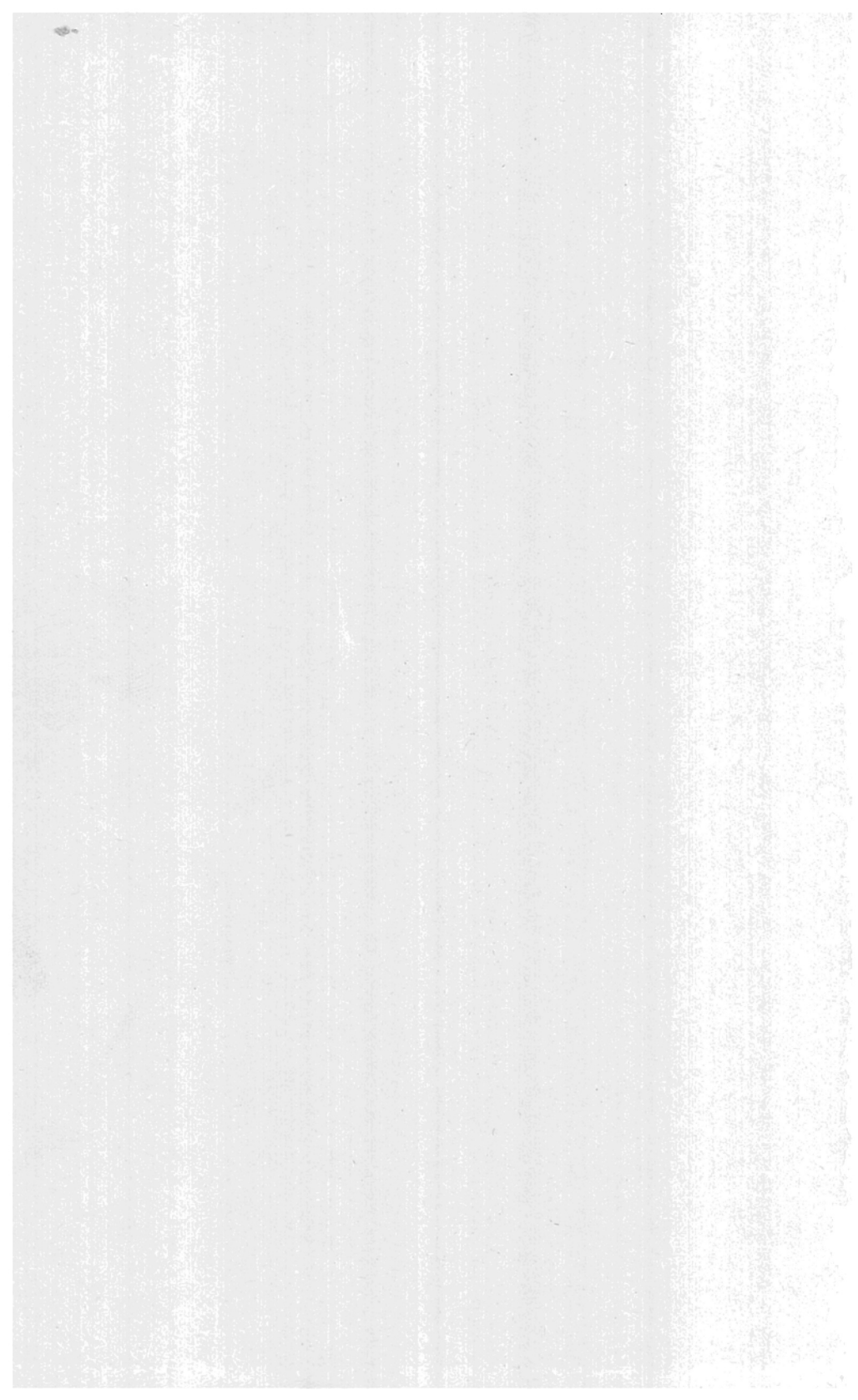


THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

THE ANNUAL REPORT 1960





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Price Five Shillings



THE NAVE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Above Sedding's Nave is the vaulted ceiling of which the reconstruction after bombing was completed in 1960 using new techniques, for which Michael Farey was the architect. The superb stained glass of the east window, in which shades of green predominate, was the work of Burne-Jones and William Morris. Miraculously it escaped destruction. The five central light fittings were adapted from the original very early electroliers designed by Sedding in 1890. Previously their presumed loss had been much regretted; but happily they were found during the reconstruction. (See pages 31 to 44)

Reproduced by courtesy of the National Buildings Record.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

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MISS HILDA REID

Address

THE HONORARY SECRETARY,
THE CHELSEA SOCIETY,
2 Redanchor Close, 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 annual subscription for new members of £1 which, it is requested, might be paid by banker's order.

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

The subscription year runs from the 1st February.

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Chairman's Report for 1960

1. *The Annual General Meeting*

In the evening of Thursday, 21st July, 1960, the Chelsea Society held its Annual General Meeting at the Chelsea College of Science and Technology by kind permission of the Principal. The Minutes of the meeting are to be found on pages 55 to 61 and an account of Mr. Strong's address on pages 53 and 54.

2. *Annual Subscriptions*

Inevitably, the cost of printing, typing, addressing, stationery and postage has risen whilst the income of the Society has remained level. In 1957 it became necessary to double the cost of life subscriptions from £5 5s. 0d. to £10 10s. 0d. Your Council have now reluctantly decided to raise the annual subscription for all members joining the Society after 30th June, 1961 from 10/- to £1. For the present, annual subscriptions of existing members remain unchanged.

3. *Bombsite Garden*

It will be remembered that in 1948 the Society suggested to the Chelsea Borough Council that if the latter could come to an arrangement with the Sloane Stanley Estate, the Society would undertake to find volunteers to convert the Cheyne Walk bombsite into a garden. Previously the site had been a derelict rubbish dump, a nuisance alike to the public and authorities. Thereupon the Borough Council arranged to lease the western part of the bombsite from the Sloane Stanley Estate at a nominal rent and the Society was most fortunate in the volunteer gardeners it found to cultivate the plots. As a result there has been, for several years, a quite phenomenal horticultural display at negligible public cost.

In July, 1954, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was graciously pleased to visit the bombsite.¹ With her delightful easy charm Her Majesty walked among the plots, pausing here and there to comment with expert appreciation on some notable plant or clever garden design. The Royal interest has always been matched by gardening enthusiasts from every section of the Chelsea community and rows of

¹ The *frontispiece* to the *Annual Report*, 1954 reproduces a photograph of Her Majesty inspecting the bombsite garden.

spectators are often to be seen leaning over the wall and watching the volunteers gardening. These volunteers deserve the thanks of the Chelsea community for having brightened a derelict area with flowers for 13 years. Nevertheless this expedient was never meant to be anything but temporary and two or three years ago much local interest began to be shown on its conversion into a public garden. At that time the L.C.C. contemplated making and maintaining the garden themselves. However, it was pointed out that this site had special local connections since it was in the heart of Chelsea and flanked by two buildings of architectural and historic interest, namely, the Old Church and Crosby Hall. It was therefore agreed that it should be laid out and maintained by the Borough Council since they were likely to have a closer appreciation of the local interest. Much discussion and correspondence took place and the Society began to collect ideas and assess local feeling on the subject. It was felt that what was needed was the advice of the best landscape architect that could be found. The Society were fortunate to secure the services of Mr. Peter Shephard, B.Arch., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I., F.I.L.A., who had delivered an address to the Society on trees in 1956. Later on, when the Borough Council came to consider the problem in detail, they most wisely decided to employ Mr. Shephard as their landscape architect.

4. *Tree Planting*

The Chelsea Borough Council is to be congratulated on having begun a most praiseworthy tree-planting operation. The Society has long had under consideration the need for systematic planting of trees in Chelsea; but it is only now that it has been tackled on an adequate scale. The first area to be thoroughly surveyed for the positions to plant trees was North Stanley Ward; and the resulting recommendations have since been agreed. A few positions in other parts of Chelsea were included in the recommendations but in the main the Borough Council state that they intend to consider a more complete survey and consequent planting in future seasons.

In most streets in Chelsea it is neither feasible nor desirable to plant avenues of trees. Under the pavement are often cellars, pipes and cables making planting impossible, except in a few places; elsewhere fronting the street are windows, the darkening of which by too close tree planting justly meets with objection.

The Borough Council must be commended for their ingenuity in selecting sites, in many cases by windowless flank-walls. On the positive side, sites have been selected so as to improve a vista, either by "framing" an attractive view or terrace and thus accentuating good architecture in a particular street; or to soften the harsh lines of indifferent or out of place features; or to hide that which is ugly. With these factors in mind the Borough Council has paid careful attention to the selection of suitable species of trees. It is proposed to plant some small flowering trees in suitable streets; but, for the most part, trees of a size large enough to be in scale with the background against which they will be seen, or suitable for screening large ugly flank-walls, have been chosen.

The species chosen in the largest numbers are those which are known to thrive in Chelsea streets; some of the rarer species for which only a small number of trees are recommended may be regarded as to some extent experimental. All except one of the species of lime (*Tilia euchlora*) and the white double-flowering horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum* var. *flora-plena*) are recommended in the Government publication *Trees in Town and City* (1958: H.M.S.O., 7/6d.) This variety of horse-chestnut does not bear "conkers" and is therefore not a target for missiles which in this locality might do serious damage to people or property.

The following is a list of trees recommended for planting in this first stage.

<i>Tree</i>	<i>No.</i>
Tree of Heaven (<i>Ailanthus altissima</i> —Syn. <i>A. glandulosa</i>)	27
London Plane (<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>)	10
Acacia (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>)	14
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	6
Ash, one-leaved (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> var. <i>diversifolia</i> — syn. <i>F.e. monophylla</i>)	2
Lime (<i>Tilia euchlora</i>)	4
Lime, Red-twigged (<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i> var. <i>rubra</i> — syn. <i>T.P. corallina</i>)	3
Maiden Hair (<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>)	3
Tulip (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>)	2
Pear, Willow-leaved (<i>Pyrus salicifolia</i> var. <i>pendula</i>)	1
Horse-Chestnut, white double-flowering (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> var. <i>flora-plena</i>)	1
Almond (<i>Prunus amygdalus</i> —syn. <i>P. communis</i>)	2
Mountain Ash, European (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	4
Mountain Ash (<i>Sorbus discolor</i>)	}
Cherry, Sargents (<i>Prunus sargentii</i>)	
	1
Total	80

5. *King's Road Decor.*

The Society is represented by your Chairman on a Committee which is giving thought with a view to making suggestions for a comprehensive scheme of design, decoration and, when necessary, un-cluttering of the stretch of King's Road between Sloane Square and Chelsea Town Hall. The Committee is under the Chairmanship of Mr. L. Wharrad, Managing Director of Peter Jones, and has representatives, besides your Chairman, from the Borough Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Civic Trust and, most important, the traders in that part of the King's Road.

6. *Preservation of Open Spaces.*

In the early part of the year protests began to be received by the Society against proposals by the Chelsea Borough Council Housing Committee to build upon the Wiltshire Close playground and the Rectory Garden.

The Society at once protested to the London County Council as Town Planning Authority, pointing out that Chelsea of all London Boroughs was among the most deficient in open spaces. The Society reminded the L.C.C. that the Borough Council had themselves, on a previous occasion, asked that the Rectory garden should be preserved as an open space. Many local activities centre round this garden. In summer it is open three nights a week to the public and at other times it is the scene of many local and parish meetings and festivities. By contemporary standards, the population-density of Wiltshire Close is already excessive and it would have been retrogressive in the extreme to have increased the density still further. Fortunately the London County Council refused to allow further building on the Wiltshire Close site; and the Borough Council ultimately dropped the proposal to build on the Rectory garden.

7. *Royal Avenue.*

The flanking terraces. It will be remembered that on 14th July, 1959 the Society wrote to the L.C.C. objecting to a Town Planning Application to develop Nos. 1-15 (odd) Royal Avenue and 5-7 Walpole Street on the grounds that three story houselets on part of the east side of Royal Avenue were of undistinguished design and would have a lower sky-level than the remainder of the terrace; and the symmetry and balance of the terraces on the east and west side would be disrup-

ted. This Application was thereupon superseded by one which endeavoured to meet the point by a proposed development of the whole of the east side of Royal Avenue; although, as the leases for Nos. 17 to 43 had 37 years to run, there would be a broken facade for many years to come. The Society then wrote to the L.C.C. as follows:-

The Chelsea Society

The Clerk to the London County Council

9th August, 1960.

