next day. On the day itself news spread quickly and by mid-morning the then Mayor of Chelsea sauntered into a bookshop to buy the latest Emma Smith novel. "Sold out" he was told "we've had a strange run on Miss Smith's books this morning".

So Richard and Emma began their married life, which soon developed into the model family. It started out from the Church -in fact, the Old Church- and so continued. In due course, with the birth of Barnaby and Rose, a new generation of Stewart-Jones began. But, largely owing to Richard's health, it centred more and more in the country. Finally, Richard and Emma went to live at Combe Manor near Newbury. Thereafter Chelsea saw less and less of him; though he used to come to London about once a week. He kept up with his Chelsea interests as a member of the Council of the Chelsea Society and the Chelsea Housing Improvement Society; but more and more he concentrated on the work of nation-wide organisations such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the National Trust, of which he became a part-time area agent. He had the resource and intuition of a genius in arranging the furnishings of National Trust houses for exhibition to the public. Unfortunately his interest in and enjoyment of beautiful things and skill in their display kept him at work sometimes all night trying new arrangements and moving heavy furniture with his own

hands. Nothing daunted him and no trouble was too much in his struggle towards perfection. But it was more than his strength could stand. In September 1956 he had a severe thrombosis followed by further attacks. Richard, although told after the second of these attacks that he must live quietly, was totally unable to follow such prudent advice when a situation presented itself in which something calling for his advice and attention was being done to an architectural masterpiece. It was, therefore, inevitable that, at a critical stage in the extensive refurbishment of Dyrham Park in Gloucestershire, he should fling himself to its rescue; and, in doing so, with all banners flying, equally inevitably, he had another attack and so met his death. If a life that brought so much joy to others had to end so young, that is how he would have wished it to happen.

B. M-S.

Mr. Paul Reilly's Address

You may have noticed the very general title that I have chosen for my talk this afternoon. It is not, I believe, the one that the Chairman of your Society would have wished for, because I think he really wanted me to talk about lamp-posts —but however devoted I am to many old lamp-posts and however disgusted by many new ones I felt quite unable to spin that subject out to last for the time at my disposal.

Besides, I saw in this kind invitation to speak to your Society an opportunity to grind a particular axe before an audience which I am sure can properly be described as opinion forming. Moreover the objects of your Society as listed in your Annual Report seem to invite just such an argument as I should like to start today.

I refer particularly to the first and third of your objects which cover the preservation of old features and buildings "unless a proved necessity requires their removal", and also the construction, when clearances are necessary, of new buildings that will be a credit to Chelsea.

I am thankful, by the way, that your Society does not lean over backwards to preserve the unpreservable but frankly accepts that a town or borough is a continually growing and developing organism.

What I am going to ask you to support today is the patronage of the modern architect, the modern designer and the modern artist, by whom I mean those creative folk who are aware of the times in which they are living, for unless people like you do give their patronage to modern minded designers this country may, I fear, appear in foreign eyes to be progressively more and more moth-eaten and antiquated, in spite of all our scientific achievements. An American visitor to The Design Centre in Haymarket, where a fine collection of our modern designs is on show, was recently

heard to say on leaving that this was the first place she had visited in England that was not a ruin—an exaggeration of course but not to be dismissed too lightly, I think.

We are already in danger of losing foreign markets to our more up to date competitors just because so many of our middle classes still imagine themselves to be living in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, still commission period houses—however muddle-aged the period—and still furnish their rooms with debased reproductions of the designs that made our ancestors famous—in short the sort of safe, time-honoured Kensington (I choose my words carefully) taste that spells death to initiative and imagination. In this competitive new world we cannot and must not allow our ancestors to do our designing for us.

I am by no means alone and by no means the first in making so obvious an appeal. There was, for instance, that strangely prophetic mid-Victorian architect, William Burges, who for all his gothic practice, yet declared at the Royal Society of Arts in 1862 that the principal impediment to progress in art and design was "the want of a distinctive architecture".

"Until the question of architectural style gets settled" he said, "it is utterly hopeless to think about any great improvement in modern art. It is most sincerely to be hoped that in course of time we may get something of our own of which we need not be ashamed. This," he added, "may perhaps take place in the twentieth century; it certainly, as far as I can see will not occur in the nineteenth"—a very remarkable prophecy still on its way to fulfilment.

You may have read Geoffrey Grigson's review last Sunday of the new Penguin Guides to London in which he said that the Deciding Classes seem to have lost their cultural nerve, attaching themselves not to living styles but to styles of fossil gentility.

