THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

THE ANNUAL REPORT 1958

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Price Five Shillings

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER
ARRIVING AT CHELSEA OLD CHURCH

The Queen Mother, heralded by a fanfare from the State Trumpeters of the Royal Horse Guards and escorted by the Mayor of Chelsea, is here seen entering the Old Church for the reconsecration on May 13, 1958.
(See page 41).

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

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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.

CONTENTS

COUNCIL OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY - - - - 3

OBJECTS AND MEMBERSHIP - - - - - 4

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS - - - - - - 6

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1958 - - - - - 8

Annual General Meeting—Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London—Royal Avenue—International Exhibition of Eighteenth Century Soft Paste Porcelain at the Mariemont Museum, Belgium—Arnold Bennett Plaque—The Civic Trust.

EVIDENCE OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GREATER LONDON - - - - - - - - - 12

ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, CHELSEA
BY DR. RIPLEY ODDIE - - - - - - 18

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH
BY THE REVEREND C. E. LEIGHTON THOMSON - - 36

THE VALE
BY MRS. G. L. THIRKELL - - - - 44

THE HELMET OF LORD DACRE IN ALL SAINTS' CHURCH CHELSEA, BY SIR JAMES MANN, K.C.V.O. - - 50

CHELSEA IN THE 'NINETIES - - - - - - 56
Letter from Mr. Gilbert Ledward, O.B.E., R.A. to the Mayor of Chelsea, Mr. Basil Marsden-Smedley, O.B.E., J.P.

ANTHONY DEVAS
A TRIBUTE BY MR. ROBIN GUTHRIE - - - 62

MR. JOHN BETJEMAN'S ADDRESS TO THE CHELSEA SOCIETY: JULY 14TH, 1958 - - - - - 65

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1958 - - - 68

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - - - - - - 72

LIST OF MEMBERS - - - - - - - 75

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER ARRIVING AT CHELSEA OLD CHURCH. *Frontispiece*

ROYAL HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE, RAYNER PLACE AND HEMUS TERRACE IN 1812. - - - - - - 18

MAPS AND DIAGRAM RELATING TO ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE - - - - - - - - - - 20

WALPOLE STREET IN 1852 - - - - - - - 23

ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, LOOKING EAST, IN 1953 - - - 25

ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, LOOKING WEST, IN 1958. - 27

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH IN 1958 - - - - - - 36

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH RECONSECRATION SERVICE - - 42

THE DACRE HELMET IN 1958 - - - - - - 51

NICHOLAS CHARLES'S DRAWING OF THE DACRE MONUMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT - - - - - - 52

THE MONUMENT OF GREGORY, LORD DACRE - - - - 54

ORANGES AND LEMONS AT THE VARLEY'S HOUSE IN 1892 56

ANTHONY DEVAS'S CONVERSATION PIECE OF MR. AND MRS. SAM GUINNESS - - - - - - - 62

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Chairman's Report for 1958

The Annual General Meeting

In the evening of Monday July 14, 1958, the Chelsea Society held their Annual General Meeting at the Chelsea College of Science and Technology, by kind permission of the Principal. It was a happy occasion for many reasons; but particularly because the address on Victorian and Chelsea Churches, with which the proceedings ended, was given by Mr. John Betjeman and was richly illustrated by slides of Chelsea Churches and Chapels. An account of this address is given on page 65. The Minutes of the Meeting are to be found on pages 68 to 71.

Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London

A Royal Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir Edwin Herbert, was set up in November 1957 to examine the present system and working of local government in the Greater London area and to recommend whether any, and if so what, changes in the local government structure and the distribution of local authority functions in the area would better secure effective and convenient local government. Since these matters are of great importance to Chelsea, the Society decided to submit evidence to the Royal Commission. It had previously, in October 1945, submitted a Memorandum to the Committee on London Government which the then Minister of Health had set up under the Chairmanship of the Marquess of Reading. (See Annual Report 1945, pages 13 to 19). That Committee, however, never reported, since in October, 1946, Mr. Bevan as Minister of Health relieved it of its task.

The Society considered that developments since 1945 had greatly strengthened the Society's case for maintaining the civic autonomy of the Borough and for opposing any plan to annex its territory, or any part of it, to any neighbouring

Borough. The Society accordingly decided again to submit the earlier Memorandum as part of its evidence to the Royal Commission. The whole of that evidence is, for convenience, printed on pages 12 to 17 of the present Report.

Royal Avenue

The noble concept of an avenue terminating in the central entrance of the Royal Hospital is valued by all Chelsea and a much wider public. The history of the development of this part of Chelsea is less well-known. Reference is made to it in Dr. Oddie's article *St. Leonard's Terrace*, on pages 18 to 35. The Terraces of small houses on either side are essentially part of the character of the place and are in scale with the avenue. In November 1958 the Society had occasion to write the following letter to the Town Planning Authority:—

The Chelsea Society

Dear Sir,

It is understood that a project may be under consideration for the development of the site bounded by the Kings Road on the North, Walpole Street on the East and Royal Avenue on the West.

A substantial development of this kind in the heart of Chelsea is of the utmost importance to the amenities of the Borough, and it is hoped that if there is to be new building it will be suitable to its environment both in character and scale. Above all we must ensure that no undesirable development should take place in Royal Avenue.

Royal Avenue is unique in Chelsea and indeed in London. The gravelled walk, lined by lime trees, with the view of the fine wrought iron gates of the Royal Hospital at one end, is of quite exceptional beauty and has been beloved by Chelsea residents and vistitors for many generations.

On the West side the houses at the South end are low 3-storey buildings of the 18th and early 19th century, of excellent proportion and character. Further North the building is of somewhat later date and the houses are of 4-storeys similar to those on the east side, which we discuss below.

The first 50 feet or so on the north of the east side of the Aveinue is untidy and of little architectural merit, consisting of low buildings behind the shop at the corner of Kings Road and Royal Avenue. From No. 1 Royal Avenue southwards to No 42, there is a terrace forming an architectural unity. This is pleasant domestic architecture of the mid-19th century of a kind once looked down on as 'early-Victorian' but now increasingly appreciated. A decorative cornice (broken on one or two houses, presumably by war damage) runs the whole length of the terrace below the top floor. Alternate blocks of four (or six) houses project a few inches, breaking what might

otherwise be the monotony of the façade, and the treatment of the attractive cast iron balconies differs slightly in the projecting blocks. The skyline is level throughout, at a height of about 40 feet.

The whole forms an exceedingly satisfactory architectural unity and an entirely suitable boundary for the "square". Most important, the height of the building does not dwarf the trees. The relation of the width of the Avenue to the height of the trees, and of the height of the trees to the height of the bordering buildings, is ideal and it is this relationship that makes Royal Avenue one of the most important and delightful features of the Chelsea landscape.

Clearly, any development which broke the skyline, or disturbed the unity of the architectural whole, would destroy the charm of one of the most beautiful and best loved open spaces in London. Such development, once permitted, would doubtless be the excuse for further destruction of amenities by further large-scale development.

The Council of the Chelsea Society would therefore most strongly deprecate:—

(a) Any development which disturbed the architectural unity of Royal Avenue.

(b) Particularly any massive development which would break the skyline, dwarf the trees, and destroy the balance of the Avenue.

They sincerely trust that the L.C.C. will keep them in touch with any proposals for development.

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Chelsea Borough Council and the Royal Fine Art Commission.

Yours faithfully,

HILDA REID,
Hon. Secretary.

The Clerk to the
London County Council,
County Hall, S.E.1.

International Exhibition of Soft Paste Porcelain

The memorable Exhibition of soft paste Porcelain held at the Musée de Mariemont (Hainaut) Belgium from May to September 1958 contained three dishes graciously lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother from her famous collection of pieces decorated with Sir Hans Sloane Plants. One of these with a branch of acacia must have been inspired by drawings of plants from The Chelsea Physic Garden contained in Volume I of Philip Miller's *Figures of Plants* of which many of the engraved plates are dated 1755 (see *Annual Report* 1953, pages 10 to 12). The Chelsea

Society was enabled to assist in the arrangements of this Exhibition at the invitation of Mme. Faider-Feytmans, the distinguished Conservateur of Mariemont. Mr. and Mrs. Basil Marsden-Smedley served on the Committees and our fellow Member, Mr. Arthur Grant Morris, lent his beautiful figure of a bird. This bird was modelled at the Chelsea Porcelain Works between 1751 and 1753 from the illustration in Edwards' *Natural History of Uncommon Birds*, 1743, Vol. I, Plate 13. It is there called a "guan" but it has sometimes been called a "peahen" (see *Annual Report* 1954, pages 38 to 41). Other pieces of Chelsea Porcelain came from the Victoria and Albert and the Fitzwillam Museums, while others from Derby, Longton Hall, Lowestoft, Worcester, Liverpool and Caughley served to show the richness of design and colour in the English Eighteenth Century China factories. These were beautifully shown in a well-lit annex of the Musée de Mariemont and offered interesting comparisons with Italian, French, Dutch, Danish and German products and above all with those of Tournai for which the Musée is famous. It will be remembered that it was the links between Tournai and Chelsea China that gave rise to an Exhibition of Tournai and Chelsea Porcelain in June, 1953 (see *Annual Report*, 1953, pages 32 to 40) arranged with the co-operation of the Belgian Institute and the Chelsea Society.

Mr. and Mrs. Basil Marsden-Smedley, as Mayor and Mayoress of Chelsea, were invited officially to the opening and were able to point out to the visitors (who included many from the countries which were exhibiting samples from their own factories) the special characteristics of the English pieces. Later, at the Exhibition, Mr. R. J. Charleston of the Victoria and Albert Museum gave a lecture on English Porcelain of that period which he illustrated from the many beautiful pieces shown.

Arnold Bennett Plaque

The Society's *Annual Report*, 1954, contained a reasoned

case which was presented to the London County Council, for commemorating the fact that Arnold Bennett lived at No. 75, Cadogan Square, from 1923 to 1930. The London County Council have now acceded to the Society's request and placed a plaque on that house inscribed as follows:—

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL
ARNOLD BENNETT
1867–1931
Novelist
Lived here.

The Civic Trust

The Civic Trust, which held its Inaugural Conference in July 1957, is an unofficial body which seeks to promote high standards of civic design. It enjoys influential support and was made possible through the generosity of leading companies in industry. Anxious to avoid duplicating activities which are being effectively carried on by existing amenity societies, the Trust has declared that, where appropriate, it will do all it can to support their work.

In particular, the Trust is prepared, in approved cases, to consider assisting such societies in the following ways:—

(a) payments to help meet the expenses involved in representation at a public enquiry affecting an important amenity, or the preservation of a building of historical or architectural merit (e.g. fees of legal, architectural and other specialist advisers)

(b) grants towards the costs of holding conferences or week-end schools for the study of architectural or planning problems

(c) loans, when available, of films, photographs and other exhibition material

(d) contributions towards cost of fees and fares of qualified speakers to address important meetings on architectural and planning subjects

(e) provision of appropriate literature.

The Chelsea Society has qualified for such assistance by inclusion on the register of the Civic Trust, and two members of the Council of the Society, Mr. Basil Marsden-Smedley and Professor J. M. Richards, serve on its appropriate Committee.

Evidence of The Chelsea Society to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London

1. On the 10th October, 1945, the Chelsea Society submitted evidence to the Committee on London Government which the then Minister of Health had set up under the Chairmanship of the Marquess of Reading. That Committee was appointed, as the Royal Commission will recall, to examine and review the number, size and boundaries of the Metropolitan Boroughs, and the distribution of functions between the London County Council on the one hand, and the Common Council of the City of London and the Metropolitan Boroughs on the other hand, and to make recommendations.

2. The Chelsea Society appends in the Annex hereto a copy of the Memorandum then submitted and invites the Royal Commission to treat it as part of the Society's present evidence.

3. Developments since 1945 have greatly strengthened the Society's case for maintaining the civic autonomy of the Borough and for opposing any plan to annex its territory, or any part of its territory, to any neighbouring borough. Chelsea has been more successful than its neighbours in maintaining its character and in preventing the loss of pleasant residential streets and squares to other uses. Not only have people lived for centuries in this historic place, which has given its name to a dozen Chelseas abroad; but people wish to continue to live there, because they love it for its own qualities, and not because they are unable to go elsewhere. It is of national, and not merely local, importance that such resident communities should continue to flourish near the centre of the capital.

4. The Chelsea Borough Council is close enough to the community which it serves to further their interests in ways

which would not occur to a composite or more distant authority. It is significant that, alone among Metropolitan Boroughs, it obtained statutory powers to build studios as part of its housing schemes.

5. Nothing would be easier, or more irreparable, than for Chelsea to lose its unique charm through undesirable developments; through the destruction, for example, of terraces of dwelling houses with gardens to make room for institutions, which could equally well be located elsewhere, where they would not involve any such destruction of valued amenities or of the interests of the local inhabitants.