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Chelsea Society to submit further representations with regard to the re-development of the Royal Avenue flanking terraces. A note by the Society on the architectural and historic merit of Royal Avenue, which in the view of the Society justifies the preservation of these terraces, is attached, together with a historical note by Captain C. G. T. Dean, M.B.E. contained in the Society's *Annual Report* 1959 pages 53-60.

The error in this case was that the Ground Landlords initiated an agreement which sought to promote development on a block of property near the King's Road which included 1 to 15 Royal Avenue and 3 to 7 Walpole Street quite regardless of the fact that this would break an end off one of the Royal Avenue flanking terraces. This act of vandalism was plotted and planned some time ago by means of a lease requiring the building tenant to re-develop this portion of the east terrace before 1969 without regard to the remainder. If this flagrant example of bad architectural manners is blessed with Town Planning consent no terrace of architectural importance in London will be safe.

The developers have recently been good enough to say that they intend to show the Society plans and elevations for developing the whole of the east side of Royal Avenue and have already shown a photograph of three-storey houses stretching from St. Leonard's Terrace to No.1 Royal Avenue. The Society has not commented on the architectural merits of this proposal because it is within its knowledge that a number of the remaining houses in Royal Avenue are held under leases which still have 37 years to run. A substantial number of these leaseholders have no intention of selling and it will therefore be impossible to implement the whole scheme for 37 years.

The Society feels that the architectural and historic merit of Royal Avenue must be preserved and submits the attached paper in support of this request. Furthermore for the reasons given above the Society asks the London County Council to agree that the time to consider re-development, if at all, would be in 37 years when all the leases run out. If these proposals are adopted the offending conditions in the lease would have to be set aside, but the demand for the property as it is, market rates being what they are, ought to ensure, not only that no one makes any loss, but that at least a just and reasonable profit is made.

The Society therefore asks that a Preservation Order be made in respect of both sides of Royal Avenue.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chelsea Borough Council.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Hilda Reid

Joint Hon. Secretary

Royal Avenue

Note by the Chelsea Society on the architectural and historic merit which in their view amply justifies its preservation.

There is a great deal more to Royal Avenue than a leafy boulevard flanked by matching terraces of houses, though the setting and the scene makes these houses among the most prized in London.

The architectural and historic merit lies in the original *raison d'être* of the Avenue, namely Sir Christopher Wren's masterly design for a grand approach to the Royal Hospital. The Society is indebted to Captain C.G. T. Dean, M.B.E., author of the *Royal Hospital Chelsea* (Hutchinson 1950) for the historical notes reproduced in the Chelsea Society's *Annual Report*, 1959 pages 53 to 60 under the heading *The Royal Avenue*.

It will be seen from Captain Dean's notes that Sir Christopher Wren's Avenue was completed about 1689. It was first planted with horse chestnut trees and an early name for it was "The Chestnut Walk". Later it became known as "The White Stiles". This is probably a better name for the present gravel walk which is sometimes rather inappropriately called "The Royal Avenue Central Reserve". It is now an avenue of lime trees; but whatever the name or species of tree the dominant feature is that it lies on the axis to the dome and centre of the Royal Hospital, providing a splendid vista and grand approach.

The visual effect of an avenue depends on its setting. Originally Royal Avenue lay through fields but was enclosed with a quick hedge. In 1807 a short cul-de-sac made its way north from Rayner Place, now St. Leonard's Terrace, thus replacing the quick hedge at the south-west corner. The first houses to be built in this cul-de-sac, which was called Hemus Terrace, are now Nos. 26 to 48 (even numbers) Royal Avenue. In 1853 Hemus Terrace was extended to the King's Road. The eastern side of Royal Avenue was developed by John Tombs, a native of Gloucester and completed in 1849. At first it was called Royal Terrace. In 1858 the name Royal Avenue was applied to the street on either side of "White Stiles".

Although Royal Avenue was not built all at one time (the actual dates being from 1807-1849) from the aspect of vista, the two flanking terraces match one another admirably and together contribute to the concept of a grand approach to the Royal Hospital in a way that most compellingly merits their preservation.

On 7th November, 1960 the L.C.C. made a Building Preservation Order in respect of Nos. 1 to 43 (odd) and resolved to make a further Order in respect to Nos. 2 to 48 (even). Notice of objection was sent to the Minister of Housing and Local Government by (a) the Church Commissioners as ground landlords of 1 to 43 (odd) Royal Avenue, (b) the Executors of the late Mr. A. M. Cawthorne, lessees of Nos. 17 to 43 (odd) and (c) Town Investments, Ltd. lessees of Nos. 1 to 15 (odd). The Minister announced that a Public Enquiry would be held.

White Stiles. The Society will have seen with pleasure that the whole area between the twin streets of Royal Avenue known as White Stiles has been re-laid with fresh hoggin. The

threatened obstructions in the line of the grand approach and vista and the Royal Hospital have happily not been proceeded with. A conflict in proposals for the surrounding rail has unfortunately resulted in delay in its instalment. The Society recommended a rail of square cross section mounted on iron or steel supports. A short sample length of rail, however, of inferior design has been put up, consisting of circular tubing held up by concrete posts.

8. *Paultons Square and Stanley Terrace.*

Members of the Chelsea Society will view with concern any threat to Paultons Square, Chelsea. This pleasing Square of small, terrace houses, which are in great demand, is one of the most homogeneous architectural entities in Chelsea and must be protected at all costs from encroaching development. The Council of the Society are therefore resolved to lend all support to the L.C.C. who have recently made a Building Preservation Order in respect of Nos. 1 to 56 Paultons Square and 291 to 301 (odd) King's Road.

Nos. 291 to 301 (odd) King's Road form an inseparable part of Paultons Square architectural entity. The pediment of this terrace is inscribed "STANLEY TERRACE, 1840". The rest of the Square was completed between 1840 and 1850. This terrace, together with its flank facing Paultons Square, is now threatened with inharmonious development; and objections to the Preservation Order for Paultons Square and Stanley Terrace, together with an appeal against L.C.C. refusal to allow Stanley Terrace to be demolished in order to build shops with flats over and a loading bay and access to basement garages facing Paultons Square, will be heard at an Inquiry by an Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

9. *The Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London.*

The Society's *Annual Report*, 1958² recorded that a Royal Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir Edwin Herbert had been set up to examine the present system and working of Local Government in Greater London and to make recommendations. The Society submitted written evidence to the

² *Annual Report*, 1958, page 7.

Commission on December 18th, 1958, a copy of which was included in the same report.³ In that evidence the Society sought to maintain the civic autonomy of the Borough and to oppose any plan to annex its territory, or any part of its territory, to any neighbouring borough. It reminded the Commission that Chelsea had been more successful than its neighbours in maintaining its character and in preventing the loss of pleasant residential streets and squares to other uses. The evidence went on to explain to the Commission that not only had people lived for centuries in this historic place, which had given its name to a dozen Chelseas abroad, but people continued to wish to live there because they loved it for its qualities, and not because they were unable to go elsewhere. The evidence then pointed out that it was of national, and not merely local, importance that such local communities should continue to flourish near the centre of the Capital. It added that the Chelsea Borough Council was close enough to the community which it served to further their interests in ways which would not occur to a composite or more distant authority; and gave as an instance the unique statutory powers to build studios which the Chelsea Borough Council had obtained.

In October, 1960 the Royal Commission published their Report.⁴ After making numerous desirable recommendations regarding the system of local government in Greater London (which hardly concern the Society) the Commission made certain recommendations about the size of London Boroughs. It is regrettable, for the reasons above, that these include the amalgamation of Chelsea and the whole of Kensington; but it is to be noted that the Commission, though they support their conclusion as to size with much logic, make only provisional recommendations about the actual grouping. They add that, if their views are accepted generally, an opportunity should be given for specific representations about boundaries to be made within defined terms of reference under legislation approved by Parliament⁵. The Society should, therefore, carefully examine the proposals to amalgamate Chelsea and the whole of Kensington.

It is first necessary to see why the Commission recommended the amalgamation. They begin by saying that the appropriate

³ Annual Report, 1958. pages 12 to 17.

⁴ Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London. (cmd.1164. 28s. 0d.)

⁵ Ibid. Paragraphs 744 and 932.

range of population for a Greater London Borough should be between 100,000 and 250,000⁶. The present population of Chelsea is 52,000. Thus the Commission, at the outset, fall into the error of using population as the sole criterion for gauging the size of a unit of local government. Other factors are equally important, such as financial viability and the effect of the day population, which the Commission ignore. Nevertheless, in considering many of the services recommended for transfer to Boroughs, population is of some importance (e.g. organisation of Public Health Services⁷. There might, therefore, be difficulty in resisting a proposal for the enlargement of Chelsea; but that need not prevent objection being taken to linking remote localities like North Kensington and Chelsea which have no community of interest and deficient communication facilities.

The Commission themselves emphasise the need for taking into account lines of communication in shaping a new Borough⁸. They also recommend, however, the amalgamation of existing Boroughs⁹; and, presumably because it is easier, have exclusively followed this latter course. If they had given due weight to their own criterion of the need to take into account lines of communication, they would have seen that, though it is admitted there is a case for a Borough of the size they recommend between Hyde Park and the Thames, there is no case at all for attaching to it territory north of the Park. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens form a natural boundary, one might also say a barrier, and communications with North Kensington are inadequate for the successful administration of a merged unit of London local government. The lines of communication for an enlarged borough between the Park and the Thames lie along east-west routes; Chelsea Embankment, King's Road, Fulham Road, Brompton Road, Cromwell Road and Knightsbridge and Kensington Road.

Apart from the desire, for which the Commission give no reasons, to use existing borough boundaries in effecting borough enlargements, there is everything to be said against their provisional suggestion to make an elongated north-south Borough, without proper lines of communication, out of Chelsea South Kensington and North Kensington. There are however,

⁶ Report of the Royal Commission Local Government in Greater London Paragraph 743 (11).

⁷ Ibid. Paragraphs 605 to 607.

⁸ Ibid. Paragraph 743 (11) (b).

⁹ Ibid. Paragraph 743 (11) (a).

excellent communications between Hammersmith and North Kensington and an obvious solution would be to create a new Borough between Hyde Park and the Thames primarily out of Chelsea, South Kensington and the south part of Fulham using for convenience the boundaries of the respective Parliamentary Constituencies, and, to maintain the population balance by attaching North Kensington and Baron's Court to Hammersmith.

Another reason against trying to retain existing borough boundaries in amalgamation is that it prevents clearing up long-standing anomalies. One such anomaly exists on the north boundary of Chelsea where tongues of Westminster and Kensington intertwine to cut off Chelsea, one of the Boroughs most deficient in open spaces, from Hyde Park. Open space facilities are essential to the residential population living in the Chelsea hinterland, but at present Chelsea has little say in development and traffic proposals along the south side of the Park, which, among other considerations, affect access by pedestrians and prams and approach by public transport. Amalgamation with South Kensington would help; but the most serious part of the anomaly is the Westminster strip between Albert Gate and Kensington Gardens.

The most important consideration, however, is whether or not Chelsea, if enlarged by the addition of South Kensington and the south part of Fulham together with the strip of Westminster fronting the South side of the Park between Albert Gate and Kensington Gore, would make a unit of government of the required size in which some community of interest existed between all areas. It would seem that these areas might very happily unite. Brompton Ward of Kensington is already part of the Chelsea constituency; and besides flats and rooms there are many streets and squares of houses of a manageable size for single occupation which are similar to those in Chelsea. The Museums, Schools of Art and Music and the Albert Hall would be closely in line with Chelsea's traditional concern with letters and the arts.

Other points besides ease of communications in favour of adding the south part of Fulham are, first, the fact that not only residents but many artists, pushed out of Chelsea by expensive developments, are finding studios and places in which to live west of the Borough; Faulkner¹⁰ stretched a point

¹⁰ Faulkner: *Chelsea*, Vol. 1, page 54. (1829).

to include Sands End (which he called Sandy End) in Chelsea and though he acknowledged it was in fact in Fulham, he excused this because Nell Gwynn, he asserted, once lived at Sandford Manor, though no supporting evidence of this is known to exist. De Morgan who made pottery in Cheyne Row from 1872 to 1881, later in life continued at Sands End from 1888 to 1899. Fulham is amply endowed with open spaces, including Bishop's Palace and Park, Hurlingham Park and Stadium and Hurlingham Club; any merger with Chelsea would greatly ease the latter's open space deficiency. Finally, the Chelsea Football Ground would at last be situated in the Borough from which it takes its name. It would seem, therefore, that if a larger unit of local government is to be forced upon us, the best solution would be

- (1) to oppose the addition of North Kensington to a South-of-the-Park Borough.
- (2) to ask instead that Chelsea, South Kensington and the south part of Fulham unite, with the addition of that strip of Westminster west of Albert Gate.