The same argument had been made even more pointedly by Prince Albert, The Prince Consort, at the Mansion House Banquet to launch the Crystal Palace Exhibition—he was speaking, remember, in the context of the first great exhibition of industrial art and design. "I conceive it," he said "to be the duty of every educated person closely to watch and to study the time in which he lives. Nobody will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition."

If that was true then, how much truer it is today—in this supersonic, electronic age—but who would guess it from the new headquarters of the National Farmers' Union in Knightsbridge for instance, or from the many tame and timid office buildings going up in the City or the West End, or even from some new building in Chelsea which I shall show you shortly. As a people we are, I fear, still unconvinced in the buildings we erect and in the furnishings we put into them that this is really the twentieth century.

Moreover we are still very prone to the failing, recognised by another Victorian critic, Mathew Digby Wyatt, of borrowing ornaments expressive of lofty associations and applying them to mean objects. This is a disease that has afflicted and still afflicts many clients and their architects and most of our durable consumer goods.

It stems again I believe from the social conventions and tastes of our upper and middle classes and it appears in an even more aggravated form in the lower reaches of the market. It can be summed up in one word "Pretentiousness" which I am sure is the Achilles heel of taste. John Summerson put it another way when he once said that "self-consciousness is the enemy of style." And Lethaby felt the same when he said that what he meant by architecture was not designs, forms and grandeurs but buildings, honest and human, with hearts in them.

So if I may be allowed to advise such a distinguished group

as the Chelsea Society I would beg you to watch out for pretentiousness in any form and avoid it like the plague.

But there is another point I would like you to consider before I show you some slides. It is that we are endowed in this country today as seldom before with young designers and architects all straining at the leash, all ready to build and make things in which they believe, but all or most of them frustrated by lack of patronage, with the sad result that much of the best modern British architecture is not to be seen at home, but overseas, in Africa or Burma or other areas that are commonly called backward.

The finest modern picture gallery in the world today is being completed at this moment not in London, nor even in Chelsea, that home of the arts, but in the heart of Africa.

And if we look more closely at these young architects and designers we will see another interesting thing. They are all working on the same wave-length so to speak. They share a common language or philosophy of design. There is a consistency in their work as between one art or craft or industry and another which has not been matched since the eighteenth century or at latest the Regency. That is surely a very promising symptom and one which should encourage the waverers, for one of the characteristics of a lively period of design has always been just such a like-mindedness between artists practising in different media.

These young designers, who would in general run a mile rather than ape their ancestors are neverthless more devoted to and possibly more knowledgeable about the monuments of the past, however humble and unpretentious, than were their fathers or grandfathers who would blithely pull down a genuine Georgian building and put up some monstrous or insipid imitation in its place.

Their respect for the fine things of the past whether in architecture, furniture, pottery or glass is expressed not by

copying the outward forms of what went before, but by emulating the original thought and experiment that went into their creation.

In this connection I think I might give you a quotation from Confucius which I once found on a lavatory door in a Sheffield factory, of all unlikely places. It seems that Confucius was asked how he would recognise a good artist craftsman or let us say today a good designer. He replied "First by the reputation of his ancestors for honesty and sincerity; second by his ability to create something new with a tradition that is old."

That sentiment exactly matches both our past history and our present challenge. If we don't encourage something new with our traditions that are old we may live to see our manufactures become the laughing stock of the world and our cities mausolea of lost opportunities.

But—and it is an important but—let us not confuse novelty with good design. There are some very sad things happening in the world in which I work. The modern movement in furniture, textiles and industrial design is in danger of going off the rails at the very moment of liberation from inherited conventions. The reason is of course the sheer opportunism of certain manufacturers who, hearing that there is a growing following for something called "contemporary", hasten to jump on the wagon, telling their underpaid, under-talented draughtsmen to quit what they have been accustomed to for the last twenty-five years and have a go at this new fangled contemporary design. The results are usually as insincere and unpleasant as one would expect.

I once talked with a designer/decorator of pottery in Stoke-on-Trent who told me that he had been drawing roses for twenty-eight years when his boss suddenly told him to do something different. He couldn't for the life of him think what to try in place of his roses so they shipped him to

California to see what they were doing there and he came back to copy what he had seen—a year or two late of course.

The fact is that in most fields a designer is no better than he who commissions him. The delights of the eighteenth century were the product of close and intelligent co-operation between patron and artist or between landowner and architect, each stimulating the other to produce the best contemporary work of the day. The client was an educated critic of his architect's work and could distinguish between the good and the bad; and this discrimination seemed to run right through society down to the humblest shop front.