6. Town planning does not mean promoting the same kind of development and exercising the same kind of control in every part of Greater London; it should rather aim at accentuating local character where that exists, and improving the quality of a local environment where this is needed. It goes without saying that certain services and utilities, and a few major principles of density control and use zoning, must be administered over a wider area than that of any single Metropolitan Borough; but in the matter of applications for planning consent, the preservation of historic buildings or the initiation of housing schemes, a Borough with the distinctive quality of Chelsea should make its own decisions.

It should not be possible for any development vitally affecting the local interests of Chelsea, or tending to change its character, to be initiated or carried out without consultation with the Borough Council; and the delegation powers under the Planning Acts and Regulations should, therefore, be exercised to the full.

7. The Chelsea Society is prepared to support and amplify these contentions by oral evidence, should the Royal Commission so desire. It is confident that the Royal Commission would not, in any event, recommend the destruction of the civic autonomy of Chelsea without giving the Chelsea Society an opportunity to be heard.

18*th December*, 1958

MEMORANDUM of the CHELSEA SOCIETY in defence of the civic autonomy of the Borough

(Submitted originally in 1945 *and now annexed to the Society's evidence submitted on the* 18*th December,* 1958)

In view of the White Paper (Cmd. 6579) on Local Government in England and Wales during the period of reconstruction, presented by the Minister of Health to Parliament in January, 1945, and the terms of reference of the Departmental Committee set up by Mr. Willink under the Chairmanship of the Marquess of Reading, the Council of the Chelsea Society have thought it right to lay the following considerations before His Majesty's Government in regard to the corporate development of the Borough of Chelsea. In particular they desire to stress, while the matter of the boundaries of the London Boroughs is before the Committee, the grave concern with which any scheme for the annexation of Chelsea to a neighbouring borough or its partition among other boroughs would be regarded. If any such plan were adopted, the social life of our community would be disrupted and its civic entity destroyed.

The Chelsea Society has frequently had occasion to make representations to the Local Authority on matters which concern the life and fabric of Chelsea. On all these occasions, whether the Chelsea Borough Council has accepted their views or no, the Society has been assured that its proposals have received meticulous consideration. Members of the Council of the Chelsea Society connected with other Chelsea organisations know that these other organisations have similar experience. In many cases the Chelsea Borough Council has adopted suggestions from Chelsea organisations and has had the time and the local knowledge and patriotism to develop and vigorously support them to other authorities and finally to secure their adoption. No larger authority, engulfing Chelsea with other localities, it is submitted, would be able to give the same consideration to matters individual to Chelsea. The Chelsea interests would be represented by a proportion or even a minority of the larger authority and might not even be represented at all on some of the Committees. Views individual to Chelsea would be diluted with different views individual to other localities. Were Chelsea to be engulfed, therefore, its people would enjoy, in a less pure form than they do at present the precious right of local self government.

The Chelsea Society has always voiced the sensitiveness of Chelsea people to the history and traditions of the place. It is the special theme of the Society that the history and development of Chelsea have moulded its unique characteristics, fortuitously perhaps, but none the less providentially, into a priceless segment of modern London, which will in future, if allowed to survive, become still more prized. The characteristic of this village is that it is a quiet place and a neighbour-

hood of thinking people in every walk of life. Some Chelsea men and women of genius there may be, indeed are, in the fields of art and letters, economics and science, politics and administration, and these find themselves in a community which appreciates them and they it. They stimulate one another as neighbours and enjoy the full advantage of a close compact society near the centre of the capital. But in the main Chelsea is an area of small separate dwellings where simple men and women live who work unobtrusively in the "back rooms" of this capital of civilisation. These people like Chelsea because it provides the atmosphere of community life which suits their individuality.

There has been a continuous development of community life in Chelsea, which has survived the "sprawl" of the metropolis. It was pointed out by the Royal Commission on London Government in 1923 that there are to be found embedded places which have a long and interesting history of their own, connected with London but still such as to give them a real sense of corporate existence and civic responsibility. The Commission added the following observations on the importance of historical conditions.

"The growth of London from its core, the City, may be traced in two tendencies. First there was the erection of royal and ecclesiastical houses on attractive spots at a distance from, but in close proximity to London, and the growth of a local population round these. Examples begin at Westminster, then Chelsea, then Kensington, further away Kingston, Richmond and Croydon. Besides these we have the first coaching stages, and villages having their origin in other causes. In all these cases the people intended to be out of London. On the other hand, there were the people who wanted to be in London, but owing to its crowded condition, had to live on its outer fringes. So the concurrent expansion of London and of the outside units went on, until the present condition is reached, in which many of the old townships are embraced in the continuous builded area we call Greater London. It is a natural consequence that the lamp of local patriotism burns more brightly in districts of the first class described. Probably in no part of existing London are there districts with more individuality than Kensington and Chelsea, while outside the county the same characteristic is observable in such places as Richmond and Croydon."

The boundaries of the London boroughs laid down in the London Government Act, 1899, were by no means all arbitrary; and in the building of roads one of the acknowledged objectives of the County Council Plan for London is the preservation of existing communities from the interference of through traffic. Indeed, the human factor which underlies the whole plan is the idea of community life; and with this object the planners began by identifying those communities which are organic units having either historical roots as the ancient villages of the London countryside or having in the course of time created characters for themselves. Both these characteristics belong peculiarly to Chelsea. "The physical organisation of a city, its industries and its markets, its lines of communication and traffic must be subservient to its social needs"; and Greater London is conceived by the plan to be a purposeful grouping of social units.

Chelsea is by its geography and its history a natural civic and

social entity, and its life on the north side of the Thames began as early as the eighth and ninth centuries, when Councils were held here. In Domesday the manor is recorded as held of the King; Court rolls show that in the 14th Century it was an administrative unit; but its individuality first fully emerged in Tudor times, when all that was best in England was brought together in Sir Thomas More's house and garden. Here Erasmus met Colet and Fisher, and Holbein made his most famous drawings. It was in Chelsea that Henry VIII established the young Princess Elizabeth, and the manor formed part of the jointure of Queen Katharine Parr.

Gradually the village by the river, with its fishing and farming, was chosen more and more by busy men seeking relaxation from the political and professional life of London. In the 17th Century, when Dorothy Osborne was describing Chelsea life to Sir William Temple, there were also many other famous people of more modest means gathered in friendly intimacy round Wren's Royal Hospital. Between 1686 and 1778 no fewer than four Presidents of the Royal Society lived in Paradise Row, and the illustrious names of Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Joseph Banks were added to the Chelsea roll. It also includes Sir Theodore Mayerne, court physician to four Kings, and Dr. Richard Mead, who persuaded Thomas Guy to found his hospital. In the eighteenth century Miss Burney was writing "Evelina," and Sir Robert Walpole spent some twenty years in Chelsea as Prime Minister; while Arne composed "Rule Britannia" at his house in the Kings Road, and Samuel Cotes painted his miniatures of the brilliant world that assembled at Ranelagh. In 1715 Thomas Doggett chose the "White Swan" at Chelsea for the finish of the Waterman's Race, which has survived to the present day.

In the 19th Century, Chelsea saw Thomas Carlyle in Cheyne Row and Dame Ellen Terry in the King's Road; the Kingsley family at the Rectory, Henry James, the novelist, at Carlyle Mansions, and Charles Keene, the great draftsman for "Punch" in Bramerton Street. Past generations of artists from Turner to Whistler, Sargent and Steer, have found Chelsea congenial, and many still make it their home; and the alteration of its character would not be conducive to fostering this unique atmosphere, still less to encouraging the "neighbourhood" idea so strongly advocated by Sir Patrick Abercrombie in his plan for London.

Chelsea has indeed long been, and has increasingly become, in Mr. Reginald Blunt's words, not only the most favoured artists' quarter in London, but the chosen abode of a host of interesting people, literary and artistic. Its individuality and historical associations, the old-fashioned charm of its river front, the quiet spell of a less strenuous time, have preserved that character for the dwellings of the craftsmen and other members of its industrial population for whom further provision is being planned. The firm of Wedgwood and William de Morgan carried on the tradition of the famous Chelsea China factory to modern times; and the excellence of the local coach building is well-known. The modest Queen Anne houses in Cheyne Row and the pleasant streets of yet smaller houses that grew up in Georgian and Victorian times attest this tradition of peace, the sciences and the arts, enjoyed by every section of the community, on which is founded the friendly atmosphere of modern Chelsea.

The merging of Chelsea in any large community would be an anti-social act, since it would destroy not only our whole tradition, but the neighbourliness which is its chief characteristic. The Chelsea Society agrees strongly with the statement in the Penguin summary of the County of London plan, just published: "London is alive, it has present and historical reasons for being what it is." The map on page 16 of that summary shows London and the surrounding villages, including Chelsea, in 1755 and their growth between 1755 and 1820, with the comment: "Many distinct villages have been engulfed and to-day form part of London; some of them have retained their individuality. The County Plan aims at retaining and encouraging the life of these communities." Chelsea, while retaining these characteristics, has long outgrown the status of an agricultural village, and the Borough possesses features which are unique in London life.

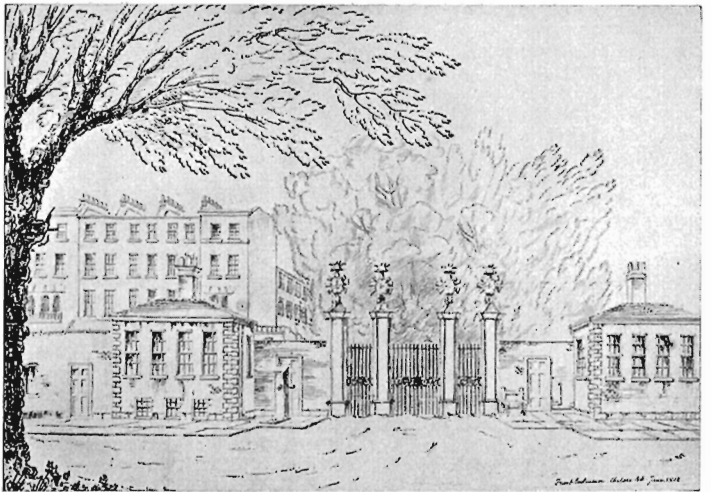
The famous Physic Garden of the Apothecaries' Society, described by Evelyn in 1685, fostered by Sir Hans Sloane, and tended from 1722 to 1770 by Philip Miller, who wrote the "Gardeners' Dictionary," took a new lease of life at the beginning of this century, when Darwin's Library was brought to its new laboratory. Here John Lindley was Professor of Botany and Elizabeth Blackwell wrote the "Curious Herbal." This garden was threatened with destruction half a century ago, but was saved for the students of the present and the future by the support given by His Majesty's Treasury to local patriotism.

The Royal Hospital of Charles II, shaken by enemy action, is preserved as part of the national history for the veterans of past wars; while the Military Headquarters in the Duke of York's School and the early organisation of the Air Training Corps and Sea Scouts reflect the continuity of the long military tradition of Chelsea.

The Old Church, that forms one landmark, will, we hope, rise again from the ground round the tomb built by Sir Thomas More; while an extension of the Chelsea Embankment is planned to remodel the riverside. When all this has been accomplished by the citizens of Chelsea, is it to be their reward that they should be deprived of their historic consciousness and continuity, of their modern Town Hall, their civic entity and the traditional neighbourliness of their riverside, the district of London which most preserves its individuality and gives its inhabitants a feeling of real pride and affection?

It is the essence of that Chelsea which history has forged into its present characteristics that it has always had its own self-government. Local government matters which would be better administered in larger areas or on a wider basis are or ought to be dealt with by the London County Council. It is the firm view of the Chelsea Society that if Chelsea loses the right to have its local affairs ordered and governed in the way it likes, it will lose its individuality and London will lose a unique quarter and the capital of civilisation will lose a cardinal component.

10th October, 1945.



ROYAL HOSPITAL MAIN ENTRANCE, RAYNER PLACE and HEMUS TERRACE IN 1812.

This sketch from inside Burton's Court by John Claude Nattes shows Nos. 14 to 18 St. Leonard's Terrace, then known as Rayner Place, and Nos. 46 and 48 Royal Avenue, then known as Hemus Terrace, with the seventeenth century Royal Hospital main entrance gates in the foreground. (See page 22).

Original drawing in the possession of the Chelsea Public Library.

St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea

By RIPLEY ODDIE

Topography

What is now St. Leonard's Terrace began as "Green's Row" in the later half of the 18th century. To the south east it faces the Royal Hospital and looks over Burton's Court, then enclosed with a wall as part of the hospital grounds and now

providing a 500 × 800 ft. rectangle of park-like land bordered with trees, with an Avenue in the middle leading from the imposing gates of the "Court" to the main entrance of the Hospital. To the north west, and bordered by trees in line with those in Burton's Court, lies Royal Avenue.