10. *The Town Planning Authority.*

The role of a civic Society is to put forward the views of a locality on matters affecting amenity; and, although the vast majority of development is unobjectionable and goes unremarked, inevitably the activities of a society tend to concern themselves with the extent to which unrestricted building enterprise, which adversely affects the neighbourhood, should be restrained in the interests of public amenity. This also is the essence of Town Planning; and the arbiter between these conflicting interests is the L.C.C. Town Planning Committee. Members will, no doubt, be aware that a fellow member, Mr. Richard Edmonds, has been Chairman of the Town Planning Committee since 1955 and has only quite recently retired on taking on another Chairmanship. During this time the public has steadily increased its respect for the L.C.C. Town Planning Department which has done a difficult job admirably. It deserves a tribute for the unity of purpose between the elected membership and the permanent staff. There is, however, room for improvement in one direction. The same treatment that is meted out to private developers should be applied with even greater rigidity to the other Departments of the L.C.C. In this way the L.C.C. would be practising what it is trying to teach and an example to private developers.

11. *Institutional Overdevelopment in Central Chelsea.*

Chelsea people have always been generous and charitable; and over the years have founded hospitals, schools and the institution now known as King's Mead. These various buildings began by being quite small and provided for the needs of the neighbourhood. They were controlled locally. Control has now been centralised; and, in providing for other districts less well endowed with such institutions, it has proved easier to the authorities to add on to existing buildings in Chelsea than to start afresh elsewhere.

It would be reasonable for Chelsea to provide services for its own locality and a fair quota towards those for all-London. In fact, however, Chelsea is providing in several fields services far in excess of local needs and as a result, since each service tends to expand its property, literally many hundreds of private residents either have been, or are likely to be, evicted in the process. Although it has been said so often, it is worth repeating that the best contribution Chelsea can make to the national well-being and to London is the housing of a resident population centrally where those engaged in the field of letters and the arts, members of parliament, diplomats, leaders of industry and government and others whose calling keeps them at work at late hours, can be near one another and near the centres of their respective avocations. It is this contribution to this great Commonwealth Capital, and this high-intellect quality, that has made the name of Chelsea world-famous. Institutions in appropriate sizes and numbers are of course a necessity; but it is bad town-planning to permit excessive institutional development in any locality so as to oust or diminish its most beneficial and characteristic contribution to the whole city.

In central Chelsea the following institutions all wish to expand and evict Chelsea people from their homes:-

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The Chelsea College of Science and Technology (L.C.C.) | 6. St. Luke's Hospital. |
| 2. The Chelsea Art School (L.C.C.) | 7. Chelsea Hospital for Women. |
| 3. The Fire Brigade (L.C.C.) | 8. The Royal Marsden Hospital. |
| 4. King's Mead (L.C.C.) | 9. The Brompton Hospital. |
| 5. The Oratory Secondary School (L.C.C.) | 10. The Royal Cancer Hospital and the Chester Beatty Institute of Cancer Research. |

It is obvious that, if all these are allowed to remain where they are and expand so as to maintain their efficiency, they will not only turn out all the residents in the neighbourhood but

will begin fierce competition with one another. One or more of these institutions must, therefore, move further away from the centre of London. All of them are well-respected in the neighbourhood and a courageous decision is called for. The following considerations may help in formulating public opinion on the subject:-

1 and 2. The Chelsea College of Science and Technology and the Chelsea Art School.

These now separate institutions of Higher Education were once the Chelsea Polytechnic. The Chelsea Art School has an international reputation and is appropriately situated in Chelsea. It is largely staffed by part time practising artists. The College is one of four polytechnic-type institutions in London selected for up-grading to Colleges of Advanced Technology. Neither of these are suitable for removal because (a) Chelsea is their reasonable habitat, (b) excellent buildings which have only to be extended already exist on this site and (c) plans are far advanced and evictions from many houses and studios have already taken place. Nevertheless, in spite of present expansion proposals, the College is still in need of additional land.

3. The proposed King's Road Fire Station.

Sometime shortly before the Second World War a section of the splendid 1810 terrace of private houses once known as King's Parade was sold to the L.C.C. to build a Fire Station. The houses were not in fact, demolished until after the war. Besides being a gross act of vandalism, as time wore on, it became obvious that it would be hard to find a more unsuitable place for the Fire Station. The present Fire Station, only a stone's throw away in South Parade, is far more suitable because it has a number of traffic-free exits; whereas on the proposed site in the King's Road by Dovehouse Street there is an impenetrable traffic block for large parts of each day. Every Town Planning expert has condemned siting the Fire Station in this position¹¹; but the L.C.C. Fire Brigade committee have stood their ground with a persistence worthy of a better cause. This site should have been used to augment the Chelsea College site.

4. King's Mead.

This antiquated institution is due to be wholly rebuilt; now, therefore, is the time to consider whether it is situated in the right place and is of the right size. Unfortunately for London, the L.C.C. Welfare Committee seems incapable of embarking on a beneficial and imaginative exercise of this kind. More enlightened people have been questioning in their minds the desirability of very large institutions. King's Mead itself is much larger than the needs of Chelsea and draws its inmates from all parts of London. To some extent the L.C.C. recognised this and in their proposals have reduced the number to 240. Even so, they propose to extend the site, to evict the occupants of houses in Sydney Street and to demolish this row of terrace houses and build old peoples' flatlets in their place. The provision of old people's flatlets is, of course, a desirable object; but surely it is wrong to choose a site where it is necessary to throw one set of people into

¹¹ Reference to Sir Hugh Casson's remarks about this Fire Station was made in the *Annual Report*, 1959, page 69.

the street to house another. As the whole institution is to be rebuilt it would surely be far better to move it to another site altogether and use the land for the essential extension of Chelsea College.

5. *The Oratory Secondary School.*

The proposed enlargement of the Oratory Secondary School involving the demolition of 77 houses and rendering 300 Chelsea citizens homeless has already been the subject of protest¹². This school is inconveniently situated because the area is restricted and only a few pupils come from Chelsea. It should be sited in a place more conveniently accessible to the majority. Moreover, in such an area, land would be cheaper and a larger site could be acquired for the same cost. The L.C.C. are understood to have acceded to the representations to the extent of relieving some but not all of the houses. It would, however, obviously be better to consider removal of the whole school to a better site.

6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

None of these five specialised hospitals have, as yet, shown any disposition to move. In point of town planning it is surely unnecessary to have so many specialised hospitals in one area. One or more ought to be moved away from the centre of London.

In this area of central Chelsea, overcrowded with institutions, the most obvious candidates for removal to another district are one or more of the specialised hospitals; but, as it does not appear that any of them are contemplating a voluntary move or total rebuilding, this solution does not seem to be practicable at the present time. An immediate and practicable way of de-crowding this cluster of institutions would be to find fresh sites further from the centre of London for the two that have to be altogether rebuilt in the near future, namely, King's Mead and the Oratory Secondary School. Suitable parts of the site of King's Mead could be wholly or partly used for the much needed extension to Chelsea College; the Sydney Street evictions need not take place; and the Oratory Secondary School site could be re-zoned for residential and studio accommodation to make up for the houses and artists' studios already devastated by expanding institutions.

12. *Offices of the Former Chelsea Board of Guardians.*

Re-consideration of the proposals for redeveloping the King's Mead site has already been urged on other grounds.¹³ The questionable proposals by the L.C.C. Welfare Committee include the demolition of the offices on the north side of the King's Road between Sydney Street and the Old Burial Ground formerly occupied by the Chelsea Board of Guardians. King's Mead site and the Old Burial Ground were given to the parish

¹² See *Annual Report*, 1959, pages 20-22. Also the Civic Trust *Bulletin*, No. 4, Spring, 1960; article entitled *Sydney Street*.

¹³ See page 19.



THE OFFICES OF THE FORMER CHELSEA BOARD OF GUARDIANS
 Chelsea ratepayers paid for building these pleasant offices, opposite Chelsea Town Hall, in 1903, on land given to Chelsea parish by Sir Hans Sloane in 1733. From the Town Hall, the view of this two storey building of fine brick with stone embellishments, topped by noble chimney stacks, is admirably set off by the large trees fronting the old burial ground. In 1929, these offices were transferred by statute to the L.C.C., except for three rooms occupied by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The L.C.C. propose to demolish them, although, if retransferred to Chelsea, they might help to solve the desperate accommodation shortage in the Town Hall.

Photograph by Kathleen Smith

of Chelsea by Sir Hans Sloane in 1733.¹⁴ For nearly 200 years the Chelsea Vestry, and afterwards the Chelsea Board of Guardians, provided for the poor of Chelsea on this site. In 1929, however, the Boards of Guardians were abolished by statute and the freehold of King's Mead, including the Guardians Offices were transferred to the L.C.C., although the freehold of three rooms occupied by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, remain with the Chelsea Borough Council. The L.C.C. however, no longer required all this accommodation, part of which they leased to the former Polytechnic School of Chiropody, which has recently been transferred to Paddington. So here, conveniently opposite Chelsea Town Hall, stands a

¹⁴ Faulkner: *Chelsea* (1829), Vol.II, page 25.

splendid block of offices, bearing over the entrance the coat of arms carved in stone of the Chelsea Borough Council; a block built of the best materials by a good architect and Chelsea ratepayers in the architectural style of 1903. It is indeed a thoroughly pleasant building, in scale with its surroundings, and well set off with trees. Its only fault is that it is not wanted by the L.C.C. Compare this with the state of affairs in the Town Hall opposite. Here the many duties that year by year are placed on the shoulders of the Metropolitan Borough Councils have resulted in Chelsea suffering from a grave shortage of Town Hall accommodation. The Lower Town Hall, once so useful for small public meetings, has had to be taken over by the Public Health Department; one of the Committee rooms has had to be sacrificed to the Borough Treasurer's Department; the Town Planning Office is housed in a temporary hut; and many more undesirable expedients have to be adopted to try to overcome this shortage. Surely the Borough Council should be urged not to countenance making matters worse by relinquishing its three freehold rooms occupied by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages; and the L.C.C. should be urged to consider the re-transfer of the remainder of these offices to the Borough Council.

13. *Noise Nuisance from Aircraft.*

Noise nuisance from aircraft over Chelsea has recently increased so much both in loudness and frequency as to become at times almost intolerable. There had, of course, always been aircraft noise over Chelsea; but until about August, 1960 it had been bearable, even if unpleasant. Since then, however, the noise has reached an intensity that calls for action. Four members of the Society have, therefore, taken the matter up with the Airport Commandant at London Airport. It appears from correspondence that Chelsea is within 11 nautical miles of London Airport and very close to the extended centre-line of the northern main east-west runway. The Commandant, therefore, considers it inevitable that some aircraft approaching to land towards the west or, to a somewhat lesser extent, taking off towards the east, will pass over Chelsea. Traffic over Chelsea may diminish periodically when wind-direction dictates the use of other runways; but in general he holds out no hope that the traffic will even remain at its present volume as it continues to build up year by year.

Prospect of making aircraft less noisy seems dim. All turbo-jet aircraft bound for London Airport must be fitted with

noise suppressors; but doubt is cast on their capacity to reduce noise to a satisfactory level. Nothing, however, it appears, can be done with propeller-driven aircraft as the noise is due to the propeller itself. The Boeing Aircraft Company, makers of the noisiest aircraft, is said to be actively seeking noise abatement measures, though hitherto without very notable success; and research on this subject is continuing on a scale which one must hope is as thorough as the occasion demands.

The minimum legal height for flight over built-up areas is 1,500 feet and the normal height is stated to be about 2,000 feet until about 7 miles from the airport when the final descent is made at a gradient of 1 in 20. The Commandant considered that there was no reason to believe these limits have been transgressed.

The first comment must be that the canker of increasing noise nuisance from aircraft has been stealthily creeping in on Chelsea; and the Society should, therefore, begin by making known the technical facts that have been outlined above. Secondly, the different facets of public interest should be weighed against one another. Noise nuisance is not only undermining the pleasurable enjoyment of the home, but it is seriously affecting the work of composers, musicians, actors and writers. It is an attack on that civilised life in which this country has hitherto excelled. Paris has refused to submit to the dictates of the airfolk and forbids aircraft over the city. Had London done this it would have been necessary to site the airport and its principal runway so that aircraft did not pass over the centre of the town. One cannot help feeling that more could and should have been done to protect London people from noise nuisance of so great an intensity. The impression is widespread that the situation would not have been so bad if the responsible authorities had been better able to appreciate in their minds the human need, not only for machinery and speed, but for the creation and enjoyment of all the fruits of civilisation, particularly those which appeal to the mind.