I wish we could say the same of our present day landowners and property companies. I wish we could think that they too were conversant with what is going on in the architecture of their own time and were able to sift the wheat from the chaff.

But if we could we would perhaps not be here today for there would be less need for a Chelsea Society, though admittedly your public spirited activities cover a wider field than architecture and buildings. However the very existence of your Society must be a measure of our failure to keep our eye on our own times.

I hope my slides may serve to illustrate some of these arguments both indoors and out. They have been carefully picked to do so. I am grateful to Mr. Buchanan and to Mr. Marsden Smedley for an interesting morning's photography in Chelsea.

The Annual General Meeting

of the

Chelsea Society was held at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, Chelsea

(By kind invitation of the English Stage Company)

on Tuesday, 30th April, 1957, at 4.45 p.m.

Once again the Royal Court Theatre opened its doors to a large gathering of members of the Society and their friends and distinguished visitors. Lord Cadogan took the Chair and opened the meeting by welcoming the (then) Mayor and Mayoress of Chelsea (Mr. and Mrs. Sims).

The President next announced that the first business was to receive the Chairman's Report as printed in the *Annual Report*, 1956. Mr. Marsden-Smedley, in moving the adoption of the Report, drew attention to its cost, and while hoping that subscriptions might remain at the present level, pointed out the desirability of collecting more money, by donations or the enlistment of new members, so that the high quality of the Report might be continued.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley then referred to the detailed historical account given in the current issue of the College of St. Mark and St. John and the Royal Court Theatre. He explained that in the past it had been found useful to put on record the importance, historical and artistic, of buildings that might be threatened in the future. As an example of a protest in which the result had favoured the view of the Society, he cited the case of the Battersea Tower, noted in the Report. He also referred to the importance of the proper pruning and siting of trees.

He went on to say that in moving the Report it was usual to refer to current matters and problems for the future. As a

current matter he reminded the Society of the Car Mart which had been placed so inappropriately in that charmang stretch of the King's Road lying between Dovehouse Street and Carlyle Square. Among problems of the future he said were proposals regarding Royal Avenue, the Bomb Site Gardens and Albert Bridge. He was in favour of fencing and tidying up Royal Avenue; but thought it was useless to attempt to sow grass there. It would be hard enough anyway to try to grow grass under the trees; but quite impossible on a gravelled stretch. A further difficulty would arise because Royal Avenue was a public right-of-way. But why not let it remain its own, original self, unique in London in its resemblence to a continental boulevard? He thought the best policy would be to recognise and develop the character of Royal Avenue as it had always been, rather than try to do the impossible and make it like other gardens. He next reminded the Society of the great interest shown by the public in the Bomb Site Gardens, and deplored the possibility that the volunteer gardeners might be ousted by the London County Council. He felt that if the gardens were taken over by Chelsea Borough Council they might allocate a portion of the garden to the volunteers who have spent so much thought and ingenuity in providing gardens of special horticultural interest. He then turned to the London County Council's proposals to rebuild Albert Bridge and expressed the view that this destruction was neither necessary nor desirable. It seemed likely to lead to an increase of heavy traffic up and down Sydney Street and Oakley Street to and from the reconstructed bridge of increased width and weight limit. The traffic artery thus created might cut Chelsea in two. Good Town Planning should avoid siting road arteries so that they divide "neighbourhood units". Moreover, increased bridge traffic would interfere with East-West traffic by introducing traffic cuts on Chelsea Embankment, and at the staggered crossings at King's Road and Fulham Road. He also felt alarmed because the London County Council threatened to provide unspecified approach works at the Chelsea

end of the bridge which might involve the houses in Cheyne Walk and the Crescent, the Gardens with their trees and the riverside walk.

Lady Heath seconded the adoption of the Report which was carried unanimously.

The adoption of the accounts, as printed at the end of the *Annual Report* 1956 was then moved by Mr. O'Rorke and seconded by Mr. Adam and carried unanimously.

The President next informed the Meeting that Mr. Marsden-Smedley had tendered his resignation as Chairman in view of his nomination as the next Mayor of Chelsea. He recalled his long services to Chelsea and the Society and prophesied that those services would not now be wholly discontinued. He then explained that under the Society's constitution it was for the Council to elect their own Chairman and announced that they had selected Lord Conesford who had been for many years a member of the Council, and had only resigned on taking office in the Government. The President went on to say how exceptionally well-qualified Lord Conesford was for the post through his great interest in Chelsea and his unusual experience in both planning and architectural amenities.