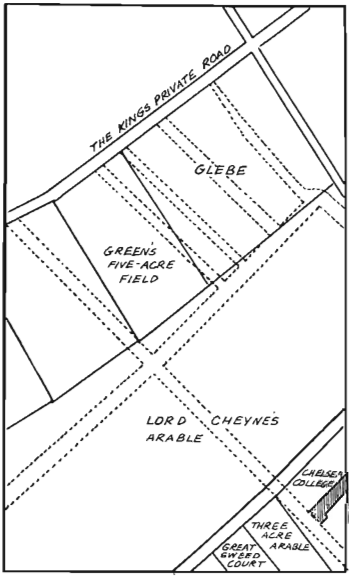
Burton's Court now provides space for the exercising of children and dogs; for football and lawn tennis; for the acti-ties of starlings, pigeons, blackbirds and even owls; and for the taking off and landing of V.I.P. helicopters. On special occasions there are colourful parades of Pensioners in their red coats and a Guards' Band plays to the cricketers for important matches. The outlook is charming, the scene in summer gay.

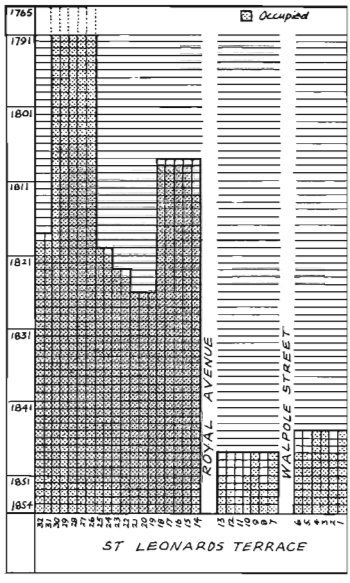
Green was a Westminster brewer who bought a 5-acre field to the north west of Burton's Court, presumably for building purposes. Thanks to a little land-juggling in the early days, Green's original property now covers the rectangle enclosed by Smith Street on the west, St. Leonard's Terrace as far as Royal Avenue on the south, Royal Avenue itself on the east and King's Road on the north. However, times became hard for Green when he had built the first five houses of his Row (according to local historians in 1765[1]) and the land's development fell into other hands.

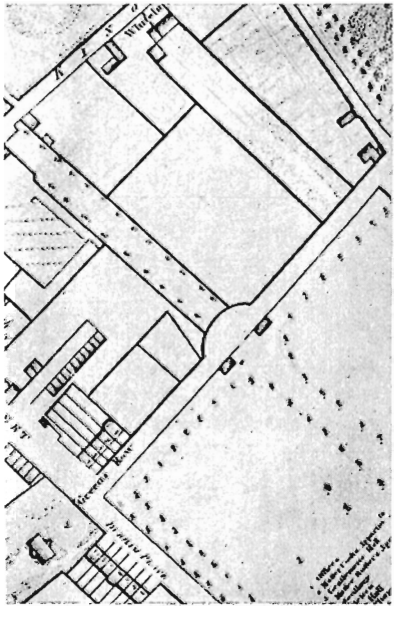
Green's five houses (now Numbers 26 to 30 inclusive of St. Leonard's Terrace) were built towards the western end of the strip between what is now Royal Avenue and Smith Street. In the early years of the 19th century a Mr. Rayner acquired land on the corner at the south end of Royal Avenue (then called "White Stiles") and built, in 1808, almost opposite the West Lodge at the north entrance to Burton's Court, five more elegant Georgian houses to match the original five, set back

[1] Richardson's map of 1769 shows a block representing the beginning of Green's Row, with a longer and larger block to the N.W. lying astride what later became Smith Street. The first accurate map of the houses themselves is Horwood's made originally in 1794, but brought up to date in 1799 (reproduced on page 20).

Maps and Diagram relating to St. Leonard's Terrace





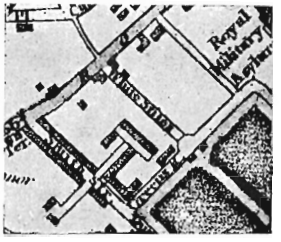


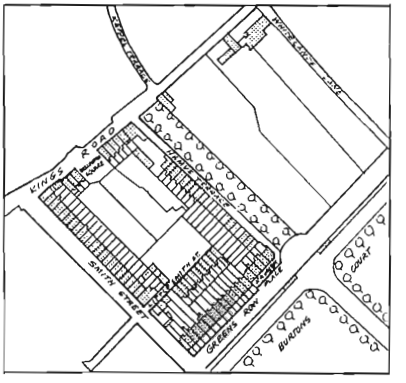
Top-left. St. Leonard's Terrace and other roads made at a later date are indicated by dotted lines over the former fields in this seventeenth century field map, which is reproduced from a larger one in Captain C. G. T. Dean's *Royal Hospital, Chelsea* by courtesy of the Author.

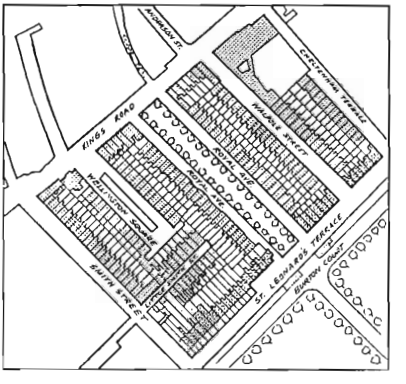
Top-right. The diagram shows the year in which each house in St. Leonard's Terrace (east of Smith Street) became occupied.

Left. St. Leonard's Terrace 1799. Part of Horwood's map of 1794, revised in 1799. The only houses are the first five of Green's Row, now Nos. 26 to 30.

Maps relating to St. Leonard's Terrace







Top-left. Part of Lawrie's map showing St. Leonard's Terrace in 1821, then called Green's Row and Rayner Place.

Top-right. Part of Thomson's map, 1836 showing St. Leonard's Terrace and Royal Avenue (west side) to use their present-day names, almost completely built up; on the east side of Royal Avenue road or houses.

Right. Part of the Survey map showing St. Leonard's Terrace in 1860-1870, with both sides of Royal Avenue, Walpole Street and Cheltenham Terrace entirely built up.

some six feet from the alignment of Green's houses and about 40 yards from them. These which are now Numbers 14 to 18 St. Leonard's Terrace, were then known as Rayner Place. A little later he began building Hemus Terrace, which now comprises 26 to 48 (even numbers) on the west side of Royal Avenue. The gap between Rayner Place and Green's Row is well shown in Lawrie's Plan of 1821[2].

The next move was in 1818, when two further houses, Nos. 31 and 32, were added to the west of Green's original block. There still remained a gap between these seven houses and Rayner Place. The gap was filled by building two or three houses at a time, from west to east in spurts between 1820 and 1824. This made the score for Green's Row 14 houses and, with Rayner Place, which still retained its name, gave a continuous Terrace of nineteen houses built in four different periods between 1765 and 1824.

It will be noted from Thompson's map of 1836 that no building had started yet on the east section of St. Leonard's Terrace. Apart from "Whitelands", the training school for school-mistresses, a building of some fair size which abutted on the King's Road where Cheltenham Terrace now begins, there were no houses on this piece of land—Walpole Street[3] came later—and so presumably an uninterrupted view from Hemus Terrace of the Royal Military Asylum, built in 1807. There were gardens—market, nursery or private—on both sides of the King's Road.

The building of the eastern section of St. Leonard's Terrace, now used as a name for the first time, started from east to west in 1845, with what later became the "pub-on-the-corner," the *City of Gloucester;* and the five other houses were completed the same year. Walpole Street, appearing first in the

[2] Reproduced on page 20).

[3] Named after Sir Robert Walpole, the statesman, later created Earl of Orfold, who lived at Walpole House next the Royal Hospital from 1723 to 1745 and rented this five acre field on the west side of Royal Avenue, later sold to John Green, the Westminster Brewer,

T. CHERRY'S DRAWING OF WALPOLE STREET IN 1852.
This illustration shows the changed conditions of the neighbourhood in the 1850's, the approach to St. Leonard's Terrace from the King's Road being through a newly-built, sophisticated street instead of open fields.
From a print in the possession of The Chelsea Public Library.

Rate Books of 1846, was partially built, but with only three occupants next year. In 1848 came the final seven houses from Walpole Street to the eastern border of Royal Avenue, and this, apart from the houses west of Smith Street (Nos. 33-44) which, though nominally St. Leonard's Terrace, architecturally belong to the later Tedworth Square epoch, completed the building of this part of the Terrace; all the houses were occupied by 1854. It now comprised the "new" section (Nos. 1-13); and the "old" section, still called Rayner Place (Nos. 1-5) and Green's Row (Nos. 1-14).

Royal Avenue Terrace, first called Royal Terrace, opposite number of Hemus Terrace, now the east and west terraces re-

named Royal Avenue, was completed in 1849. It had only six occupants in 1846. Cheltenham Terrace comprised 13 houses.

A word should be added about Mr. John Tombs, the builder responsible for the development of the eastern section of the Terrace and all the surrounding houses on the four-acre rectangle formed by Royal Avenue, King's Road, Cheltenham Terrace and the eastern part (Nos. 1-13) of St. Leonard's Terrace. He was a native of Gloucester. It is significant that three miles to the south east of Gloucester there is a village named Upton St. Leonards. Mr. Tombs also lived at Cheltenham. It is possible that, following the age-old practice of emigrants, he took the names of his places of origin with him. This would account for St. Leonard's Terrace, Cheltenham Terrace, and the *City of Gloucester* public house. By a lease dated 1840 the land (originally glebe) was granted to him, and he himself was the first occupant of No. 4 in 1845, and No. 6, to which he moved in 1848.

In 1858 Royal Avenue acquired its present name; and in 1867 the names of Green's Row and Rayner Place disappear, regrettably, being absorbed by the upstart St. Leonard, and being numbered from east to west from 1-44, of which 1-31 lie east of Smith Street. This latter figure should be 32, as it is now, but from 1851 to 1880 this house was lent, as it were, to Smith Street as No. 23.

Re-numbering must have been something of a trial to residents in the old section of the Terrace. The original five houses were numbered 1 to 5 from east to west. In 1818 when the two new houses were built to the west of the original block, they became numbers 6 and 7. In 1836 No. 7 was deprived of its number and re-numbering in a contrary direction reversed the situation. The original No. 1 became the old No. 6. In March 1840 the end house, No. 7, was re-numbered No. 1 for good measure, and the old No. 6 became un-numbered to preserve the balance. Only two years later

the end house reverted to "no number" and No. 6 triumphantly regained its number. This was indirectly due to the new houses built to fill in the gap between Rayner Place and the original five houses with which Green started. Peace reigned with consecutive numbers from left to right until the end house was lent to Smith Street. When it came back in 1880, as No. 32, the whole Terrace had been re-named and re-numbered for the last (up to the present) time, from east to west.

The Houses

Architecturally, St. Leonard's Terrace presents an admirable prospect. The part east of Smith Street, in addition to the charming private forecourt gardens in front of Nos. 32 to 19, is confronted by Burton's Court, that large expanse of lawns and trees with the Royal Hospital beyond. It is therefore to

LOOKING EASTWARDS ALONG ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE IN 1953.
Photograph by John Bignell.

be seen from many points at a suitable distance, an advantage rare in London, which enables the entire terrace to be viewed as a whole. It would be hard to improve upon the setting, with its space, lawns and plane trees in scale, terminating in the three blocks of building which form this part of St. Leonard's Terrace.

Besides the grand prospect of St. Leonard's Terrace at a distance, the character of the place is especially apparent from the carriage way immediately in front of the houses. From this view, the flowering shrubs and flowers in the gardens of the houses with private forecourts furnish the vista with beauty and interest. The lamp posts at the time of writing are all unselfconsciously different having been installed at various times in the nineteenth century. At night, the soft gas light brings back the Victorian age. Even the octagonal "V.R." pillar box, despite its too-small mouth, repeats and emphasises the historic atmosphere.

It is sad to call to mind the very beautiful wrought iron gates and railings that adorned so many of the private forecourts until removed in World War II in the national drive for scrap metal. Some idea of what was then destroyed may be gathered from a fragment of railing left between Nos. 26 and 27 with a hole for a hinge on No. 27 which shows the height of the original gate.

There is a pleasing variety in the individual houses due to the fact that building was intermittent, first in 1765 then in 1808 and 1818 and finally 1845-1848. At the same time these houses, in point of appearance, manage to blend together into a coherent whole. St. Leonard's Terrace achieves, in fact, informal balance without formal symmetry.

The earliest houses are near the western end of that part of the terrace which lies east of Smith Street; they are now numbered 30, 29, 28, 27 and 26. Two of these have an additional floor and one of these, No. 26, is wider with three windows on each floor instead of the normal two. All of these

LOOKING WESTWARDS ALONG ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE IN 1958.
Photograph by John Bignell.

houses have entrances of charm and well-designed broken pediments above the arched doorways.

Between these older houses and Smith Street are Nos. 32 and 31, built later in 1818. These two houses are carefully detailed but smaller in scale than those to which they adjoin. On the eastern side of No. 26 come the gap-filling houses of the 1820's, Nos. 25 to 19, all almost uniform, but with a narrower frontage of fifteen feet. They are smaller in scale to the two end houses, Nos. 32 and 31. The individual wrought-iron balconies on the first floor are a distinctive feature. A vine now spreads over five of them.