14. *Obituary*

During the period under review the Society will have heard with deep regret of the death of:- Mr. A. E. A. M. Atkins, Mr. W. H. Buchanan, Major A. W. Foster, Sir Geoffrey Fry, Bart. K.C.B., C.V.O., Lady Jackson, Mrs. G. H. Jennings, Mr. Gilbert Ledward, O.B.E., R.A., to whom a tribute appears on pages 51 and 52, Mr. Reginald Rees, M.B.E. and Mrs. D. M. Riddell.



THE OLD CHURCH STREET FRONTAGE OF THE CHELSEA ARTS CLUB

The Autumn Meeting at the Chelsea Arts Club

By T. H. H. Hancock

Nearly three hundred members of the Society attended the Autumn Meeting at the Chelsea Arts Club, on Saturday, 1st October, 1960 which proved to be a most successful occasion.

Although the invitations said "3.30 p.m.", long before that time Members of the Society had begun to arrive. Everyone deeply appreciated the hospitality and the welcome extended by the Chelsea Arts Club which enabled them to wander from room to room and to see many paintings in the possession of the Club which also have particular local interest.

First, the Committee Room, a low-ceilinged panelled room with, on its walls, a masterly pen and sepia wash drawing by

Augustus John, O.M., a Life Member of the Club; a striking female figure study by Sir William Orpen, and centrally hung over the fire place a famous caricature by "Spy" of James McNeill Whistler, a founder Member of the Club.



THE CHELSEA ARTS CLUB GARDEN; to the left a statue of Venus formerly owned by Sir William Orpen, R.A., and of French classical origin; in the foreground the Memorial Fountain known as *Cupid on Shell* by Henry Poole, R.A., and erected in his memory by Club Members.

Members of the Chelsea Society were invited to take tea in the Dining Room—a pleasant-shaped room with its superb view over the garden and long scrubbed-oak refectory table. On the walls of this room works by John Sargent, P. Wilson Steer, O.M., and William Etty attracted attention. A portrait of Stirling Lee, the first Chairman of the Club, by Wilson Steer also hangs in the Dining Room. In the Garden Loggia, framed in a case, hangs Whistler's *Butterfly*, a device he used when signing his works.

A visit into the spacious garden was rewarding for a glimpse of a marble Venus of French Classical Period and unusual beauty once owned by Sir William Orpen, and a Memorial



A CORNER OF THE CHELSEA ARTS CLUB GARDEN.

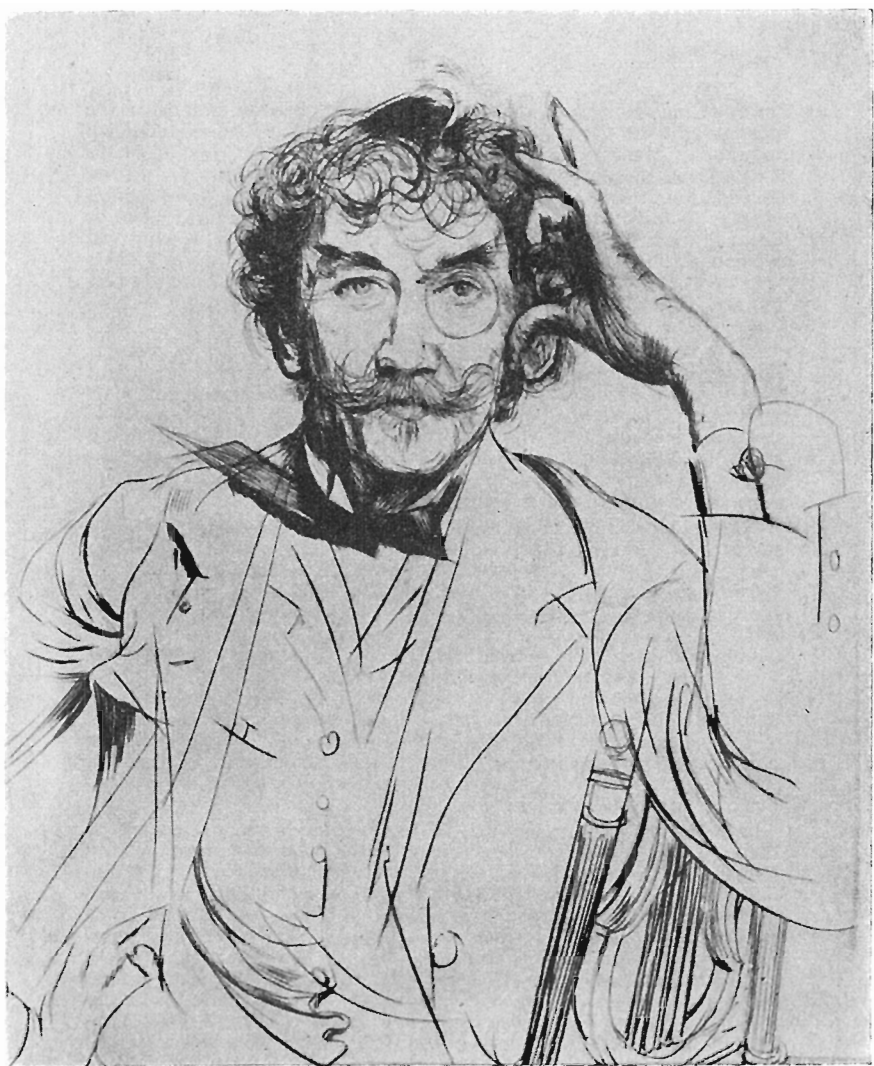
Fountain erected in memory of the Sculptor, Henry Poole, R.A. (1873-1928). The Fountain embodies one of his works, a bronze "Cupid on Shell", and is a memorial of Henry Poole's work for the Club and of his great service to Sculpture. The fountain is placed at the junction of the paved court with the lawn, directly opposite the bay window of the billiard room.

Members of the Society gathered together in the Billiard Room, a very large room and the Club centre, to hear Mr. Marsden-Smedley's talk, and will recall seeing on its walls a magnificent large painting of the Thames, a view of "Cheyne Embankment", by C. Napier Hemy, R.A. first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1873.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley's Address on the History of the Club.

Clip clop, clip clop, clip Someone would rush into the club, spreading alarm, with the words "Jimmy's outside" and James McNeill Whistler would descend from his cab and enter the club screwing a glass into his eye and reviewing his fellow artists like an inspecting general. His biting wit was both feared and appreciated; it immediately became the Talk of the Town.

The date was 1902 and the Chelsea Arts Club had just moved to their present premises; before that the club premises had been since 1891 at



JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER

From an etching by Paul Cesar Hellen

Whistler was a member of The Chelsea Arts Club from its foundation to his death. The profound effect he had on painting was matched by his influence on the professional status of artists. Even today the atmosphere of the club is still charged with his influence.

By courtesy of the Chelsea Public Library

No. 101 King's Road, now replaced by the Chenil Galleries and before the formation of the Club artists used to meet at one or two small Italian restaurants; Manzoni's opposite Carlyle Square; or the Monaco in the King's Road. But since 1902 the club had been at the present premises No. 143 Old Church Street. The pleasant low, gothic-revival front, like a country vicarage, is one of the features of Old Church Street. Its history can be traced through the Chelsea rate books back at least to 1822, when it was two cottages. They are described as being in "Bolton Place". From 1850 to 1890 they are called "Bolton Cottages". In 1870 "Upper Church Street" appears. Today, lettering on a shield over the Gothic entrance declares that it is "Bolton Lodge".

But to return to Whistler and the club with members gathered round in 1902 waiting to memorise some *bon mot*. What was the nature of this club? First it was the only club in which membership was and is limited to practitioners in one or other branch of the visual arts. Then it set out to reproduce something of what was popularly supposed to be the atmosphere of the Parisian Studios. Lastly it served as a professional centre for artists; and here matters affecting the profession have always formed the subject of animated and informed discussion.

Whistler himself had contributed much to the professional status which artists achieved in the second half of the nineteenth century. He had been among the first to commission that novel structure, the artist's studio-house. Before the rise in artists' professionalism, artists had been content to work in ordinary dwelling houses; but with Whistler's White House, Tite Street (which he occupied for so short a time) specially designed studio-houses sprang up all over Chelsea. Sitters were received by a butler and shown to a north-lit studio on the top floor and into the presence of the great man himself. The artist had indeed "arrived" and to rub it in Whistler himself set an example by refusing to accept fees that were not expressed in guineas. Nor was it in matters of form only that Whistler sought to raise the status of the artist. His elegance and fastidiousness and self-criticism, and the immense pains he took to strive towards perfection in his art, contributed towards the respect he commanded in his later years.

In his earlier years it is true that Whistler's painting was misunderstood. The notorious case of *Whistler v. Ruskin*¹⁵ arose out of two of his so-called "Nocturnes". Before Whistler's time artists had tended either to paint landscapes from reaches of the Thames where woodlands or open country reached down to the riverbanks, or where that river was flanked by grand buildings. Moreover it was usual to paint in bright almost Mediterranean weather. But Whistler painted often in mist or fog or at night and he painted the ordinary riverside scenes the old wooden Battersea Bridge, the factory chimneys, warehouses and barges. This is the river as he saw it and as we know it but it was only quite late in Whistler's life that the reality of Whistler's art was generally recognised. What Whistler was trying to do was brought home to the public by his famous *Ten o'Clock*. This lecture was re-read to the Chelsea Arts Club on a memorable evening in 1891. It had first been delivered at Princes Hall in 1885 and had had a dynamic effect on Art Criticism and incidentally on the public appreciation of Whistler's genius.

It was typical of Whistler that he should appear in faultless evening dress, his opera hat resting on the table from which he was to deliver his

¹⁵ A full account of this law suit for libel is given in J. McN. Whistler's *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (1899, pages 2 to 19)

address, and his long cane resting against the wall behind him. The very time, which gave the name of *Ten o'Clock* to the lecture, carried a note of elegance. People, said Whistler, must not be hurried as to a play, but must have time to digest their dinner. The business arrangements were left to Mrs. D'Oyly Carte who was simultaneously launching *The Mikado*. Whistler took immense pains over the preparation. The press representatives expected some eccentric performance and came prepared to laugh and ridicule; but as soon as the lecture began the entire audience, including the press, were fascinated by the beauty of the words and the nature of the argument at once so novel and convincing. The text of the *Ten O'Clock* is given in Whistler's *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*.¹⁶ Here is a passage from it:-

*And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanile and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens and fairy land is before us . . .*¹⁷

"The poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky"; "The tall chimneys become campanile"; "The warehouses are palaces in the night". The audience, that might have wondered whether it was being treated to a Whistlerian paradox, was spell-bound by the poetry and carried away by the eloquence. Those who came to jeer, began to see things in a new light. Here was an artist of elegance and wit; a man whose whole quality was originality; a man's man and a leader. Around this man clustered the artists who joined themselves into the Chelsea Arts Club.

Since Whistler's time the club has continued to be the meeting place of the leaders, the wits and the eccentrics of the world of artists. There have been so many it is hard to know where to begin. The names of many former members are household words as artists; but, as their work is well-known, the only matter of interest for this occasion is their contribution to club life. Henry Tonks, artist and Slade professor, for instance, was an early member; as was his assistant at the Slade, Wilson Steer. Among their early pupils were Orpen and Augustus John. Tonk's withering comments on poor performances at the Slade (such as that delivered to a female student, "Can you sew?") had its counterpart at the club in his deft deflation of over-talkative young men.

Among other under-talkative members was John Singer Sargent. On one occasion he was prevailed upon to undertake a speech at the club dinner; but, having risen for the purpose to the sound of applause, found himself tongue-tied and could only stand and bore a hole in the table with his fork until he resumed his seat to further applause. But if he could not talk he could certainly eat. In addition to the "ordinary" he was in the habit of ordering a grilled steak and a litre of wine. When he got very heavy he tried horse riding and even hunting. But he fell off so often that his friends at the club recommended bicycling. One even offered to ride with him to a friend's house thirty miles from London. Off they set; but Sargent soon tired and was complaining bitterly long before they reached their destination. When they did arrive Sargent was so exhausted he sank upon a settee from which he did not stir until the two departed for London

¹⁶ J. McN. Whistler: *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, (1890), pages 135 to 159.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 144.

by train with the bicycles in the van. Even if bicycling proved to be not quite the appropriate cure for Sargent's overweight, the thought behind the advice was typical of the members' habit of mutual help. Another silent frequenter of the club was Wilson Steer who would drop in regularly for a game of chess. By contrast, Orpen was constantly the centre of a genial throng, leading the exchange of good conversation. Alfred Munnings, too, would often blow in on a Suffolk breeze, resplendent in sponge-bag trousers and hat on one side. He was even known to regale taciturn breakfasters with news from the stables and a discourse on Lawrence, Constable and the English School.