Lord Conesford replied briefly remarking that he had for thirty years lived in the same house in Cheyne Walk and that his affection for Chelsea had increased every year.

The President informed the Council with regret that General Sir Bernard Paget had resigned from his office of Vice-president of the Society on his retirement as Governor of the Royal Hospital and leaving Chelsea. He also referred with regret to the resignation from the Council of Miss Maud Pelham, Miss Dorothy Pickford and Mr. Richard Stewart-Jones. He hoped the Society would continue to see them at our meetings. He then thanked the Hon. Secretaries, the Hon. Auditor and the Hon. Treasurer for their services and

moved that the Council and Officers with the exceptions already mentioned be confirmed in their posts. This was seconded and carried unanimously.

The President then moved a vote of thanks, which was carried with acclamation, to the English Stage Company and Mr. Devine for allowing the Society to use the theatre for the Meeting. Lord Cadogan then referred to the historical account entitled *Ranelagh Chapel and the Royal Court Theatre* of pages 7 to 19 of the *Annual Report,* 1956 and particularly to Mr. Devine's comments at the end.

The formal business of the Annual Meeting having been concluded, the President called on Mr. Paul Reilly, Deputy Director of the Council of Industrial Design. Thereupon Mr. Reilly delivered an address of exceptional aptness for the aims of the Society on *Indoor and Outdoor Design,* illustrated by lantern slides. A full account is given on page 59.

At the conclusion, Mr. Marsden-Smedley thanked Mr. Reilly for an inspiring talk and for having thrown new light on many old topics of burning interest.

GENERAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1957

INCOME	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Balance brought forward, 1st Jan., 1957		
Office Equipment		25 10 0
Bank and Cash ...		82 19 8
„ Members:—		
Life Members ...	117 12 0	
Annual Subscriptions	203 2 0	
Donations ...	61 15 9	
Entrance Fees ...	22 2 0	
		404 11 9
„ Sales of Annual Report		1 0 8
„ Interest on £500 of 3½% War Stock		17 10 0
„ Realised from Deposit in P.O.S.B. ...		150 0 0
„ Interest on Deposit in P.O.S.B.		2 12 6
		£684 4 7

EXPENDITURE	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
By Annual General Meeting		19 7 6
„ Annual Report ...		272 10 1
„ Bank Charges ...		4 2
„ Clerical Assistance ...		40 1 2
„ Photographs		1 13 6
„ Postage		25 4 3
„ Printing		29 1 3
„ Stationery		19 4 1
„ Summer Meeting ...		19 5 0
„ Typewriter Insurance and Maintenance		1 13 3
„ Depreciation of Office Equipment ...		5 0 0
„ Balance:—		
Cash in Hand ...	6 1 0	
Barclays Bank ...	179 12 10	
P.O.S. Bank (Interest)	44 16 6	
		230 10 4
„ Office Equipment ...	25 10 0	
Less: Depreciation	5 0 0	
		20 10 0
		£684 4 7

E. HALTON.
Hon. Treasurer.

12th January, 1958.

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.,
Hon. Auditor.
21st January, 1958.

NOTE:—The Certificates for £500 3½% War Stock in the name of the Chelsea Society are deposited with Messrs. Barclays Bank, Ltd., 348, King's Road, S.W.3.

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH RESTORATION FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1957

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward 1st January 1957	132	11	1	By Balance in P.O.S. Bank	135	17	1
„ Interest for 1957	3	6	0				
	135	17	1		£135	17	1

E. HALTON.
Hon. Treasurer.

12th January, 1958.

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.,
Hon. Auditor.
21st January, 1958.

REGINALD BLUNT MEMORIAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1957

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward 1st January 1957	48	19	8	By Balance in P.O.S. Bank	50	4	2
„ Interest for 1957	1	4	6				
	£50	4	2		£50	4	2

E. HALTON.
Hon. Treasurer.

12th January, 1958.

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.,
Hon. Auditor.
21st January, 1958.

ANALYSIS OF POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNT

As at 31st December, 1957

General Fund Account	57	16	0
Reginald Blunt Memorial Fund Account	50	4	2
Chelsea Old Church Restoration Fund Account	135	17	1
	£243	17	3

List of Members

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

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† *While this report was being prepared for printing the Society will have heard with deep regret of the death of Mr. G. A. Beaton.*

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