Now comes the set-back section, Nos. 18 to 14, (originally the five houses of Rayner Place, built in 1808). There is a carriage-sweep in front of these houses instead of the forecourt gardens which lie in front of Nos. 32 to 19.

The remaining houses in the terrace, all built in the 'forties', lie to the east of the south-eastern corner of Royal Avenue. First come Nos. 13 to 7 as far as Walpole Street; and the remaining Nos. 6 to 1 from there to Cheltenham Terrace.

At the end of the twin blocks of this part of the Terrace, Nos. 13 to 7 and 6 to 1, where conformity is more noticeable, repetitive uniformity is relieved by No. 1 (the old *City of Gloucester*) and the side entrances of the corner houses.

Between Smith Street and Royal Avenue, the houses in St. Leonard's Terrace are, with one exception, faced with brick-work. On the east side they are entirely of stucco.

St. Leonard's Terrace Thirty-five Years Ago

Below are some notes which give a picture of one of the 1823 houses as it struck a young barrister and his wife before World War I. They took the house leasehold at £120 p.a. in 1913. They had a paved garden in front, with yellow jasmine, a cherry tree, and a small laburnam. They also had—a practical point—two servants. "The house had an atmosphere—the right sort of cornices, basket grates, and the proper window panes of the period, and in front of the drawing-room windows a wrought iron balcony."

In the basement there was a kitchen and scullery; on the ground floor a dining room with a tiny sitting room at the back, bookshelves on either side of the fireplace (husband's study). On the first floor was the drawing-room with a piano and pictures by Sickert and McEvoy. On the top floor, the cook *and* the maid slept in the little back room; the front one was the guest room. Their bedroom and his dressing room were on the second floor. There was one bath-room on the half landing.

In 1922 the baby turned up, and, failing the purchase of the next-door house, they moved to a Queen Anne one in Upper Brook Street.

Contemporary Note in 1817

An observant Frenchman, Louis Simond, who paid a visit

here at this time, gives a vivid picture of how the houses and their inhabitants struck a Parisian.

"Each family occupies a whole house, unless very poor. These narrow houses three or four stories high—one for eating, one for sleeping, a third for company, a fourth under ground for the kitchen, a fifth perhaps at the top for the servants—and the agility, the ease, the quickness with which individuals of the family run up and down, and perch on the different stories, give the idea of a cage with its sticks and birds." After detailing the plan of a typical house and the area—"a sort of ditch . . . enclosed by an iron railing"—he adds that the house is about 20-25 feet wide in front, and finds that they (the houses) "have rather a paltry appearance—but one cannot pass the threshold without being struck with the look of order and neatness of the interior. Instead of the abominable filth of the common entrance and common stairs of a French house, here you step from the very street on a neat floor-cloth or carpet, the wall painted or papered, a lamp in glass bell hanging from the ceiling and every apartment in the same style: all is neat, compact, and independent, or, as it is best expressed here, snug and comfortable."

He adds a practical note: . . . "rich houses have what are called water-closets; a cistern in the upper storey, filled with water, communicates by a pipe and cock to a vessel of earthenware, which it washes."

(In the early nineteenth century some houses in the Terrace must have had these things—there were local workmen versed in these matters in Smith Street—but information is scanty.)

Water-supply and Sanitation

According to the Metropolitan Water Board, it is "probable" that pipes were laid to Green's Row by the Chelsea Water Works Company at the end of the eighteenth century. By 1820, eighty-five yards of wooden pipes for supplying the houses had been laid in Green's Row and Rayner Place, and the local water-engineer proposed changing them for cast

iron pipes. But wheels moved slowly in those days and this conversion did not take place until 1839. They add: "an extension to St. Leonard's Terrace, which was situated to the east of Royal Avenue, was made in 1844." (i.e. prior to the actual building of the eastern section).

The real impetus to the water-borne sanitation came much later, when in 1871, the Prince of Wales was nearly carried off by Typhoid Fever. By this time proper sewers were provided for this area of Chelsea, and though the experts did not agree that there was a really effective valve-closet installed even in the Royal Palaces before 1876 it would be a reasonable guess that the Terrace was not doing so badly.

Actually the earliest records of drainage held in the Public Health Department of the Chelsea Borough Council date from 1856, and in the next year a plan was submitted for No. 2 Green's Row showing house drainage discharging into an existing sewer.

Illuminating gas came here early in the nineteenth century. Apparently the Imperial Gas Company had gasometers in West Chelsea in 1806, and the local historian, Faulkner, mentions with an air of triumph, that in 1826 and 1827 "upwards of fifty oil and *gas* lamps were installed in various situations." Electricity was available to houses in St. Leonard's Terrace in the year 1900.

The People

The diagram (p. 20) shows how the building of the Terrace developed from 1791-1854 (houses west of Smith Street excluded). The earliest period of the original five houses is not shown, for, due to an unfortunate break in the Rate Book records before 1790, information on the occupants from the first building of these houses is not, as yet, available.

However, from 1791 to the present date a continuous chart of occupants of all the houses has been prepared with the aid of the Rate Books and various Directories. The names of the

people exceed 650, so that in any case there is a basis for further exploration beyond the actual names. As this paper is nothing more than a mere sketch of the last 200 years few conclusions can be offered about the inhabitants, occupationally or otherwise. It seemed best, therefore, to highlight certain groups and individuals and follow this by comparing, on a "then-and-now" basis, three given years' occupants of the nineteenth century with the same in the twentieth. This falls a good deal short of the ideal, but may be of some interest.

People are inclined to ask: (1) "What sort of people lived here in the past?" (2) "Were they, or did they become famous?" To this I can only answer: (1) "They were just a cross-section of ordinary people—part professional, part tradesmen—middle- (but with a few upper-middle) class, as the social changes took place." (2) "For the most part, no."

Last year the B.B.C. enacted part of a film here covering a serial television presentation of "Our Mutual Friend." Suddenly, time was switched back a hundred odd years and one had a fleeting glimpse of the Terrace as it used to be in the days of the wicked Silas Wegg. I can only provide a similar glimpse of the past without, I fear, much substance to it. A minor consolation might be that my people did, in fact, exist outside an author's imagination.

Taking the whole population of the Terrace from 1791 onwards, there are 50 different Professions and Trades in the list of occupants. The total of individuals of known occupation is unfortunately small, being less than 150 out of 650 (to the present time).

With the limitations imposed by the large proportion of "unknowns" in the above figures it is still possible to group certain individuals by occupation. Thus apart from the Clergy, the Services, the Law and Medicine, and Trade, which, with stockbroking in more recent years, are well represented, two rather odd groups stand out—namely, girls' schools and "apartments". Both vanished ostensibly by the beginning of

the present century but seem to have been a feature of the Terrace in the nineteenth century.

Girls' Schools. According to the historians the picture of "female education" in boarding schools in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is not an edifying one. Fashion was considered far more important than hygiene and a "stately carriage" preferable to normal physical development. The young ladies were constantly "physicked" to keep the complexion delicate. Sometimes they swung from a chain to lengthen their necks; they wore steel "busks" as well as stays; their diet was inadequate. They slept two or more in a bed, on the plea that it kept the girls warm.

Maybe these are smear stories; but the hygiene of the time was somewhat rudimentary in any case, and tightly closed windows may have contributed to the incidence of "consumption", at that time rife among all classes of the community.

One hopes that the proprietors of "Ladies Schools" in Chelsea in general, and in St. Leonard's Terrace in particular, had become more enlightened before the close of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the existence of "Whitelands", the Training School for school mistresses in the King's Road exerted a favourable influence. In 1845 there is the first record of local participation (No. 18) under Mrs. Mary Little. She was followed by Mr. and Mrs. R. K. Smart (first at No. 9, then at No. 13). Mrs. Burnett carried on next door at No. 14 until 1869, one year after the publication of the findings of the Schools Commission on Middle Class Female Education, which showed a condemnatory attitude on the part of the authorities of the day. It would be unfair to suggest that this was the reason for Miss Burnett's withdrawal from the scene; but it was not until 1872 (after an interval of three years) that Henry and Clara Durant (or Durand) took up the burden once more at No. 23. They were succeeded by Mrs. Ann Harrison (to 1876), and by the Misses Jane and Mary Moore, who bore the flag after Ann's retirement (1875) for the rest of the century in the same house.

For the last quarter of the nineteenth century the school must have welcomed the propinquity of the local musician "Professor" Kinkee (at No. 24). I like to think, when woken at 3 a.m. by the starting of noisy motor-cars, of the scrapings of the violin, the heavy thumps on the piano and the throaty hootings of untrained female voices which emanated by day from No. 24 ninety-odd years ago.

Apartments. For the last forty years of the nineteenth century apartments or lodgings were available in the Terrace. They were confined to the older part of the Terrace (Nos. 16, 17, 21, 23 and 32) west of Royal Avenue. "Ed. Stirling Dickson" and family began in 1861, at No. 16 and lasted for 15 years, by which time other individuals had entered the field, and such names as Mrs. Hannah Browne, Mrs. Mary Ann Holland, Mrs. Fanny Stevens and Walter Bugby (1897) are to be found, Sampson Philip Scoble covered the period from 1890 to 1898, at No. 23. The periods of time varied from one to eleven years, and from the turn of the century all mention of this profession disappears. Perhaps the Terrace had become "smarter"; perhaps lodgings are more discreetly advertised to-day; perhaps both.

Some Individual Occupants. Among these there do not seem to have been any meriting "plaques" on the houses they lived in. However, in the field of Science it seems worth mentioning Robert Hunt, F.R.S. (No.26), who was here from 1858-1887 and who, so to speak, "graduated D.N.B." He was a geologist by profession, and incidentally wrote the first English treatise on photography (1841). He later became Professor of Experimental Physics at the School of Mines, and was appointed to the official position of Keeper of Mining Records.

Two soldiers also deserve mention. The first, Lieut.-Colonel George Fred Paschall, who lived here at No. 19, 1834-1855, was descended from one of the office holders at the Royal Hospital. He was gazetted to the King's German Legion in 1812 as Lieutenant, and served in the Peninsular War and had the Waterloo Medal. In 1815, at Quatre Bras, he was attached

to Sir Henry Clinton. He retired by sale of his commission in 1851.

Lieut.-Colonel James Shaw (No. 20, 1825-1827) who later changed his name to Shaw-Kennedy and acquired a knighthood towards the end of his career, joined the army in 1805, serving in the 43rd Foot. He was promoted Captain in 1812, Lieut.-Colonel 1819, "unattached" in 1830, Maj.-General in 1845.

According to the Regimental History of the 43rd Foot he served with Sir John Moore in the retreat from Corunna, and at Waterloo. He had some appointments which he handled very well—namely Adjutant General at Manchester "during periods of disturbance"; and he organised the constabulary force in Ireland.

"Then and Now." By taking three years (1825, 1854, 1884) in the nineteenth century and a similar number in the twentieth (1914, 1944, 1954) and listing the occupations of Terrace inhabitants, where known, a rough idea of the changes in 150 years can be obtained.

The nineteenth century presents a collection of trades so heterogeneous that tabulation, by way of comparison with modern occupations, is impractical. Booksellers, printers and publicans (for the *City of Gloucester* which lasted from 1846 to 1914) are common to both groups, and so are architects; but in the earlier period we have a "Blackwell Hall factor" (cloth trade), a musical instrument maker, a builder and bricklayer, a brewer, a wine cooper, a champagne importer, a stationer and a travelling draper–perhaps somewhat "humble" compared with our twentieth century hop factor, estate agent, Lord Chancellor and occasional Peer of the Realm.

In the nineteenth century a patent searcher suggests something more learned, as does a Curator of the Physic Garden, a physicist Fellow of the Royal Society and an F.R.G.S., expert on the Far East; even a Registrar of Births and Deaths has at least a ring of authority. There was only one Doctor

(1884) then, as compared with three in the Twentieth century, including two specialists representing the changing face of medicine—an anæsthetist and a psychiatrist. Apartment houses, and Girls' Schools as indicated above, vanished before 1900.