At the present time the leading artists of the age are to be found on any day of the week enjoying one another's company and the club lunch at the scrubbed-oak tables.

It was hardly necessary to remind members that the artist community was an essential characteristic of Chelsea. It was the centre of English art; and its influence radiated out to all quarters of the globe. It was something Chelsea had given to the world. The club was the centre of this community, of which the artist members taught or were taught in the Chelsea Art School, sought artist materials in the King's Road and worked in Chelsea studios. The enemy of these artists were developers who pulled down studios to build luxury flats; and their friends the Borough Council (who in 1949, alone among London Boroughs, obtained Parliamentary powers to build studios in connection with their housing schemes) and, above all the people of Chelsea.

Following his talk Mr. Marsden-Smedley introduced Mr. Alfred Hayward, R.P., of the New English Art Club, a Life Member and doyen of the Chelsea Arts Club. Mr. Haywood welcomed the Chelsea Society and kindly gave a short address to the Meeting on certain interesting aspects of the Club, and reminiscences of many famous Artists, formerly Members of the Club, that he had known intimately during his membership extending over more than fifty years.



BRONZE MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO JOHN DANDO SEDDING

This memorial to the Architect of Holy Trinity Church, who died in 1891, was the gift of the Art Workers Guild. He was closely associated with the Guild, of which he was a past master.

Reproduced by courtesy of the National Buildings Record.

Holy Trinity, Sloane Street

By Michael Farey¹⁸

The Society's *Annual Report*, 1957¹⁹ contained an article on Holy Trinity, Sloane Street by F. H. Spicer entitled *The Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts*.²⁰ This article followed a talk by John Betjeman inaugurating an appeal for £20,000 to complete the church's restoration after severe war damage and other dilapidations.

The restoration work has now been largely completed and the church was re-dedicated by the Lord Bishop of London on 26th June, 1960. The work has been admirably carried out and the following account is here included as a historical record of an important architectural achievement in Chelsea and because

¹⁸ Mr. Michael Farey, M.A., A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I. was the architect for the restoration.

¹⁹ *Annual Report*, 1957, pages 36 to 39.

²⁰ See also F. H. Spicer: *Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street* (1956).

members may be interested in some of the problems involved in putting together again this late Victorian church and its unique monuments and decoration.

War Damage

The first scars inflicted on Holy Trinity occurred early one morning in September, 1940, when the Rector, The Rev. C. Cheshire, was informed that an incendiary bomb had set the roof of the Lady Chapel and the organ on fire, thereby putting the organ out of action until the end of the war. Owing to the efficiency of the Fire Brigade the fire was extinguished before it spread to the nave.

On the night of 10th May, 1941, a stick of incendiary bombs fell on the main roof and completely destroyed it. The burning timbers and light fittings crashed to the floor and filled the nave and sanctuary with debris. The small body of women fire-watchers succeeded in saving all the altar furnishings and miraculously, the stained glass windows were almost unscathed.

Services were continued in the Lady Chapel, which were screened off by hessian. In August, 1941, the Church was closed while the remnants of the roof were demolished. In November a temporary roof of salvaged timber and corrugated iron was finished and the repair of the west window was supervised by Walter Lawrence, F.R.I.B.A.

On the night of the 14th March, 1944, blast effects from a bomb which exploded nearby caused large fragments of concrete and road material to be thrown on to and through the slated and temporary roofs, badly damaging parts of the roof trusses, guttering and stained-glass clerestory windows.

Restoration Work. First Stage.

As the District Surveyor had declared the temporary roof to be unsafe, a licence was obtained in March, 1950, for the first stage of the permanent restoration. Foster and Dicksee carried out the work to the designs and direction of Verner O. Rees, F.R.I.B.A. A forest of scaffolding had first to be erected to dismantle the existing roof, and to erect a temporary roof to serve while work proceeded on a more permanent one. Six of the clerestory windows were removed to make room for ducts to shoot the rainwater and snow clear.

The roof was formed with a flat centre portion and sloping sides to provide access for maintenance. It was constructed of steel trusses with reinforced concrete purlins supporting a

continuous slab formed by hollow clay blocks with reinforced filler joists, screeding and asphalt finish. From the underside of the trusses was formed a false ceiling of precast plaster panels and ribs to a star pattern with a flat centre and slightly sloping sides.

In addition to the new roof, the following other work was done; all cracked leaded lights were renewed, including the west window and some of the clerestory windows; internal brickwork revealed by the removal of the original vault was plastered; the soffit and panelled front of the gallery were renewed; the whole of the wood-block flooring was taken up and relaid with new timber where necessary and was resanded and polished; some repairs were done to the choir stalls; and some of the marble to the high altar was renewed.

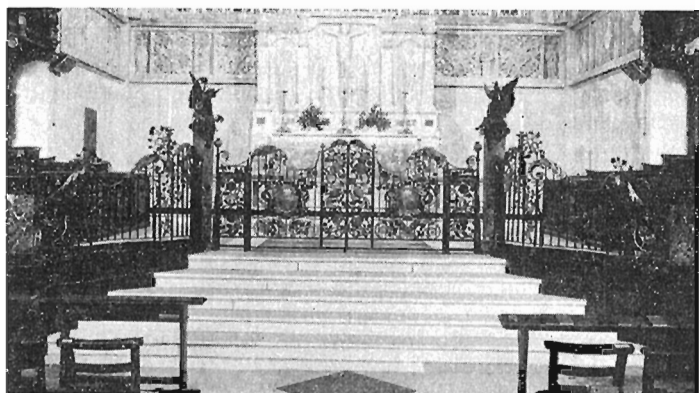
The first stage of the permanent war damage repairs was completed for the *Thanksgiving Service* on 15th July, 1951.

Restoration Work. Second Stage

(1) *Work Required.* In 1955, when building-licensing came to an end and it seemed that there was some prospect of completing the war damage repairs, negotiations were re-opened with the War Damage Commission. The vaulted ceiling presented the most difficult problem of the restoration as the Commission were minded to regard the existing flat ceiling as within the definition of 'plain substitute repair', thus absolving them from further payment.

The original vault was formed in match-boarding on a concealed timber framework with oak moulded ribs. The cost of repeating this method of construction would have been prohibitive, apart from the fire risk involved.

The rest of the work required at that stage consisted of the restoration of the gallery, the floor of which was burnt out, although some of the main members were only charred. A large tangled heap of ironwork comprising the five lighting fittings seemed at first to be fit only for scrap; but disentanglement and closer examination showed that they were well worth preserving, especially as no contemporary fittings were found to be suitable. The marble plinth to the chancel was so badly flaked by fire and exposure that complete renewal was essential. The oak choir and clergy stalls were badly charred and pitted with particles of slate. Extensive repairs required to window tracery, stone mouldings, ledges, etc., could not be assessed until scaffolding was erected. All the marble pavings to the



CHOIR GATES AND RAILINGS

Sedding designed the magnificent wrought iron gates and railings which head the steps to the choir. His assistant and successor as architect to Holy Trinity Church, Henry Wilson, added the hammered work. The angels on the pillars were modelled by F. W. Pomeroy.

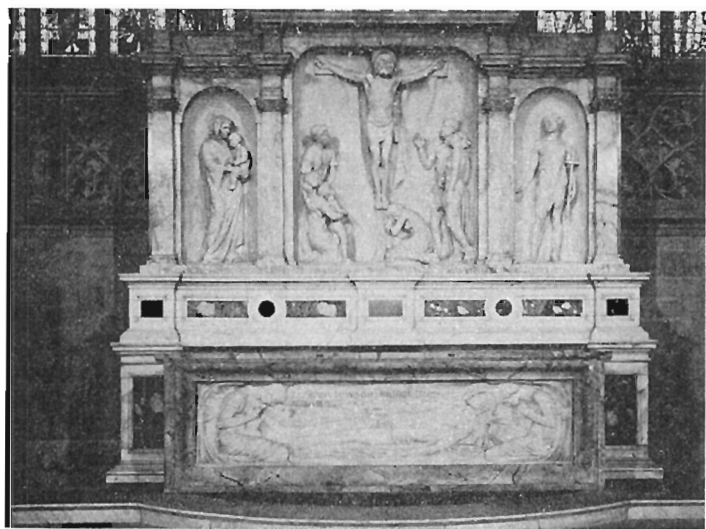
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nave, aisles and chancel were badly cracked, and the heating ducts were clogged with charred wood and dust around and under the pipes. This had no doubt been largely responsible for the shabby state of the stonework and plastered walls, all of which were badly in need of decoration.

During the course of the work many other defects were discovered not only to the interior but also to the exterior, where temporary war damage repairs had not withstood the test of time.

(2) *Preliminary Negotiations.* After three years of correspondence, argument and negotiation with the Commission, it was agreed that the only feasible way of tackling the work would be to have it undertaken by a local firm. As funds were limited, it was decided to dispense with a clerk of works. A great debt is due to Mr. Miles, the verger, for his keen interest and practical help at every stage.

Finally, although they would not agree to pay for pulling down the flat ceiling and erecting the vaulted ceiling, the Commission did agree to make a contribution of £1,141 16s. 0d., plus £1,380 for scaffolding, reckoned to be the difference in



ALTAR AND REREDOS

The front panel in the marble altar of Holy Trinity Church bears a bas-relief of the Intombment by Harry Bates; but, except on Good Fridays, it is usually concealed behind a frontal.

The reredos was the work of John Tweedsmuir.

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cost between the two ceilings if the vaulted ceiling had been replaced in the first instance. Although this figure was low, they made a generous concession by allowing a sum of £2,500 in respect of damage to the gallery front, after a conjectured reproduction of the design had been submitted to them, there being no record of the original design.

Although the original tender amounted to £15,323 12s. 6d. the Commission would only agree to a firm figure of £10,500, the remainder to be assessed when scaffolding was erected for the extent of the stonework repairs to be accurately determined. The London Diocese were prepared to advance no more than the exact amount of the war damage payment and the remainder, not agreed by the Commission, had to fall on the parish. The finally agreed cost of the war damage repairs came to £14,099 6s. 6d.

(3) *Contract.* In June, 1959 the contract was signed with the London Diocese and work started on the erection of scaffol-

ding. It can well be imagined that the quantity required for the cathedral proportions of the church (about 150 feet long by 40 feet 9 inches wide by 60 feet high for the nave, choir and sanctuary) was very large indeed.

(4) *Initial Protection.* Before work was allowed to start on the demolition of the ceiling Messrs. Walker were consulted about the special protection of the organ and they recommended polythene sheeting to cover the arches to the Chancel and the Lady Chapel, in view of the enormous amount of dust which the work would cause.

(5) *False Ceiling.* In addition to the scaffolding, a false ceiling consisting of a boarded platform had to be formed under the flat ceiling before it could be demolished in order to catch the large sections of plaster and dust which had to be lowered to the floor by pulleys before they could be removed.

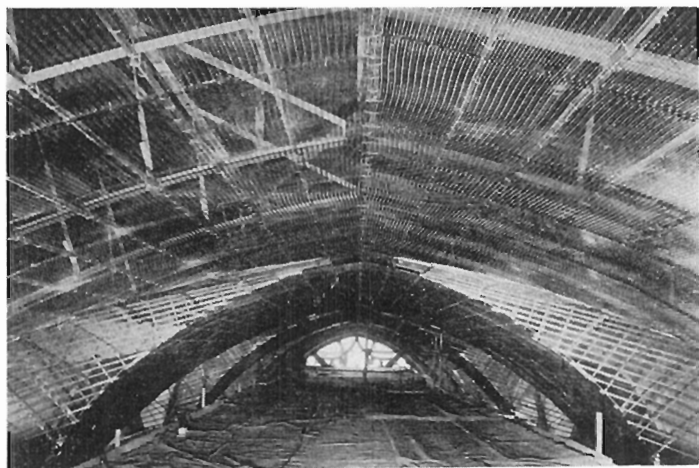
(6) *Steel Framework.* Next followed a most hazardous operation, namely the erection of galvanised steel framework to form the shape of the vault. This was complicated by the fact that drawings could not be prepared in advance, as the main vault was pierced by subsidiary vaults from the clerestory bays, the heads of which were lower than the main vault, involving a sloping groin at the crown. A further complication was that the curvature of the arch to each bay was slightly different, so that a separate template had to be made before the steel angles were bent to the required curvature for them to meet exactly at the stone *tas-de-charge*, which was all that remained to show the profile of the mouldings for the vault ribs.

Another complication arose over the difference of about 3 feet between the crowns of the arches over the east and west windows. As the west window is the higher, it determined the top of the vault, so that the crown groin of the east bay has a decided slope downwards to meet the stone arch, which, for no apparent reason, does not coincide with the shape of the great window under it.

The success of the formation of the vault was due primarily to Mr. Marzetti under the able direction of Mr. Gibbs of Thomas and Wilson, whose geometrical wizardry found a ready solution to every problem. It was a great pity that this wonderful avenue of steel branches could only be seen by those who climbed to the platform. Each of the steel ribs was secured

to the existing steel trusses by innumerable hangers to ensure complete rigidity of the ribs and the angles fixed to them.

The next stage consisted of fixing the expanded metal lathing to the steel skeleton, a comparatively simple but



EXPANDED METAL LATHS BEFORE PLASTERING

View from the workmen's platform showing the metalwork construction to carry the Carlite plaster and ribs of the high vault over the nave of Holy Trinity Church.

painstaking operation involving thousands of small strands of steel wire, each of which had to be carefully twisted to ensure a true and rigid base to receive the plaster.

There was then a delay of some weeks while the hollow plaster rib sections were being cast in the workshops of Thomas and Wilson before they could be fixed on the site. Each of the ribs was cast in lengths of about 10 feet which could easily be handled by two men. Although the general form of the vault was faithful to Sedding's original design, economies were made by eliminating groins for ribs on the central axis at the crown of the vault.

(7) *Plaster.* While the vault was being formed a considerable amount of research was done before the type of plaster was decided. The first intention was to use lime and sand plaster, but as the total area of the vault was considerably more than

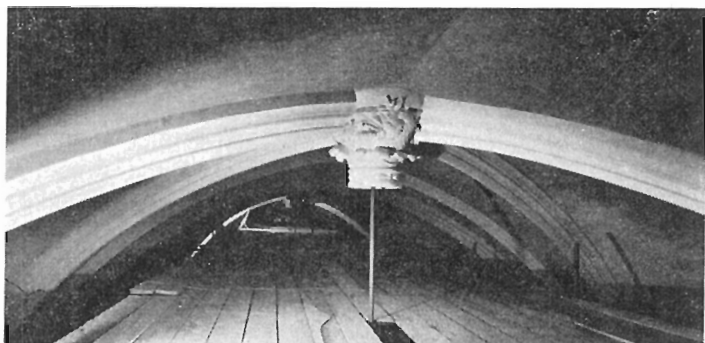
that of the flat ceiling the District Surveyor was most concerned about the added weight on the steel trusses and was not prepared to take into account the form of the vault which would make it largely self-supporting like an egg shell. Various alternatives were considered including acoustic plaster, which was discounted because of the high cost and its tendency to attract dust. Finally it was decided to use natural Carlite plaster on account of its light weight (only one-third that of lime plaster) and its excellent thermal insulation and fireproof properties. It consists of a natural volcanic rock expanded by intense heat to a much greater volume of small aerated particles, which are mixed with water to form a very workable plaster. By applying only two coats and dabbing the second coat with a foamed plastic sponge a pleasant slightly mottled rough texture was obtained without the extra cost of the third coat normally applied to obtain a smooth surface. A further economy was the elimination of decorating so large an area which would not only have added so much to the cost but would also have sealed the pores of the plaster and increased the reverberation. Another advantage found since the scaffolding was dismantled has been that any leaks to the asphalt roof can be seen without leaving a stain as the rate of evaporation is so rapid.

When first applied the plaster had a natural pink colour. It had been intended to paint the ribs white, but after about two months the plaster was found to have faded to a warm white, so that it was decided to reverse the process by painting the ribs to match the stonework, thereby ensuring harmony between the new and old work.

While the plastering was being done the preparations had to be made for two most difficult problems which had to be inter-related. The first was the form of the five bosses to be fitted to the junction of the ribs at the centre of each of the five bays. Sedding's original drawing was too small to give any idea of what was there before. As a suitable *motif*, in recognition of the church's chief benefactor, it was suggested that an adaptation of the crest of the Cadogan family²¹ was appropriate to cover the intersection of the ribs and to receive the holes for the suspension of the light fittings. These holes were also useful to provide minimum ventilation for condensation without losing too much heat. Mr. Course was the sculptor

²¹ Cadogan Crest: *Out of a ducal coronet, or, a dragon's head, vert.*

employed to make the small clay model, which was first approved and then made to full size. Castings were then made so that each boss could be assembled in six parts, each of which was made to fit into the angles of the quadripartite vault and firmly secured to its neighbour by windlassed



THE DRAGON'S HEAD BOSSES

No record of Sedding's design for the bosses in Holy Trinity Church, from which the central electric light fittings were suspended before the bombing, having survived, new bosses were designed bearing the dragon's head device from the Cadogan Crest.

strands of steel wire, and with invisible plaster joints. Lord Cadogan generously agreed to present these bosses in memory of his grandfather.

(8) *Light Fittings.* Next followed the most complicated operation of all, the remodelling of the five great central light fittings. The original design was even more complicated, as the scrolled ironwork surrounded a rather clumsy lantern, in addition to which the bulbs were festooned around the outside so that the whole effect must originally have been most distracting. As the lanterns were so badly distorted it was decided to remove them and to fill the space with two delicate clusters of small bulbs set off by rosettes, the whole contained within the bold heart-shaped iron frame. Each of these fittings weighs about a hundredweight and their suspension from a height of over 60 feet from the floor was quite a problem, especially as they could not be hung until the vault had been completed. The District Surveyor would not agree to relying on the thread of the steel conduit so a steel cable was anchored from the steel

truss and threaded through prepared holes in the bosses and in the conduit, with a noose at the base to receive the hook of the fitting. The joints of the steel conduit were masked by gilded copper balls²². Much credit is due first to Mrs. Mitchell, who not only subscribed to the renewal of these fittings in memory of her husband but also contributed much to the improvements made to the original design; and secondly to the skill of Mr. Margrie, the Chelsea blacksmith, and his men, who climbed scaffolding with the agility of monkeys.

(9) *Gallery*. Before the vault was complete some of the scaffolding was removed so that the stepped floor could be reinstated. The original floor and many of the structural members had been burnt out but the main members, although charred, were still sound. The District Surveyor insisted on strengthening the floor with steel joists. The restoration of the gallery front has had to be left until a later date. Economies have been made by leaving out the pews and finishing the floor in softwood instead of hardwood. The surface has been treated with two coats of Bourne Seal.

(10) *External Work*. The rain which succeeded the long dry summer of 1959 revealed a few leaks in the asphalt roof. On inspecting as much of the roof as could be seen from the nave roof, it was found that several slates were cracked, temporary asbestos gutters were leaking in places and that a general overhaul of joints to ridges and gable copings would be necessary. A large hole caused by a bomb fragment was found in the roof boarding to the south aisle; it had been covered with slates and only became apparent by removing a section of the flat ceiling. The consequent repair work necessitated a considerable amount of additional scaffolding. It was also found that the lightning conductor to the two west turrets had been severed and not reconnected, so that there had been no protection from lightning since the roof had been burnt out. A section of cable, possibly from a drifting barrage balloon was also found in a deep incision to the cornice of the south-west turret.

(11) *Stone Repairs and Cleaning*. After the completion of the vault the scaffolding had to be adapted for the inspection and repair of the stonework. As the burning roof timbers had crashed to the floor they had caused much damage to capitals, mouldings, window tracery, etc. and an exhaustive scrutiny of every part of the stonework had to be made. The scaffolding

²² Adapted from the disused ballcock floats of household cisterns.

and platforms darkened the church, so that the existing high level flood lights were invaluable for detecting what the eye would otherwise have missed. Owing to the general shaking of the church by bombs which exploded nearby, a great many of the stone joints had opened. After the repairs were completed the whole of the stonework was cleaned.

(12) *Redecoration.* The general scheme of redecoration has been kept as broad and simple as possible in order to emphasise the structure and to show the stained glass, furnishings and ornaments to the maximum advantage. The governing colour factor was the warm shade of the natural Bath stone. This, in turn, was well set off by the pale mushroom background of the plastic emulsion paint on the plaster walls. Furthermore, the natural colour of the Carlite plaster of the main vault can be seen to be improved by the warmer blush pink of the oil paint on the Lady Chapel vaults, the North Aisle and the soffit under the gallery. A slightly warmer pink was used for the South Aisle and North Ambulatory.

(13) *East Window.* A major set-back during the concluding stages occurred when scaffolding was further altered to observe at close quarters the damage to the tracery of the east window, which had not been visible previously on account of the darkness caused by the stained glass. This revealed alarming fractures to the key stones over the two principal mullions at third span, to the haunches and to the head of the window. In order not to disturb the main scaffolding, separate scaffolding had to be erected and braced externally and internally, and several panels of stained glass and wire guards had to be taken out before the defective stones could be renewed. Fortunately the Commission agreed to accept full liability for this work. Advantage was taken of the external scaffolding to extend it to restore the coping and to repoint the brickwork of the east gable.

(14) *Choir Practice Room.* This beautiful little room, with its square plan, coved ceiling and octagonal lantern, was improved so that it could be used as a parish room for holding meetings and as an office for launching the "planned giving" campaign. The pine block floor was sanded and varnished. The cumbersome choir stalls were remodelled. The room was redecorated with pale mushroom walls, blossom pink cove and flamingo pink octagonal flat ceiling to give it a feeling of warmth and intimacy, and to set off the delicate existing pendant light fitting. The five utility shades were replaced by eight simple



PLASTER MODELS FOR CORBELS

These four extremely original plaster models for corbels, full of the feeling of the epoch of their creation, were discovered charred but repairable, in a gallery to the north of the sanctuary. They have been placed in the choir practice room of Holy Trinity Church.



Reproduced by courtesy of the National Buildings Record

modern fittings to improve the light. Only a few weeks before the redecoration some discoveries were made in the previously unexplored gallery to the north of the sanctuary, including four of the original plaster models for the corbels at the feet of the nave shafts. Although badly charred and covered with dust they were found otherwise to be in good condition so that they only required to be cleaned and fixed to the centre of each wall about eight feet above the floor, where they can be studied better than in the main body of the church.

(15) *West Doorway.* The sculptured panel of the Transfiguration in the archway over the central west doorway was very shabby and much of the moulding and carving below it was defective, so it was repainted in colour. The stone jambs, which were pitted and painted, had to be resurfaced to reveal the natural stone. The oak doors were stripped and then treated with French and wax polish. The north-west and south-west porches were redecorated and the external doors were painted Spanish red.

The elaborate wrought iron west railings and gates were badly corroded, so that advantage was taken of the repairs to simplify the design and remove excrescences which projected above the rail. They were then painted black with a little green incorporated.

The final stage of the restoration was the cleaning and Bourne sealing of the pine-block floors of the nave and Lady Chapel. Rather than create more dust by sandplaning, it was decided to keep the charred marks from the fallen roof as honourable war scars. The extra richness of colour caused by the Bourne seal made them less noticeable than before.

As the war damage grant towards renewal of the marble paving had to be transferred towards the restoration of the vault, the parish decided to pay for the renewal only of the most fractured slabs and to keep the rest of the cracked slabs as further war scars. As the nosings of the steps were badly chipped in several places, they had to be dressed back by an electric grinding machine.

By mid-day on Friday, 24th June, 1960 the work came to an end apart from the inevitable small maintenance items which remained to be done later, so that the ladies of the parish were

given the whole of Saturday to arrange flowers and to add the human touches to have everything ready for the Rededication Service on Sunday, 26th June. As the sun streamed into the church on that great day it was a proud occasion for the parish and the many workmen who had been invited to see the completion of their labour. The whole of this hazardous operation had taken almost exactly a year. It gave much cause for satisfaction that this had been accomplished without any accidents.



A PANORAMA OF THE LANDSCAPED GARDENS OF CADOGAN PLACE
SEEN FROM THE CARLTON TOWER.