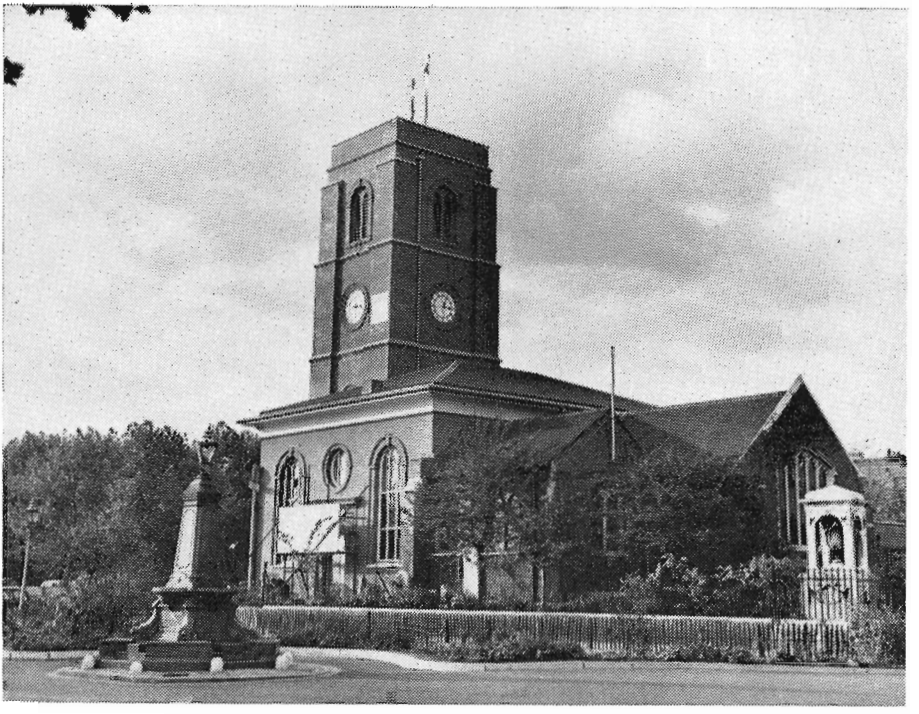
Barristers and Solicitors are common to both groups but the twentieth century can boast a High Court Judge and a barrister who later became Lord Chancellor.

In the services were the two regular army officers in the nineteenth century and one regular naval officer in the present one. The Clergy, of whom there were three, had disappeared before 1884. In the twentieth century we have a Privy Councillor, three diplomats, a Professor of English Literature, a retired hospital matron, a Member of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, an artist and a collector of rare books.

But the most striking additions have been in titled people (6) writers (6) and in "business" as represented by two company directors, six stockbrokers, four members of Lloyds (only one Phoenix fire-insurance man in nineteenth century) and an investment banker.

Duration of Occupancy. Some families, particularly in the early days, remained in the same house in the Terrace for many years. The unsurpassed record is that of the Nattalis. Michael Angelo Nattali took No. 29 in 1832, and a Miss Nattali was still there in 1921. Henry, the son, covered the period 1863-1919. They were booksellers, with a business in 19 Southampton Row, W.C. in 1840. In 1893 it had moved to 28 Bedford Street, Strand, and in 1913 to 89, Duke Street, St. James's.

There seem to be no rules as to how many tenants or owners cover a given span of time, except that tenancy changes occur more frequently in modern times. No. 23 has had 20 changes of ownership since the first occupant, Miss Elizabeth Blenman, in 1823. In the 167 years since Brownlow Bate occupied No. 30 (one of the original houses) in 1791, there have been 23 occupants.



CHELSEA OLD CHURCH
The rebuilt Church as completed in 1958
Reproduced by courtesy of the Belgrave Press Bureau.

Chelsea Old Church

By C. E. LEIGHTON THOMSON

I. The Rebuilding

One thing was certain for the Old Church as the New Year of 1958 dawned. The Reconsecration Service was to take place on May 13th. Yet the structure of the Church was far from finished. Some twelve feet of the square tower needed to be added and roofed; work on the vestries had not yet

begun; and many of the monuments and tablets had still to be replaced. Perhaps most nerve-wracking of all was the fact that the pitch of the Gallery floor was found to be too low. This meant that few of those seated in the Gallery would be able to see more of the Church than the Altar. Though it was at first said that nothing could be done, the Church Council gave instructions for the floor at the rear of the Gallery seating area to be raised three feet, and the joiners went to work with a will.

There were four months to go.

Early in March things began to look more hopeful. On the 4th, the Pulpit and its staircase arrived on the site. On the 10th, the raising of the Gallery floor began, and work started on the roofing of the vestries.

There were now two months in which to complete the work. The oak Pulpit, restored in the joinery department of Messrs. Norman and Burt, of Burgess Hill, Sussex, (the contractors engaged in the building of the Nave and Tower), was severely damaged in the bombing. An interesting amount of the seventeenth century work remains, however, notably the vertical carving between the panels, the southernmost panel, the door, with its original knob and latch, and a little of the capping and moulding.

The staircase suffered least damage but was of late date. The present stem is new, and is presumably the third, as the pre-war stem and staircase date from the alterations of 1908-10.

It was the month of April 1958 which saw the most feverish activity at the Church. The vestries were roofed. The Tower shot up to its final height. The original weathervane of 1704—repaired here and there—was re-erected. The raising of the Gallery was completed and the new oak pews were installed. The clock faces were glazed and the numerals were gilded. The carved oak hymnboards were completed.

The carved oak Font cover was being gilded, and the final interior painting of the Nave was in hand.

On April 29th, the Treble Bell, cast in 1678 and recast in 1957 at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, arrived on the site, and was hoisted to the belfry the same day. (It was rung for the first time on Sunday, May 4th.)

On the last day of April the roof of the Tower and Turret was asphalted, and we were secure from the weather.

There were yet thirteen days.

Desperation or sobriety reduced this to seven *working* days. Sundays had to be excluded; Saturdays hardly counted, and the Day of Reconsecration itself, and the Monday before it, had to be kept free for rehearsals and last minute preparations.

As if to emphasize the need for dispatch and the shortage of time, the clock (by E. Dent and Co., Ltd.) began to tick on the first day of May. At the same time the flagstaff was erected.

Five working days now remained.

Yet the scaffolding still clung to the Tower and the hoarding in front of the Church still failed to mask the inevitable array of builders' material and equipment. It seemed that only by a miracle could the Church be ready for the Reconsecration Service. Though time was so short the builders were confident, and those responsible for the various other outstanding tasks and fitments were equally assuring.

Then everything happened at once. The Church became, even more, a hive of industry. The four six-light chandeliers were hung in the Chancel. The specially-made carpet was laid. The railing round the Dacre monument was painted and the finials gilded. . . The commemorative tablet in the porch was fixed. Suddenly the Tower was innocent of scaffolding, all hoarding at ground level was removed, and the garden became a blaze of flowers.

The building was ready for reconsecration. The race against time had been won, though only after what would be described in non-ecclesiastical circles as a "photo-finish".

Since the Day of Reconsecration, May 13th, 1958, further work has been completed. Eight wall tablets have been repaired and replaced in the Baptistery. The oak case for the five Chained Books, presented to the Church by Sir Hans Sloane, has been made and installed in the South West corner of the Nave, and an oak literature stand has been specially designed and fitted in the porch.

The clergy and choir vestries were completed last November and though of course functional in form are notable for the quality of the joinery in Sussex oak. Fitted cupboards, sliding doors, and neat lockers present a simple, pleasing appearance, and conceal ample storage space.

The main task yet to be completed in the furnishing of the Lawrence (North) Chapel as a Lady Chapel for week day Communion services. The key to this lies in the discovery of a suitable altar table.

1958 was a memorable year in the history of the Old Church. The main structure was completed and the Church was reconsecrated. Nearly £9,000 was raised for the Building Appeal, leaving another £11,000 to find out of the £40,000 target.

There is, however, much yet to be accomplished, and it is hoped that there may now be but a matter of months before the building of the Church Hall and Vicarage can begin.

II. The Reconsecration on May 13, 1958

The thirty-nine years of George Herbert's life embraced a period of particular interest in the history of Chelsea Old Church. For some of that time he lived in the parish. Little

could he have known that rather more than three hundred years later the Old Church would be very severely damaged by a sea-mine. Yet there was something of prophecy in a few lines of his:

"Then Sin combined with Death in a firm band
To raze the building to the very floor:
Which they effected, none could them withstand.
But Love and Grace took Glorie by the hand,
And built a braver Palace than before."

For those who attended the reconsecration of the "braver Palace" there was an indefinable sense of sharing in a unique and historic moment.

It may be true that the detailed preparations had contributed to this; as had also the bedecking of the Church and the manner in which the Churchwardens and thirty Sidesmen carried out the important role of showing the full congregation to their seats. Indeed, every available inch was utilized in achieving six hundred seats in the Church itself, and a further one hundred and fifty outside in a marquee borrowed for the occasion from the Tower of London.

Yet there was something more than the excitement generated by a congregation which, seated half an hour before the Service was due to begin, and, listening to a recital of organ music, had every opportunity to experience a growing feeling of expectancy.

There was more, even, than the dignity of Anglican liturgy and ceremonial as the procession of Churchwardens, Readers, Clergy and Former Incumbents, led by the Verger and Cross Bearer, made its way to the Sanctuary.

Was it perhaps that those participating had a deep awareness that Divine "Love and Grace" had indeed "taken Glorie by the hand?"

There were still ten minutes before the start of the Service, and, outside the Church, a large crowd had gathered. The

Mayor and Mayoress of Chelsea arrived, accompanied by the Town Clerk. A minute later the Lord Bishop of London, with his Chaplain, reached the Church.

Then at three minutes to six a fanfare of trumpets sounded by the State Trumpeters of the Royal Horse Guards heralded the arrival of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, who was met by the Mayor and received at the entrance to the Church by the Vicar. *(see frontispiece).*

Her Majesty was conducted to her seat in the Chancel and, all in their appointed places, there was sounded a second fanfare of trumpets followed by the singing of the National Anthem.

The Service which followed lasted about an hour and was divided into nine parts. There was first of all the presentation of the Petition to the Bishop outside the West Door. Then after making a processional circuit of the outside of the Church, the Bishop knocked at the West Door three times with his Pastoral Staff, whereupon the door was opened wide from within and the Keys were delivered to him.

A fanfare of trumpets ushered the Bishop into the Church and he moved in procession to the Sanctuary preceded by the Apparitor, the Registrar, and the Chancellor of the diocese. There the Bishop laid the Keys upon the Altar and offered prayers of dedication. (". . . . . sanctify with thy gracious presence this House which is built for thy honour and glory . . . . .")

The Vicar then conducted the Bishop and the Archdeacon of Middlesex to various parts of the Church for the Benedictions, where prayers were offered in the Chancel, at the Lectern, Pulpit and Font, and before the Altar for all who would take part in the many-sided activities of the Church's life.

The central part of the Service, performed by the Bishop was the Act of Reconsecration, and for the purposes of

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH RECONSECRATION SERVICE
The Sentence of Reconsecration has been read by the Chancellor of the Diocese and signed by the Lord Bishop of London, and the State Trumpeters are Sounding the fanfare introducing the Doxology.

ecclesiastical law the Sentence of Reconsecration was read by the Chancellor and signed (with a specially provided swan quill) by the Bishop who then declared:

> ". . . . . by virtue of our sacred office in the Church of God, to be reconsecrate, and for ever set apart from profane, common, and ordinary uses this House of God, under the dedication of All Saints."

This part of the Service ended with the doxology from "All people that on earth do dwell" with accompaniment by the State Trumpeters.

Her Majesty was then conducted to the porch of the Church and unveiled the Reconsecration Tablet, with the words:

"We unveil this Tablet, erected to record this Day of

Reconsecration, and in memory of the five fire-watchers who lost their lives through enemy action."

The Bishop then dedicated the Memorial, the inscription of which is as follows:

THIS CHURCH RECORDS OF WHICH DATE FROM
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY WAS RECONSECRATED BY
HENRY LORD BISHOP OF LONDON IN THE PRESENCE OF
HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER
ON THE 13TH MAY 1958
THE PRESENT BUILDING REPLACES THAT BOMBED ON THE
NIGHT OF 16TH APRIL 1941 WHEN FIVE FIRE-WATCHERS
WERE KILLED . HENRY FRANKLAND . YVONNE GREEN
MICHAEL HODGE . SIDNEY SIMS . FREDERICK WINTER
IN WHOSE MEMORY THIS STONE IS ERECTED
VICAR . C. E. LEIGHTON THOMSON
CHURCHWARDENS
JOHN W. DURNFORD . ARTHUR P. H. STRIDE
ARCHITECT . WALTER H. GODFREY

The Service concluded with hymns, prayers and thanksgivings, and after the Bishop had pronounced the Blessing, Her Majesty was conducted to the West Door. There Her Majesty was graciously pleased to sign her name in the book, and to allow the Vicar to present the Churchwardens, Patrons, Senior Sidesmen, Architects and representatives of the firm of building contractors, diocese and borough.

So ended an unforgettable day in the annals of the Old Church, a day commemorated by these lines written specially for the Reconsecration by the poet and parishioner, Paul Dehn.

"Men built you
For God's glory.
Men bombed you:
You grew flowers.
Once more, men raise you
And we praise you
Who, through your long story,
Stayed God's and ours."

The Vale

By Angela Thirkell

I have been asked to write about The Vale, now lost and buried under varieties of architecture which only the pen and the wit of Osbert Lancaster could adequately and blisteringly enough describe. Some members of this society will remember it as it was, with nostalgic affection, and the party given to celebrate and mourn its demise. But we shall come to that later.