The Carlton Tower Hotel

A member writes:- The tall building is in fashion. It makes architectural news whenever it appears; and now the tall hotel has made its first appearance on the London scene. Others will follow—in Park Lane and elsewhere—but meanwhile we can experience in Chelsea a foretaste of this special kind of building in the Carlton Tower Hotel²³ which rises high over the plane trees of Cadogan Place. The familiar skyline of London will be completely changed during the present decade by high building. This change will be for the better only if there is a really imaginative town planning policy to control it. Undoubtedly there is room for an immense amount of argument on the location and design of tall buildings, whether they should be located singly at visually strategic points, whether they should be scattered more or less evenly throughout the city, or grouped in clusters and so on.

The High-Building code, a published statement by the L.C.C. outlines clearly its policy in regard to tall buildings. It informs developers of the questions they will be asked and the points that would count in their favour when a waiver is requested from the height restriction which limits buildings to a height not greater than 100 ft.

²³ The views here expressed refer only to the important considerations of architecture and design. A discussion, which included opinions on whether the site at the north end of Cadogan Place should have been dedicated to the traditional provision of homes for Chelsea citizens or for a hotel for visitors from elsewhere, took place at the Society's last Annual General Meeting, of which an account is given on pages 55 to 61.

THE CARLTON TOWER
The Carlton Tower Hotel from the gardens of Cadogan Place
By courtesy of CONCRETE QUARTERLY



Consultations with the L.C.C., Chelsea Borough Council, and the Royal Fine Art Commission gave special consideration to the suitability of the one-acre Carlton Tower site for a complex of building with a tower of 18 storeys height. As we see the building today the tall tower is flanked by lower buildings which form visual links in scale with adjoining development. On the west side of the site a two-storey block continues the shopping frontage of Sloane Street, including the rehousing of Coutts' Bank on its original site. A successful feature of the design is that a substantial set-back is provided at pavement level, which keeps the human scale, yet allows the tower to soar above.

Michael Rosenauer, F.R.I.B.A., A.I.A., the architect of this hotel has placed the tower, 208 ft. in height, where strategically it acts as a focal point in relation to the Sloane Street axis. Furthermore, it takes advantage of one of the longest squares in London- the gardens of Cadogan Place extend more than 1,300 feet in length, with a depth of 250 ft. The architect is to be congratulated on the design.



THE CARLTON TOWER INTERIOR

A detail of the glass mural, backed with gold and silver leaf, by
Feliks Topolski.

Views of the tower at a distance add architectural interest to the skyline, although it is not an exceptionally tall building when compared with high buildings projected elsewhere in London. It is at least a significant new element in the pattern of the surrounding district, and is the largest hotel built in London since the second world war.

Turning to the interior decor, for which the interior design consultants were Henry End, A.I.D., I.D.I., with Charles Warmouth, A.I.D., members of the Society will no doubt already have expressed interest in the murals of the public rooms executed by Feliks Topolski. In the glass mural stretching across the north wall of the lobby, 62 feet long and 11 feet high, Topolski has created a fantasia on the theme of "London flowing down the Thames from Richmond", through an imaginary townscape built only of its architectural landmarks, to Dockland and the Pool of London.



THE CARLTON TOWER INTERIOR
The Hotel Reception looking North; the mural by Feliks
Topolski covers the entire North wall.

By courtesy of VOGUE

The panelled and red felt walls of the Rib Room are covered with an interesting variety of broadsheets from "Topolski's

Chronicle", a contribution to the recording of world events by the artist. It takes the form of colour prints, cartoons, gouaches, portraits, theatrical designs and panoramic scenes all of which are arranged in a random effect within the harmony of the whole. The Chelsea Room, on the first floor facing south overlooking the landscaped gardens of Cadogan Place, has a unity of colour and theme. Here Topolski decided that the panels offered an opportunity to comment on the social manners of London today. Women are prominent in the panels, with men in attendance. The artist aimed not at a list of famous names but searched for style, panache and comedy to typify the elegance and exaggeration of British people. In this the panels have achieved a marked success. The personalities selected by the artist were those notable for their distinctive qualities and for their elegance in the London social scene.

The Carlton Tower Hotel has brought the art of Topolski to Chelsea and, until superseded by yet taller buildings has given Sloane Street a new skyline.



THE AWAKENING

This charming figure was the work of the late Gilbert Ledward, R.A., a member of the Chelsea Society, who bequeathed it to Chelsea. The above photograph shows it in the setting of the London County Council's Exhibition of *Sculpture in the Open Air* (1960) in Battersea Park. It is understood that it may be placed in the proposed bomb-site garden in Cheyne Walk

Reproduced by courtesy of the London County Council

Gilbert Ledward

O.B.F., R.A., P.P.R.B.S.

It is hard to believe that nothing remains on earth of Gilbert Ledward, who died on 21st June, 1960, but our valued memory of him and the permanent existence of his work. He had so many endearing qualities. I cannot help, first of all, calling to mind his habit of dropping in at odd times on neighbours and his unbounded friendship and charm. Then I feel we might all be flattered by his general interest in the Chelsea Society. He never missed a meeting and indeed modelled the *Annual Report* of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, of which he was at one time President, on the Chelsea one.

He was indeed a son of Chelsea; born at a house in Beaufort Street where his sculptor father carried on his profession²⁴; christened at Chelsea Old Church; educated at St. Mark's College, King's Road, and Chelsea Polytechnic; sculptor of the fountain in Sloane Square²⁵; and, by his will, donor to Chelsea of (a) his bronze figure of a girl entitled *The Awakening* and (b) a bronze head of Helen Spalding.

Gilbert's great modesty was so real one was never conscious one was talking to a man at the very top of his profession. Yet for the last 40 years a high proportion of national monuments were his work; and future generations will have to consider the extent to which he represents at least an important design facet of this age. Anyone who saw Gilbert at work must realise that he employed every skill and technique known to sculptors and his portrait busts were models of their kind. He himself was particularly pleased with *The Awakening* and Chelsea will assuredly be forever thankful that it was by the choice of this work, which he liked so well, that he remembered his birthplace in his will; and by that choice and by that bequest among other things he will be well remembered²⁶.

Among his other works he designed and executed the bronze figures and relief panels for the Guards' War Memorial in St.

²⁴ Some of Gilbert Ledward's reminiscences are given in the Society's *Annual Report*, 1958, page 56 to 60.

²⁵ *An Architect's Appreciation of the Fountain in Sloane Square* by Howard V. Lobb, C.B.E., F.R.I.B.A. is given in the Society's *Annual Report*, 1953, pages 44 and 45.

²⁶ *The Awakening* has not yet been placed in position; but it is understood that the present proposal is to place it in the proposed bomb-site garden in Cheyne Walk between Chelsea Old Church and Crosby Hall.

James's Park; the memorial plaque to the late Sir Alfred Gilbert, R.A. in the crypt of St. Paul's; the memorial to the late Lord Milner in Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey; statuettes in stone of King George V and Queen Mary in Norwich Cathedral cloisters; *Monolith* purchased by the Tate Gallery; the figures symbolising submarine, commando and airborne forces in Westminster Abbey Cloisters; and many other works including his last composite piece for Barclay's Bank D.C.O. offices in Old Broad Street, depicting the peoples of Africa.

In his quiet way Gilbert was always a powerful influence. His voice in the Chelsea Arts Club on matters of sculpture had the ring of authority. On questions regarding monuments the Chelsea Society often sought his advice. He collaborated with Eric Gill to improve the design of churchyard headstones and advocated the use of native instead of imported stone. I doubt whether there will be any specific monument to Gilbert Ledward; but does this really matter when his memory lives on in his work and the monuments he has raised to others?

B.M-S.

The Restoration, an Approach Through Contemporary Pageantry

Mr. Strong, Assistant Keeper at the National Portrait Gallery, in an interesting address to the Society, to mark the tercentenary year of the Restoration of the Monarchy, introduced as his theme the Triumphal Arches erected in the City of London for the Coronation of Charles II in 1661. He described these examples of Contemporary Pageantry in considerable detail. He illustrated his address with lantern slides of the designs, attributed to Sir Balthazar Gerbier²⁷ in the Burlington-Devonshire Collection of Architectural Drawings in the R.I.B.A. Library. From this collection, Mr. Strong selected and described the following four designs:

At Leadenhall Street: Return of the Monarchy. A two tiered structure, the upper tier repeating the high central Archway, but containing a figure of the King holding the orb and sceptre, surmounted by winged figures holding a crown and the Royal Coat-of-arms above.

At the Royal Exchange: Loyalty Restored. A two tiered structure, the lower part in the form of a Roman triumphal arch with Ionic order on high bases, the upper part in the form of a frame flanked by inverted consoles and surmounted by a raised pediment, over which a figure of Atlas supporting the globe.

At Fleet Street, near Whitefriars: Garden of Plenty. A two tiered structure, the lower part composed of a high central archway with rusticated Doric Order flanked by a small opening, consoles, and over these flaming urns. Over the curved pediment of the archway is an arched superstructure wreathed in garlands.

²⁷ *Sir Balthazar Gerbier* (1591?-1667). A Dutch born Huguenot, "a curious character-courtier and diplomat, miniaturist and architect, pamphleteer and prompter—whose career threads grotesquely through the events of the seventeenth century up to the Restoration and beyond". Sir Balthazar baited other architects for some forty years, directing his shafts particularly at Inigo Jones. He was the author, also, of two little books on Architecture. The first, published in 1662, is entitled: *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Three Chief Principles of Magnificent Building, viz. Solidity, Conveniency, and Ornament*. Its importance is negligible. The second, published in 1663, is entitled: *Counsel and Advice to all Builders*. The book concludes with a valuable list of contemporary building prices. It is very nearly certain that Gerbier designed the York Water Gate, now in the Embankment Gardens, and he attempted to form an Academy in his house at Bethnal Green. The attribution to Sir Balthazar of the authorship of designs and the drawings of the Triumphal Arches, at the Coronation of Charles II, is based on similarity of style with other surviving drawings by him.

At Cheapside, near Wood Street: Temple of Concord. A two tiered structure, a single archway in the lower part, flanked by coupled Corinthian columns supporting a curved pediment over which is a domed "tempietto".

After Mr. Strong's address the President thanked the speaker on behalf of the Society for his interesting and very informative talk, and those responsible for the arrangements for projecting and showing the lantern slides to the Meeting.

*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 Thursday, 21st July, 1960*

Many surprises were in store for the large attendance which constituted the liveliest Annual General Meeting of the Society since its foundation in 1927.

Lord Cadogan presided and the first items of formal business were soon despatched. The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd July, 1959 as printed on pages 69 of the *Annual Report* 1959 were taken as read, approved and signed. Lord Cadogan then expressed regret that Mr. Fyffe had passed away during the year under review. The Council, he said, had been strengthened by the addition of Sir Edward Maufe, R.A. and Mr. Derek Barton. Mr. H. Clare O'Rorke and Major Halton had resigned respectively from the posts of joint Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer having served with great efficiency since 1954. He was happy to announce that their posts had been filled by Mr. T. H. H. Hancock, F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I. and Mr. Roland Clarke. No other nominations having been received in response to the Society's letter dated 1st July, 1960 (circulated with the *Annual Report*) it was resolved, on the motion of Lord Cadogan, that the Council and Officers of the Society as set out on page 3 of the *Annual Report* 1959 be re-elected *en bloc*.

The President then called on Mr. Marsden-Smedley to move the adoption of the Chairman's Report for 1959 as printed on pages 7 to 33 of the *Annual Report*. Mr. Marsden-Smedley began by saying that it was clear from the many references in the Report to proposals which would have the effect of altering the townscape and the greatly increasing number of building projects cropping up all over Chelsea that a faster tempo of change was afoot. He next reminded the Society that destruction of well-loved visual features was only half the calamity of modern times. The other half was the country's failure in the first half of the twentieth century to meet the public disgust at

the perpetuation of drab neighbourhoods and the spoiling of town and country by allowing objectionable land-uses and ill-designed man-made objects to spring up; and the capitulation of the Authorities to noise nuisance and the motor age. In whichever direction one turned the Chelsea community cried out to have its amenities fostered and protected by the Society.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley then stressed the joy the appearance of a town brought to all sections of the inhabitants. Not everyone could travel to distant parts. There were the not-well-off, the old, the halt, the ill and mothers of large families. It was holidays at home for them and these were among those who most appreciated measures to improve the appearance of the borough.

What was to be the country's record in the second half of the twentieth century? The problem was how to achieve better civic design and avoid the mistakes of the past. Mr. Marsden-Smedley pinned great faith to the work of Amenity Societies such as the Chelsea Society; great powers were in the hands of local authorities and these must be wielded in accordance with the principles of democracy; that is to say they must be a reflection of what the public want. In these days a responsible local Amenity Society is almost an essential concomitant in the exercise of powers by a local authority in the field of amenity. Amenities are seldom issues at local authority elections and the only way of finding out what the public want is to consult the local representative organisation. Moreover it was often of assistance to a Town Planning Committee faced with the kind of decision in which doing the right thing by the public involved detriment to an individual to know that the Society will or will not support a given action. Mr. Marsden-Smedley then developed the theme that the Society should, as far as possible, regard itself as the partner of the local authority and put forward its representations in the spirit of diplomacy rather than attack.

Finally Mr. Marsden-Smedley admitted that Societies were not always right and not always unanimous. At most, however the good life of the citizen need not be marred through lack of opportunity to consider, discuss and put forward collective views on constructive or destructive proposals affecting local amenity.

Lord Cadogan then said that Mr. Marsden-Smedley had very wisely and well told the meeting what many must feel. He took strong exception, however, to certain passages in the

Chairman's report now under discussion. He, as President, had not been given an opportunity to see the *Annual Report* before it was in print and therefore was now taking this opportunity to cross swords with the Chairman over certain remarks. The reference²⁸ to "the monstrous hotel rising to the north of the Gardens" was simply a question of personal opinion but it was wrong to imply that there was a purely materialistic motive in pulling down the existing houses. Mr. Marsden-Smedley must know perfectly well that the "charming row of Georgian houses formerly occupied by generations of thinking people" were handed back, after requisition, to the Cadogan Estate in such a bad condition that the only course was to demolish them.

The President disagreed with the Society's objection to a large hotel in Chelsea. He maintained that there was such a need in this part of London. The Society should consider the prosperity of the neighbourhood and also the increased revenue that the Borough would derive thereby. The Borough as a whole would benefit by the increase in the rates on this building, while the shops would enjoy greater prosperity.

Lord Cadogan further took exception to the question raised in the report whether, when Sloane Street and Cadogan Place were re-developed, the flats would be "minute and vastly expensive perches for affluent boors who do not contribute to the civilised life of the community or the neighbourhood". He pointed out that with modern building costs it was impossible to provide flats of a "size for family use with space for entertaining, books and other requirements of a civilised occupation" at a price that the tenants could afford, and he thought it extremely unreasonable to imply that the people who might live in that part of Chelsea would be "boors".

He agreed that the Society's job was to criticise, but that criticism alone was useless—it must be constructive.

The Vicar of Chelsea Old Church, the Reverend Leighton Thomson, then read a prepared statement commenting on references in the Report with regard to proposals to re-site the Jervoise Monument.²⁹ The statement explained that the Parochial Church Council felt that the report was one-sided and suggested dissension among the congregation. He then drew attention to the fact that certain people, not members of

²⁸ See the *Annual Report*, 1959 page 19. Carlton Tower Hotel on the north side of Cadogan Place.

²⁹ See *Annual Report*, 1959 pages 22 to 30.

the Chelsea Society Council³⁰, had been invited by that Council to attend an informal inspection of the mock-up; and pointed out that the description "friends of the Old Church" had no official meaning, the three people thus named being in no way representatives of the Old Church. Next he quoted a letter from the firm responsible for the restoration of the monuments stating that they thought there was no risk that the Purbeck Marble would deteriorate as now stored on the north side of the Church since it was protected by wood battens and a covering.

The Vicar called attention to several references of a negative kind in the note of the informal discussion e.g., "not to replace the monument", "by not re-instating one of the most important ones", "probably the greatest disappointment would be caused if this monument were not restored at all". He stated that the Parochial Church Council's intention has been and is to re-erect the Jervoise Monument. The question is not "whether"? but "where"?

It seemed to the Parochial Church Council, he said, that the Council of the Society had set itself up as the Protector of Chelsea Old Church. In view of the immense care which was being taken by the Church Council over the question of the final siting of the Jervoise Monument and the thought and expense involved in the preparation of a full scale model of the monument; and in view of the unanimity amongst members of the Church Council and the lack of dissension over this matter at the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting, the Church Council begged leave to wonder from whom the Church was being protected.

Mr. MacGregor, after expressing the view that the meeting was the best the Society had ever had, began to imply that, if more fuss had been made earlier, the Chelsea lamp posts might have been saved, but he was ruled out of order.

Lord Conesford said that during the two years in which he was Chairman the lamp post problem had been constantly with him and there was much in the Society's conduct and representations which might well please Mr. MacGregor. He added that if the Society was to be effective at all in protecting

³⁰ These presumably were Sir James Mann, K.C.V.O., M.A., B.Litt., F.B.A., F.S.A., a member of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and Chairman of the National Buildings Record, Mr. A. K. Dufty, Hon. Secretary the Society of Antiquaries, the late Mr. Gilbert Ledward, R.A., President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors and a member of the Chelsea Society. See *Annual Report*, 1959. page 25.

the amenities of this unique metropolitan village, their Council and even their Chairman must sometimes act without consulting members, He agreed with Lord Cadogan that there must be great developments in Chelsea. It was a mistake to suggest that high buildings must necessarily be wrong; and the report under discussion had specifically agreed with this view. The point to which the report had rightly or wrongly drawn attention was the changes in the character of the neighbourhood and the doom of a quiet enclosed space that had long been the home of a civilised community. He was delighted by the fact that, if changes had to be made, there was to be comprehensive planning of the area and the employment of first rate architects.

Turning to the issue of the siting of the Jervoise Monument, Lord Conesford said that this was one of those things on which varying, but most genuine, convictions were held. To mention only one point, it had, at one time, been suggested that the memorial should be erected in the open air; but some of the greatest experts had given it as their opinion that this would be harmful. The Vicar had, however, quoted a contrary view by the firm responsible for the restoration of the monuments.

The report had rightly drawn attention to an issue which was of widespread public concern and had met the point raised by the Vicar that it was for himself and the Parochial Church Council to decide how the church should be used as a place of worship by specifically limiting their consideration of the problem to proposals which did not, they hoped, interfere with the church as a place of worship.

The Vicar had said that the report was one-sided; but most of it purported to be an account of a meeting at which all points of view were expressed. A great deal therefore turned on whether that account had been agreed with the Vicar.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley began by assuring the Council that the account of the informal discussion held in the vestry of the Old Church on 30th July, 1959, had been sent in draft to the Vicar who had made careful amendments which had been embodied in the report.

He reminded the Society again that it had always pressed for the rebuilding of the church as a place of worship; but that the best way of doing this was to give Chelsea back the church it had known for centuries complete with its furnishings. It had also urged that, when rebuilt, the church should be re-

stored as a pastoral centre for a new parish, the boundaries of which had been suggested to the church authorities by the Borough Council. This had resulted in the Old Church having once again a parish which it had not had since 1824.

In reply to a question he agreed that the Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council were the responsible Authority for siting monuments subject only to the provisions of the Diocesan Reorganisation Scheme and faculty procedure. But any citizen or body of citizens was free to make representations to that body with complete propriety, and this was what had, in fact, been done. Many members of the Society were also members of the Old Church congregation and had communicated their views to the Council. Mr. Marsden-Smedley then reminded the Society that when the church was bombed it was the late Mr. Reginald Blunt, Founder and Hon. Secretary to the Society, and Mr. Walter Godfrey, the great Mediaevalist and founder-member, who had directed rubble-removing operations so that almost all of the monuments were saved.

After the Second World War there was widespread disappointment because the Church Authorities decided not to rebuild the church. It was the Society's persistence that had collected the support of local citizens and national learned Societies and made the necessary representations which had been successful in securing the reversal of the Church Authorities' decision. Can it be said that the Society ought not to have made these representations because they differed from those put forward in the first instance by the Church Authorities? If that had been so there would be no Old Church, no Vicar and no monuments today. Clearly it is in the interests of everyone that representations regarding church fabric should be made.

All over the country churches have been spoilt, usually in the nineteenth century, by the mis-directed enthusiasm of some local big-wig, often the incumbent; or a small clique of individuals who have been anathematised ever afterwards by successive generations of worshippers in those churches. How often has one wished that there had been some local body to call in experts or make representations on the substitution of new stained glass for old or pitch-pine for old oak before it was too late? That is what the Council of the Society did when it invoked the aid of experts like Sir James Mann, Mr. Duffy and the late Mr. Gilbert Ledward. It was surely the right thing

to try to give the Society an account of all the views expressed at the informal meeting.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley then turned to the passages in the report to which Lord Cadogan had taken exception. He refuted the accusation that "he knew very well that the charming row of houses that stood where the Carlton Hotel stands today had to be pulled down because they had been requisitioned during the war and were handed back to the Cadogan Estate in an uninhabitable condition" by saying that he did know they were in a bad state but did not know they were beyond repair. He had no objection to tall buildings and perhaps, when the scaffolding was removed, the Society would come to admire the Carlton Tower as architecture. But when Chelsea was crying out for places to house people like themselves, there were good reasons for the Society taking exception to a form of development which would substitute accommodation for short-term visitors from elsewhere in place of Chelsea residents' homes. He then withdrew any adverse reflections on the policy of the Cadogan Estate.

The Chairman's Report was then put to the vote and carried by a show of hands from the vast majority of those present although about a dozen hands were raised in opposition.

The President then closed the discussion by expressing a wish that everything that had been said would be published in the *Annual Report*, 1960. He suggested it might first be agreed in draft by those principally concerned.

The adoption of the accounts as printed on pages 70 to 72 of the *Annual Report*, 1959 was then moved by Mr. Roland Clarke and carried unanimously.

After the formal business of the meeting the President introduced Mr. Strong, Assistant Keeper in the National Portrait Gallery who had kindly consented to give a talk entitled *The Restoration, an approach through contemporary pageantry*. A short account is given on page 53.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1960

LIABILITIES	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	ASSETS	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Accumulated fund:-							Investments:-						
Balance as at 31.12.59...	785	8	1				£500 3½% War Stock at cost				409	0	6
Less deficit for 1960 in Income and Expenditure A/c ...	32	14	3				(Market Value £297.10.0)						
				752	13	10	Office equipment as at 31.12.59 ...	20	0	0			
							Less depreciation: ...	5	0	0			
											15	0	0
							Cash at Bank	263	16	6			
							Cash in hand	2	12	0			
							Cash in Post Office A/c	62	4	10			
											328	13	4
											£752	13	10

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December, 1960

INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Members' subscriptions:-				Annual Report	...	262	13 2
Life	...	78	15 0	Clerical assistance	...	23	18 6
Annual	...	211	12 6	Printing, stationery and postages, etc.	...	70	3 5
Entrance fees	...	8	0 0	Expenses of Annual General Meeting	...	19	11 0
Donations	...	31	18 6	Expenses of Autumn Meeting	...	3	0 0
				Depreciation of furniture	...	5	0 0
Sales of Annual Report	...	330	6 0				
Interest on 3½% War Stock	...	2	5 6				
Interest on Post Office A/c	...	17	10 0				
Deficit, being excess of expenditure over income for year	...	1	10 4				
		32	14 3				
						£384	6 1

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

C. H. BURR,
Chartered Accountant.
6th April, 1961.

R. D. CLARKE,
Hon. Treasurer.

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 year ended 31st December, 1960

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
Balance 1.1.60	142 14 1	Balance 31.12.60 in P.O. Savings Bank	...	146 5 5	
Interest for 1960	3 11 4				
			<u>£146 5 5</u>			<u>£146 5 5</u>	

R. D. CLARKE,
Hon. Treasurer

Audited and found correct. C. H. BURR,
Hon. Auditor.

REGINALD BLUNT MEMORIAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of income and Expenditure for year ended 31st December, 1961

INCOME	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
Balance 1.1.60	52 14 8	Balance 31.12.60 in P.O. Savings Bank	...	54 1 0	
Interest for 1960	1 6 4				
			<u>£54 1 0</u>			<u>£54 1 0</u>	

R. D. CLARKE,
Hon. Treasurer.

Audited and found correct
C. H. BURR,
Hon. Auditor.

ANALYSIS OF POST OFFICE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

as at 31st December, 1960

	£	s.	d.
General Fund Account	...	62	4 10
Chelsea Old Church Restoration Fund Account	...	146	5 5
Reginald Blunt Memorial Fund Account	...	54	1 0
		<u>£262 11 3</u>	

List of Members

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

- | | |
|---|--|
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