Members—and there must be many—who have read William De Morgan's books, will remember " The Old Man's Youth "—not perhaps his best, but so full of his own personality and his wit and his crystal-clear remembering of what was already dying when he wrote. His hero—if one can call him that—who tells the story is Eustace John. He with his friend, Cooky Moss, a couple of schoolboys, have been on a long ramble over Wimbledon Common and Putney, returning by field paths through Eelbrook Common and so past Cremorne.

" Just beyond the kink of the road, that must have been caused by some antediluvian pond, Cooky was brought up short by a " to let " notice over a gate on the left. It announced the existence of an eligible bijou residence with a quarter-of-an-acre of garden and a coach-house.

" Look at it or not?," said Cooky, who always treated me with great decision, to correct a corresponding defect in my character. " Say which."

" Dinner !" said I. I left the word by itself, and went on : " But we could just walk down and look at it."

" Bother dinner !" said my friend. " Let's go down the lane and see what's to be seen."

"The lane was lined with trees on either side, elm and chest-

nut, and was entered through a swing-gate as a private carriage-way, shared by two or three residences at the end. The gravel pathway made a circle between them, round some larger older elms, to make turning room for things on wheels. At the end, on the left, unseen at first, was a garden open to the roadway, except for chains on posts that hardly counted, and its owner certainly deserved the rich crop of peas that were helping the universal scent of hay in the kitchen-garden behind, if only for having planted the standard roses on the smooth bit of lawn in front. However, it was not our business, any more than the house on the right or its large garden in the rear, or the meadow beyond the fence at the end, or the two fallow deer—actually fallow deer!—that was browsing in it. Beyond it were big trees in some private park or garden."

Now Eustace John's father was looking for a house away from the city and this looked like the sort of place he would like, so the boys went through the open gate and found a house with verandas on the ground floor " in which," the speaker says, " wood-trellis, curvilinear fretwork and a graceful dip in the lead roof combined towards an ornate character. Otherwise Taste seemed to have kept her distance ; unless, indeed, a mermaid that had climbed up on a plaster bracket to blow a horn had been egged on by her to do it."

There the boys found an old man who still lived there and wanted to leave because his wife had died. And behind the house there was a garden that stretched away to a high hedge with a road beyond and haycarts at a standstill at a roadside pothouse ; and a figtree that the old man had planted fifty years ago.

As Eustace John and Cooky saw it, so was The Vale for many years to come ; except that the parkland was sold and the dreadful hot red and grey hideosities of Elm Park Road and Gardens gradually came right up to the back of The Vale. Just the gate, the short road and the four or five houses with their gardens remained.

It seemed always to have been an eligible bit of property. In the old Chelsea rate-books people from other parts of London were buying property there. By the 'sixties William Jones Lavis of Spital Square (I do not know where this was) had property in The Vale and Vale Grove. I am not quite sure which of these is which. A Mr. Thomas Maguire owned Rose Cottage in The Vale at the same time. Peter Burrell, of Ebury Street, Lower Edmonton, owned leasehold houses and ground in The Vale, King's Road and Vale Grove. One Edmund Burton, of 12, Markham Street, owned number two, The Vale. There was a good deal of buying and selling and evidently the property was considered a good one. The main road had altered. Houses and shops were going up along King's Road.

After many years Eustace John came back from Australia, where he had done well and went to look for The Vale—or the Retreat as the writer calls it.

" He wished to find the exact spot where the Retreat had stood, but the blocks of new houses bewildered him. Once he thought he saw behind some buildings a black poplar tree that struck him as familiar. It stood alone, hemmed with palings and fences on a piece of land still to be built on. Could that tree be one of the poplars with the rustling leaves that grew at the end of the garden ? Then what had become of the two big mulberry trees and the fig tree ? All gone ! All gone !"

I did not see it in its horrible decline. Mrs. Stirling has kindly allowed me to quote from her life of the De Morgans a description of The Vale as it was.

" Formerly as one walked along the noisy and unappetising King's Road, nearly opposite Paulton Square, one came to a small crossing guarded by an unpretentious wooden gate ; curiously rural in appearance and suggestive of being the entry to some derelict field. The chances were against the casual passer-by even noticing its existence ; but those who

had occasion to penetrate to its precincts beyond it found themselves in a roadway resembling a country lane which, in the sudden hush that fell, seemed a veritable oasis from the turmoil of the noisy thoroughfare they had left. This little retreat was a *cul-de-sac* down which no vehicles drove and no foot-passengers passed save only those who sought one of the three isolated houses that nestled there, each in the midst of a spacious garden. It terminated in green sward and waving trees, the remains of the ancient deer-park. . . . The quaint rambling house taken by the De Morgans stood on the left of the lane, shrouded in creepers, with a veranda back and front. A greenhouse overlooked the garden, where flourished an ancient vine and a fig-tree, though some of the old mulberry trees, which seemed survivals from a former orchard, had to be cut down to make way for a studio Mrs. De Morgan built. The remains of the deer-park still stretched on one side, and opposite to it was the lovely spot where Whistler grew his larkspurs round a velvet lawn." And here Ricketts and Shannon started The Vale Press.

In 1909 The Vale was doomed. Destruction and reconstruction. The inhabitants united for a last farewell. All carriages were stopped in King's Road and the guests came up the avenue on foot. Some Chelsea Pensioners in their red summer coats guarded the lane. The trees were filled with fairy lamps. The three houses and their gardens were open to all guests, with music and singing, while the party wandered in the flower-scented dimness. To a girl of nineteen it was all like magic and fairyland come true. One did not think of this being the end ; it was like some dream party that will go on for ever and ever. The " house-cooling," as De Morgan called it, in contradistinction to "house-warming," was over. Beauty vanishes, beauty passes, and all this was gone.

But the memory of William and Evelyn De Morgan will not die. His fascinating rambling books --a touch of Dickens and his own personality--and the memory of his voice, its

heights and depths, putting forward some idea or some slightly mischievous allusion, his laughter, and her eager kindness and the way she was a beloved person to us, as children, never hinting for a moment that she was an artist of many gifts. In my childhood there was not the universal Christian naming that reigns now, but we loved them very well as Mr. and Mrs. De Morgan. That affection followed them when they died and they are not forgotten.

The fate of books (as was written in Latin some seventeen and odd hundred years ago) depends on the capacity of the reader. De Morgan's books may not be much read now, but the wheel turns and they will come again. And it is possible that antiquarians, seeking among the past of Chelsea, will find in them the truest feeling of what this place was, and an even truer feeling of what Chelsea meant to those who lived there. Trafalgar Square may have been re-named—most unnecessarily, for was not one of the stock questions to the cab driver when being tested for his licence, How would you drive to Trafalgar Square ? and the correct answer was : Do you mean Chelsea or Charing Cross ? Now there is no Trafalgar Square in Chelsea, and as Chelsea Square De Morgan would not know it. But his books will enshrine its past and what The Vale was, and keep it alive. And her paintings will remain with his pottery and his books as their memorial.

I have been asked to write something about the De Morgans themselves. The best description of him is in the words of the painter, Sir William Richmond : " When I was working in the schools of the Royal Academy, a tall rather gaunt young man arrived as a new student who excited among us of a term's seniority some interest. He was an original, that was evident at starting. His capacious forehead denoted power, his grey eyes tenderness, his delicately formed nose refinement, and his jaw strength. But the commanding characteristic was unmistakeably humour. He spoke with a curious accent. His voice—as if it had never settled down to be soprano or bass—

moved with flexibility up and down the scale and every sentence was finished with a certain drawl."

So do I remember him and his courteous kindness to a small girl and to the girl when she was older.

The wife who shared so much with him and helped him through every crisis with sympathy, wisdom and, not least, her own fortune, which she poured out to forward his ventures in pottery, was also a remarkable character, loved by a wide circle.

As most members of this Society will know, her sister, Mrs. Stirling, is a writer of great gifts whose biographies combine the accuracy of the historian with her own charm of manner. She lives in Old Battersea House, within a stone's throw of Old Battersea Church. It is one of the finest specimens of Wren's domestic architecture, about 1699, overlooking the river, and it is still a fine house, though shorn of its garden of six-and-a-half acres, now all built over by mammoth Council flats. Here Mrs. Stirling lives and will, by previous request and appointment, during the winter months, show visitors her collection of her sister's pictures and her brother-in-law's pottery and some of the beauties of the old house itself. She, with her own collection of old family dresses (which the BBC, with its unerring gift for the wrong word, would probably call "fabulous") is part and parcel of the atmosphere. Her biography of William and Evelyn De Morgan is a most remarkable book for its accuracy, its memories and its charm. Anyone who wishes to see the best examples of the work of William De Morgan can do so by crossing the Thames and going past Old Battersea Church and the Vicarage. Overlooking the river, in the remains of the once great gardens they will find them housed in the 1699 Wren house, which is still kept alive by Mrs. Stirling, against all odds.

The Helmet of Lord Dacre in All Saints Church, Chelsea

By James Mann

The helmet which until recently hung on an iron perch on the wall near the East window of the South aisle of Chelsea Old Church, belongs to the monument of Gregory Fiennes, 10th Baron Dacre of the South, who died in Sir Thomas More's house in 1594. The monument, which was originally erected in the More chapel by his widow, now stands some way down the South aisle of the church, and the helmet has been moved so as to hang beside it.

The helmet is a relic of the custom when officers of arms carried the insignia of the deceased in procession in front of the bier. It was called a Heralds' Funeral, and the heralds carried in succession the crested helmet, banners, targe, tabard, sword, gauntlets and spurs, and these were later hung over the monument of the deceased "for ever," to remind posterity that he had departed this life for one where no such distinctions existed. A drawing of Lord Dacre's achievements is preserved in the British Museum among Nicholas Charles's notes (Lansdowne MS. 874), and shows the banners with their many quarterings, the crested helmet, targe and sword, which once hung in the church. Of these only the crested helmet, as is often the case has survived. These processions, with the heralds in their brilliant tabards and black mourning hoods with the succession of tall banners, must have given bright colour to the narrow streets of London at fairly frequent intervals each year.

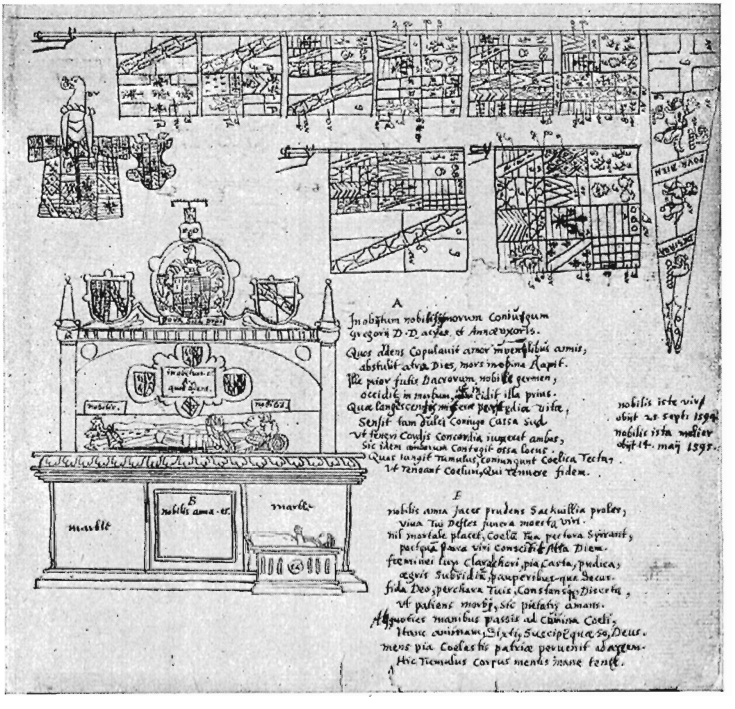
Examination of the helmet shows that it dates from a generation before the death of Lord Dacre. This is not unusual, as the helmets used at funerals were usually supplied by the undertaker, and were often old helmets obtained at second-hand. They were painted and a crest added for the

THE DACRE HELMET

The Dacre helmet in Chelsea Old Church, borne on a perch over the Stanley monument, has now been cleaned and placed where it belongs near the Dacre monument.

occasion. In this way some very important early helmets have been preserved, of which the most notable example is that of the Black Prince in Canterbury Cathedral. On the other hand, some church helmets are of inferior quality, having been roughly put together by a blacksmith as funeral properties.

The Dacre headpiece is a good example of a real close-helmet, dating from the second quarter or middle years of the XVI century. It consists of a skull forged in one piece



THE DACRE MONUMENT

Nicholas Charles, herald, drew this illustration of the Dacre monument with the achievement above it early in the seventeenth century.

Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

with a central ridge, a visor with cusped upper edge on the brow and pierced with a single longitudinal slit for sight. The lower edge of the sight is turned over to a rounded section and lightly roped. The visor originally covered the whole of the face, as was usual for visors of the first half of the XVI century, but it has since been cut away horizontally across one of the lines of breathing holes below the point. The helmet was then completed by the substitution of an upper bevor of inferior metal. This brought it into keeping with the fashion of helmets at the time of Lord Dacre's death, and was undoubtedly done at the time of the funeral. The chin-piece, or lower bevor, is part of the original helmet ; a piece has been cut out of the middle in front of the mouth, possibly shortly after it was made. At a later date, again probably at the time of the funeral, two gorget plates were added front and back. A photograph of the helmet illustrated in Mr. Cripps-Day's " List of Church Armour preserved in English Churches," published in 1922 in Vol. V of Sir G. Laking's *Record of European Armour and Arms*, shows both these plates in position, but the back one is now missing ; presumably it became detached and lost when the church was badly damaged during the late war. There is a row of lining rivets inside the chin and brow, one of which retains a small piece of leather, showing that the helmet was originally made for wearing.

As was usually the case, but is seldom so well preserved, the brow above the sight, the bevor and the chin-piece are painted with gold flourishes. This decoration was added when the helmet became a funeral one. At the same time the rest of the surface was probably painted a slate grey ; the paint has disappeared with time, though the more adhesive gilding has survived. Sometimes one finds with church helmets that the gilding, too, has gone, but has left clear traces behind it, as the surface of the metal is seen to be less corroded where the gilding was applied than on the painted parts. There is no decoration on the skull or on the visor below the slit of the

MONUMENT OF GREGORY, LORD DACRE (1595)

The central features of this tomb are the recumbent alabaster effigies of Lord and Lady Dacre in an arched recess. He is attired in richly decorated armour; she in ruff, mantle and hood. The tomb is profusely ornamented with Elizabethan decoration in coloured marbles, heraldic devices and Latin inscriptions. At the summit is a winged skull, an hour glass and a balance representing Time, Death and Judgment. Below, on the right, is the small effigy of their daughter.

The illustration on the left is reproduced by courtesy of the National Buildings Record; and that on the right, from the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Vol.II, is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

sight. The undertaker has affixed a rough spike on the top of the skull to hold the funeral crest. This takes the form of an eagle's head and neck carved in oak, which, as the underside shows, was built up of four vertical pieces of wood, comprising a central block with three shaped pieces added to their sides. It is carved with scale-like feathers, gilded, and the interior of the open beak is scarlet. The crest of the Dacres was an eagle's head *or* holding a ring in its beak, as Nicholas Charles's drawing shows. There is now no trace of the ring. The crest can be seen again carved on Lord Dacre's

monument. The weight of the helmet is at present 5 lb. 15 oz. and that of the crest 2 lb. $4\frac{3}{4}$ oz.

Gregory Fiennes, Lord Dacre, was born in Sussex in 1539, two years before the untimely death of his father, who was involved in a scuffle in Sussex in which one of Nicholas Pelham's servants was killed. In consequence he was executed on Tower Hill, a fate which appears to have been in the nature of a judicial murder. Gregory Fiennes' life seems to have been comparatively uneventful. The family recovered their estates in 1558, and he took part in a great train of noblemen who accompanied Lord Lincoln to the court of Charles IX of France to ratify the Confederation of Blois a few months before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Camden describes him as "a little crack-brained." His wife, born Margaret Sackville, seems to have been the stronger character. She inherited Sir Thomas More's house in Chelsea, where they both died, he on the 27th September, 1594, and she a few months later on the 14th May, 1595.

Their monument is a large one of alabaster and coloured marbles in the style made popular by the masons Gherardt Jansen, father and son, refugees from the Low Countries, who anglicised their name to Gerard Johnson and worked in Southwark. Husband and wife lie side by side on an altar tomb, he in decorated armour, in an arched recess, which is surmounted by an entablature and an attic with a large achievement of arms on top between two obelisks. His inscription is on a tablet let in on the wall of the recess, and hers on another tablet on the front of the altar tomb. A miniature effigy of their daughter lies in front and to the right. The monument is in good condition, thanks partly to the original ironwork railing which has survived.

ORANGES AND LEMONS AT THE VARLEYS' HOUSE IN BEAUFORT STREET IN 1892

Master Gilbert Ledward, even at that age dressed in a sculptor's smock, is the last in the procession.

Chelsea in the 'Nineties

To the Worshipful the Mayor of Chelsea,

Alderman Basil Marsden-Smedley, O.B.E. J.P.

14*th October,* 1958.

My dear Basil,

You suggest that I should write a few reminiscences of my childhood in Chelsea but it is a far cry from 1952, *when as Chairman of the Chelsea Society you first came into my studio to look at the clay models I was then making for the foun-*

tain at Sloane Square, to that time when as a small child in Chelsea I always thought that women were solid from the waist down—like a tree. I do not remember when I became more enlightened but this fact, alone, is probably quite sufficient to indicate the period of my birth, a period of graceful women with large picture-hats and long flowing skirts which touched the ground.

In those far-off halcyon days the summers were always sunny and it was about the same time that the so-called "safety" bicycle with pneumatic tyres first became popular. I learnt to ride one in Beaufort Street and the bright young things of those days brought their bicycles on cabs to Battersea Park where they cycled round and round the circular roadway sometimes wearing "bloomers" the forerunner of the emancipation of women. I remember, also, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the death of Queen Victoria; a cinematograph of her funeral was shown at the old Acquarium, which stood on the site of the Wesleyan Central Hall, where the variety entertainment ended with the popular "Monte Cristo" dive, of a man in a flaming sack, from the roof into a small tank of water below.

There were the "penny" paddle steamers on the Thames and along the river front of Battersea Park a collection of old building stones had been dumped and had become a favourite playing-ground for children. These stones had come from the colonnade and gateway of Burlington House. This gateway was designed by Colin Campbell, one of the architects employed by the 3rd Earl of Burlington, and was demolished soon after 1850. *The stones were all carefully numbered and*

it would be interesting to know what eventually became of them. I also remember some over-dressed women who paraded along King's Road, known as the "Chelsea sights," who always struck my childish imagination although I fancy they were the inmates of a house of ill repute which I believe once existed in Church Street. There was a dairy in the "S" bend of King's Road, just opposite the site of the old police-station, where we obtained fresh milk from the cows that were milked there. During the day-time King's Road was literally packed with the slow-moving horse-traffic but after 9 o'clock at night the road became practically deserted and I remember, but this must have been as late as the turn of the century, when I went to evening art-classes at the Chelsea Poly-technic, following members of the teaching staff, walking home after the classes, along the middle of the deserted road and I could hear them talking 50 yards or so ahead of me.

I also remember, but this must have been a few years earlier, being loudly summoned by a police-man, together with the other visitors—we were all in the old Victoria and Albert Museum—to come outside at once to see a small procession of motor-cars, proceeding slowly along the roadway under the direction of a man holding a red warning flag.

I was always destined to take up some form of art and for a short period I went on one evening a week to the original Arts and Crafts School which was then situated somewhere near Langham Place. I must have been very young because I always felt rather frightened coming back alone at night on the horse-buses from Piccadilly and in order to keep up my courage I used to spin my top down

Regent Street which at 9.30 at night, in those days, always appeared to be absolutely deserted.

But what can one write about the boyhood of a Londoner during that remarkable Victorian period of the "Anti-macassar" and the "What-not" when, as someone described it, "the average Englishman thought that history was over and we were to live happily for ever afterwards in a state of permanent felicity."

I was born and lived for 12 years or so in a house on the West side of Lower Beaufort Street where my father, a sculptor like myself, had built two studios at the end of a garden which was bounded by one of the original walls of Sir Thomas More's estate. I can see it now with wall-flowers growing on it and the trellised grape vine and mulberry trees in a garden full of poppies which always seemed to be in flower.

My first school, after a kinder-garten period at a house, also in Beaufort Steet, run by two grand-daughters of John Varley, the well-known water-colour painter (1778-1842)* *was St. Mark's College where Derwent Coleridge, the second son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was the first Principal from* 1841-1864. *The College of St. Mark and St. John is still of course in active operation but nothing is left of the boy's school except that delightful little octagonal building, the original school building, which was visited by the Chelsea Society on the occasion of the summer meeting in* 1956.

* It is possible that these ladies were the grandchildren, not of John Varley, but of his second son, Albert Fleetwood Varley, born 1804 and died in Brompton in 1876.

About 1901, *I went to Germany with my family for two years and when we returned our old home together with most of Beaufort Street had been demolished and to-day practically nothing remains of King's Road as I remember it in those days.*

Sandford Manor House was empty at that time and was for sale at £900 *freehold. It is, of course, reputed to have been the home of Nell Gwynne where Charles II is said to have broken his journey to Hampton Court from time to time and this brings me back from the Western boundary of Chelsea to Sloane Square at the Eastern boundary because I depicted Charles II in gallant conversation with Nell Gwynne on the bronze basin of the fountain in the centre of the square. I always feel that I had a certain proprietary right to depict that romantic couple because a direct ancestor, on my mother's side, was a certain Thomas Wood of Hackney who was chaplain to Charles II. He was stigmatised by the Archbishop of Canterbury as " puritan, sordid and covetous " and I think he must have been something of a thorn in the flesh of Charles because he left London and became the Bishop of Lichfield from* 1671-1692. *He was the great-grandfather of Ralph, Aaron and Moses Wood, all master-potters, Ralph Wood, of course, being the famous Staffordshire figure maker. Personally I am descended from the youngest of the three brothers, Moses, and a great number of his descendants were master-potters—a tradition which still actively persists to-day in the firm of Wood & Sons of Burslem and, as a sculptor myself, I am naturally interested in this side of my ancestry.*

My father, also of Staffordshire origin, was a student at the National Art Training School, now the Royal College of Art and he lived in Margaretta Terrace before he moved to Beaufort Street where he died in 1890, *at the age of* 33, *leaving a widow and five children. He was a sculptor of great promise, his sketchbooks in my possession are full of masterly drawings, and an account of his brief career is given in the National Biography.*

I am afraid that my reminiscences have inevitably developed into something in the nature of an auto-biography but I have restricted it as far as possible to my boyhood days in Chelsea, that most delightful of all London Boroughs.

Yours sincerely,

GILBERT LEDWARD.

ANTHONY DEVAS'S CONVERSATION PIECE OF MR. AND MRS. SAM GUINNESS

Mr. and Mrs. Guinness are here seen sitting in the drawing room at their home, No. 6, Cheyne Walk. Mr. Guinness has long been planning a whaling expedition in the antarctic; but hitherto difficulties have always intervened. Mrs. Guinness, knowing how much he looked forward to this expedition, is urging him to undertake it.

In the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Guinness by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

Anthony Devas

When Anthony Devas died in Chelsea just before Christmas, 1958, those who knew him were impressed by the extent of their loss. He had played so large a part in their adult lives and his mind and art had been so close and so intimate a concern, mattering, it seemed, beyond the common boundaries of fellowship, that a positive readjustment was needed

to accept the fact of his departure. They had seen the quick recoil to the illness of two years before, the struggle to regain strength and the efforts made to continue the painting which was his enduring passion. To acknowledge he was defeated was an admission he had not been able to make and the battle against failing physical powers went on. When the relapse of last summer came his friends told themselves there could be but one conclusion—yet Anthony belonged to life so much that hope followed on fresh hope and disaster seemed an incongruity if not an impossibility. It was to be otherwise. Quite suddenly, on 21st December, after beginning work on a new picture, the frail body gave up and he was gone.

To describe the very personal quality of Anthony from friendship's standpoint in a way comprehensible to others is beyond the scope of words and cannot be attempted here. The changes the years bring to an enquiring spirit depend for their justice on the person involved. Only they can vitalize it. In the same way the proper artistic status of one near to us in time is better looked at presently. Enough to say Anthony was a man of persuasive charm and character whose art ran parallel to his natural love of people and things close to his home. His success in both may be that he was directly spontaneous in the expression of himself, without illusion or pretension.

Anthony was one of the Slade School generation coming into being in the middle 1920s. It was the vintage years of Pasmore, Moynihan, Coldstream, Rogers, Tibble and Gowing. The Slade teaching in the realm of drawing and of tonal observation set these youngsters on their paths. Some formed themselves into a common unit, the Euston Road Group. But Anthony, though equally impressed with Slade convictions, chose to find his own way -a more lyrical one, perhaps, suggestive of the English 18th Century; and the particular sort of elegance implied inevitably took him towards portraiture.

In this country there are, fortunately, enough people of taste to want something better from an artist than the dreary effigy on canvas so often passing for portraiture. Anthony offered a promising alternative and the commissions which followed soon after the Slade and after a one-man exhibition were a response to an artist who bore in mind the painter's full problem. It was one to which he was in due course to add a further dimension. With growing facility he was able to catch and set down a subtlety of movement impossible for a less skilled, a less observant eye. He watched before he painted and then worked fast, noting that figures move and must be shown in the process of moving. And then, his rendering of women was particularly perceptive. Almost it seemed Anthony's understanding of femininity was a thing apart and reserved for him alone. In single-figure and in conversation-piece subjects the many women whose features he rendered were an endorsement of a generally recognised talent. Thus popularity came; and, with it, prosperity. Anthony "did well". How easily he might have succumbed! How easily might pandering to fashion have been the last chapter of his story!

A comprehensive retrospective exhibition to be held in London this year should be the best comment on Anthony Devas the artist. For the rest we will remember 12, Carlyle Square and the home he and his fair Nicolette created in their own very special way. Together they made a family of man and wife and children—children growing up and away to school—books and pictures filling shelves and walls—objects put there for use and pleasure ; and the inevitable flowers invading from the window, filling the house with perfume. To be there with them was as stimulating to the inquisitive as too real for their living. Visitors of another kind came back for more.

If an epitaph were to be written it might run thus :

" He loved painting and home and people and flowers."

R. G.

Mr. John Betjeman's Address

Mr. Betjeman arranged his talk on *Victorian and Chelsea Churches* chronologically. He began by saying that, except for Westminster Abbey, Middlesex and that part of London formerly Middlesex had few great mediæval buildings. Most of the parish churches were rather pleasant "Essex-like" buildings, of which that at Perivale and the old one at Greenford are characteristic. Then with the growth of London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brick additions were added, or in some cases the churches were wholly rebuilt.

Mr. Betjeman then referred to Chelsea Old Church as an interesting sixteenth and seventeenth century re-building. He showed slides of the church outside and inside and an old print showing at the top of the tower what is sometimes described as "the cupola" for the Ashburnham Bell (removed 1815) which he appropriately called "the bellcote." He expressed the view that the appearance of the tower would be improved if the bellcote were to be put back.

He then went on to describe the Chapel of the Royal Hospital as an example of the seventeenth century style *in excelsis.* Among the slides of the Royal Hospital he showed a coloured one of the apse and Sebastiano Ricci's *Resurrection.*

Mr. Betjeman next turned to non-conformity, which in Chelsea, he said, was an eighteenth and nineteenth century growth. He illustrated this phase with slides showing a string of chapels beginning with the Moravian Chapel and ending with Tarring's Congregational Church,[1] Markham Square. Other slides included the former chapels at Knightsbridge and

[1] *Markham Square Congregational Church.* The Foundation was laid in 1858. The Chapel was demolished in 1953. Illustrated in *Annual Report,* 1953, page 25.

Ranelagh,[2] the Welsh Chapel, Radnor Walk, the early English style Catholic Apostolic Church in Elystan Street (destroyed by bombing), and the former Wesleyan Chapel, Sloane Terrace, replaced by the First Church of Christ Scientist and rebuilt in Chelsea Manor Street.

Next in order came the Roman Catholic Churches. First, in Cadogan Street, the Pugin schools, 1845, to which, in 1877, Bentley added the church of Mary, in his early English Gothic style. Mr. Betjeman pointed out, however, that the Roman Catholic churches tend towards the classic tradition, as in the case of Edward Goldie's Holy Redeemer, Cheyne Row (1894). Slides demonstrated the stylistic differences.

Finally, slides illustrated the growth of the great Anglican Churches in Chelsea. Of these, the first important one to be built in Chelsea after the Old Church was James Savage's St. Luke's, Sydney Street (1824). This was the pioneer church of the Gothic revival in that it had a stone vaulted roof, though Mr. Betjeman reminded the Society that it belonged really to the Georgian tradition of Commissioners' perpendicular. He praised it very highly.

Mr. Betjeman then used Park Chapel, now St. Andrew's, Park Walk, to illustrate the growth of a small Church of England Chapel of Ease through two centuries until it became a parish church in 1912. His first slide showed Park Chapel in 1718 nestling in trees and rural surroundings and approached by the muddy lane then known as Twopenny Walk. In the next slide, depicting Park Chapel in 1810, though the nave and the bellcote of the former Chapel remained unaltered, the building had grown side-aisles and been generally enlarged ; a few buildings had crept into the still-rural background. By 1912, the year the old building was demolished, the third slide showed Park Chapel, still with

[2] *Ranelagh Chapel.* Opened in 1818 and converted into a Theatre, later to become the Royal Court Theatre, in 1870. Illustrated in *Annual Report,* 1956, on pages 8 and 9.

the bellcote it had when it was first built, standing in the town street now known as Park Walk. Lastly, he showed Blomfield's design for St. Andrew's, made in 1900 but not begun until 1912. Further slides showed the interior of Park Chapel and of St. Andrew's.

Then came a number of nineteenth century churches. Edward Blore's Christchurch (1838) and St. Mark's Chapel (1843) at the College of St. Mark and St. John; George Basevi's St. Saviour's, Walton Street (1840) and St. Jude's, Turk's Row, 1844 (demolished 1938); Joseph Peacock's St. Simon Zelotes (1859) and St. John's, Tadema Road (destroyed by bomb).

Finally, Mr. Betjeman came to that great church of Holy Trinity, Sloane Street. The first church on this site was built in 1828; like St. Luke's, the architect was James Savage. It was replaced in 1890 with the present church by John Dando Sedding. It is this church that Mr. Betjeman so aptly terms "The Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts."[3] Successive slides showed the interior and the exterior of the former church and several features of the present church, such as the H. H. Armstead's angel lecturn and (in colour) the east window Sir Edward Burne Jones designed and William Morris, after filling in the details and background and arranging the colour, put together.

Mr. Betjeman ended by giving his opinion that the three best churches in Chelsea were, without doubt, Chelsea Old Church, St. Luke's and Holy Trinity, Sloane Street.

[3] (See also *Annual Report*, 1957, pages 36 to 39.)

The Annual General Meeting of the Chelsea Society was held at the Chelsea College of Science and Technology

(By kind permission of the Principal)

on Monday, 14th July, 1958

The Society has held its Annual Meeting in many different buildings in Chelsea, but never before in the Chelsea College of Science and Technology, and never before at 8 o'clock in the evening. Either on account of this or because the address (on Victorian and Chelsea Churches) was to be delivered by Mr. John Betjeman, the attendance was larger than ever before in its history.

The invitation cards had announced that the meeting would be followed by refreshments, but this undertaking could not be carried out, for it was found that the domestic staff, who start their day early, could not stay on duty so late. They consented, however, to stay later than usual and to serve refreshments before the meeting instead of afterwards. Unfortunately, arrangements made to direct members and guests to the refectory on arrival were not sufficient, and the Council much regret that many people, ignorant of the change in arrangements, took their seats on arrival and had to wait for 25 minutes before the meeting began.

The President, Lord Cadogan, took the chair at 8.25 p.m. and apologised for the unavoidable change in the arrangements.

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, April 30th, 1957, were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the President.

After this Lord Cadogan announced that the first business was to receive the Chairman's Report as printed in the *Annual Report*, 1957.

Lord Conesford, before moving the adoption of the Report, said he knew that he was expressing the feelings of the meeting in congratulating a member of the Council of the Society on becoming Mayor of Chelsea for the second time. In applauding this sentiment members were congratulating not only the Borough but also themselves. He regretted that the Mayoress was not on the platform, but she was performing the useful task of ensuring the arrival of Mr. John Betjeman.

Lord Conesford went on to describe the completion and re-dedication of the Old Church as the great event of the year. It had not been achieved without a struggle, in which the Society and its members had played an honourable part. When he attended the re-dedication service on May 13th, 1958, he thought that it was perhaps the most triumphant and glorious occasion at which he had ever been present.

Lord Conesford next referred to Albert Bridge and the proposals of the London County Council for its destruction and replacement. These, in the opinion of the Council of the Society, constituted the gravest threat to the amenities of the Borough which Chelsea had known since the foundation of the Society.

The steps taken were fully set out in the *Annual Report*, 1957. The proposals of the London County Council had now been indefinitely postponed and he hoped that they would never be revived. The statement of the Chelsea Society's case was on the record. It was an error to suppose that, because traffic improvements sometimes injured amenities, anything that injured amenities was bound to benefit traffic.

Lord Conesford then turned to the subject of the new street lighting in Chelsea. He stressed the great interest which the public took in this matter and he congratulated

the Borough Council on their choice of design for the post and lantern on the Class A roads. Unfortunately, the post and lantern that had been put up in Chelsea Manor Street as a sample for the lighting of Class B roads had, in the opinion of the Society's Council, neither traditional elegance nor modern functional efficiency. If the Borough Council had decided that they must erect new lights in all Class B roads, he thought it to be of the utmost importance for the reputation of Chelsea and the preservation of its amenities that they should find a better means of lighting than the one suggested. He questioned the need of using fluorescent tubes in view of the successful development of alternative methods of lighting since the matter was first considered by the Council. He hoped that the new alternative methods would be considered, but, should the Borough Council feel bound to adhere to their original decision to use fluorescent tubes, the Council of the Society had suggested a different design for both post and lamp, which would, they were convinced, be far more suitable than those previously selected. He repeated the offer already made to the Borough Council that the Society would willingly help in any way they could.

Mr. John Hayward seconded the adoption of the Report.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley then rose to congratulate the meeting on having heard from their Chairman a most lucid exposition of the whole subject of street lighting. He reminded them that, as Mayor, he himself must maintain a strictly neutral position. He went on to assure the Society that the Borough Council, subject to the need to come to a decision within a reasonable time, would do their best to hear and consider the views of all Chelsea citizens, including those of the Chelsea Society. The adoption of the Chairman's Report was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The adoption of the accounts as printed on pages 69 and 70 of the *Annual Report*, 1957, was then moved by Mr. O'Rorke, seconded by Mr. Ian Fairbairn and carried unanimously.

The President then referred with regret to the resignation from the Council of the Society of Mr. Grahame B. Tubbs, a well-known member of the Chelsea Arts Club. He was glad to say that, at Mr. Tubbs' suggestion, Mr. Fyffe, another member of the Chelsea Arts Club, had been elected in his place. Effect had been given to these changes in the list of Members of the Council on page 3 of the *Annual Report*, 1957, and he therefore moved that the members of the Council and the Hon. Officers of the Society be confirmed in their respective offices. The resolution was seconded by Miss Katharine Acland and carried unanimously.

The formal business of the meeting having been concluded, the President introduced Mr. John Betjeman, who thereupon delivered a charming talk on *Victorian and Chelsea Churches*, illustrated by lantern slides. A full account is given on page 65.

At the conclusion Mr. Marsden-Smedley expressed the deepest thanks to Mr. John Betjeman for his most original and inspiring talk. He said there might be many who could talk in general on churches and architecture, but none, with the exception of Mr. Betjeman, who would have done so using virtually no examples but Chelsea churches.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1958

LIABILITIES	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Accumulated Funds		
Balance as at 31.12.57	673 0 4	
Add excess of Income over expenditure for year ...	37 2 5	
		710 2 9
		£710 2 9

ASSETS	£ s. d.	£. s. d.
Investment:—		
£500 3½% War Stock at cost. ... ... (Market Value £332.10.0.)		409 0 6
Office equipment as at 31.12.57.	20 10 0	
Additions during year ...	12 14 6	
	33 4 6	
Less Depreciation ...	8 4 6	
		25 0 0
Cash at Bank	198 6 6	
Cash in Hand	18 10 9	
Cash in Post Office A/c	59 5 0	
		276 2 3
		£710 2 9

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December, 1958

INCOME	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Members Subscriptions:—		
Life	88 5 0	
Annual	174 14 0	
Entrance Fees	13 0 6	
Donations	29 19 9	
		305 19 3
Sales of Annual Report ...		5 0
Interest on £500 3½% War Stock		17 10 0
Interest on P.O. A/c. ...		1 9 0
		£325 3 3

EXPENDITURE	£ s. d.
Annual Report	211 11 6
Clerical Assistance	8 14 9
Printing, Stationery and Postages, etc.	43 13 1
Expenses of Summer Meeting ...	15 17 0
Depreciation of Furniture	8 4 6
Balance excess of Income over Expenditure for year	37 2 5
	£325 3 3

I have examined the above Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account, with the Books and Vouchers of the Society and certify same to be in accordance therewith.

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer.

C. H. BURR,
Chartered Accountant.
31*st March*, 1959.

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, 1958

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward, 1.1.1958	135	17	1	By Balance in P.O. Savings Bank ...	139	4	7
„ Interest for 1958	3	7	6				
	£139	4	7		£139	4	7

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer.
1st February, 1959.

Audited and found correct.
C. H. BURR,
Hon. Auditor.
31st March, 1959.

REGINALD BLUNT MEMORIAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income ana Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1958

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward 1.1.1958	50	4	2	By Balance in P.O. Savings Bank ...	51	9	2
„ Interest for 1958	1	5	0				
	£51	9	2		£51	9	2

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer.
1st February, 1959.

Audited and found correct.
C. H. BURR,
Hon. Auditor.
31st March, 1959.

ANALYSIS OF POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNT

As at 31st December, 1958

	£	s.	d.
General Fund Account	59	5	0
Reginald Blunt Memorial Fund Account	51	9	2
Chelsea Old Church Restoration Fund Account	139	4	7
	£249	18	9

List of Members

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

*Miss K. Acland, O.B.E.
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Mrs. M. A. Jenks
Mrs. G. H. Jennings
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