



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity 27626

Autumn Bulletin 2021



©Michael Stephen 2021

This Bulletin is printed and distributed to members twice a year, and electronic mailings are sent to members at approx. monthly intervals. If you are not receiving them, please contact Secretary@chelseasociety.org.uk or 07598 534290.

For more detail, and to keep up to date with the activities of the Society, visit our website at www.chelseasociety.org.uk You can also follow The Chelsea Society on Instagram, where we now have 837 Followers Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Society, by visiting our website and clicking on “**Join Us.**”
They do not have to be resident in Chelsea.

FUTURE EVENTS

Artisan Du Chocolat -

15th December 2021

Wednesday 15th December at 6.30pm at
“L’artisan du Chocolat” 89 Lower Sloane Street
(at the Royal Hospital Rd end)

An opportunity for a limited number of Chelsea Society members to taste the exotic chocolates in this new shop, and have a glass of Prosecco.

Tickets £10 per person available from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post with cheque payable to Cadogan Hall, or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online).

A charge is made by Cadogan Hall for card payments.



PAST EVENTS

Remembrance Service



Wreaths were laid by the Deputy Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, by Viscount Chelsea DL, and by representatives of local organisations, on Sunday 14th November 2021 at 11am at the War Memorial in Sloane Square.

The Chairman of The Chelsea Society, Dr. James Thompson, laid a wreath on behalf of the Society.

Afterwards everyone assembled at Holy Trinity church in Sloane Street, for the Service of Remembrance, at which the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Society read prayers.

Diary of an MP's wife

On Wed 10th November at 6pm at Waterstones bookshop, 40 members of The Chelsea Society enjoyed an evening with Lady (Sasha) Swire, who was interviewed about her book by the Vice-chairman of the Society, Michael Stephen.

The book was voted Sunday Times political book of the year and contains lots of high-octane political gossip seen through the sceptical eyes of a woman one step removed from the stage. They cover the Cameron-May years in power. This was an opportunity to hear first hand from Sasha about the diaries she kept and the sensations they caused. She is a Chelsea resident when not at her house in Devon. The book is now available in paperback.

SASHA SWIRE
**DIARY
OF AN
MP'S WIFE**

*Inside and
outside power*



AGM

Minutes of The Annual General Meeting held at 6.30pm on Monday 29th November 2021 at Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road, London SW3

1. The meeting was addressed by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, Cllr. Gerard Hargreaves.
2. The meeting approved the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held on Monday, 30th November 2020, which had been published in the Annual Report for the year 2020.
3. The following members of Council retired by rotation in accordance with Rule 4.16 and were re-elected:

Michael Bach

Sarah Ingham

Jules Turner

4. The Treasurer, Mr. Chris Lenon, presented the Accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 and answered questions.
5. The Chairman, Dr. James Thompson, delivered his Report for the year ended 29th November 2021, and answered questions on:

The refurbishment of Argyll House

Basements policy

Air quality and traffic

Chelsea History Festival

Flying the Union Flag above Chelsea Old Town Hall

Traffic noise and acoustic cameras

6. The meeting was addressed by the President, John Simpson OBE, remembering the founder of the Society, Reginald Blunt, and the sculptor Sir Eduardo Paolozzi.
7. The meeting was addressed by the MP for Chelsea and Fulham, the Rt. Hon Greg Hands, on government planning policy for housing.
8. There were no Resolutions of which notice had been received under Rule 8.12.1
9. The Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea proposed a vote of thanks to the Officers and Council of the Society for the work they had done during the year.



PAST EVENTS

Chelsea Walk

A group of Members enjoyed a guided walk around Chelsea with Guy Fairbank, a Blue Badge Guide and City of London Guide, with a wide interest in London's history.

On this 90-minute stroll we explored the quiet streets off the King's Road. We met Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife. Also Bess of Hardwick and the Duchess of Monmouth, Noël Coward's muse, a giant of the Art Nouveau movement, the site of the Chelsea Pottery, a stylish designer couple, an eccentric architect, and the studio where an iconic album cover was designed. We all knew Chelsea quite well, but Guy managed to find things that even we did not know. There have been requests for another walk, which will be in the Spring.



Chelsea Barracks Visit



The architect, Michael Squire, hosted a walking tour of Chelsea Barracks for Chelsea Society members on 20th October 2021. He explained the original masterplan – created in 2009 by Squire & Partners, Dixon Jones and Kim Wilkie.

Their vision was for a new piece of the city as a seamless evolution of Belgravia, enhancing value in all its forms – cultural, aesthetic, social and economic – for the benefit of local residents and the wider community. The development establishes new pedestrian routes across the site as well as over two acres of public landscaped space which did not of course exist while the site was used by the Army.

The walk showed the first three completed phases of Chelsea Barracks – a trio of residential apartment buildings designed by Squire & Partners, townhouses designed by PDP London, a restaurant designed by Ben Pentreath and landscaping of a series of public gardens and squares by Gustafson Porter + Bowman. We also went inside the old Garrison Chapel, which is now a beautifully restored exhibition space.

National Army Museum

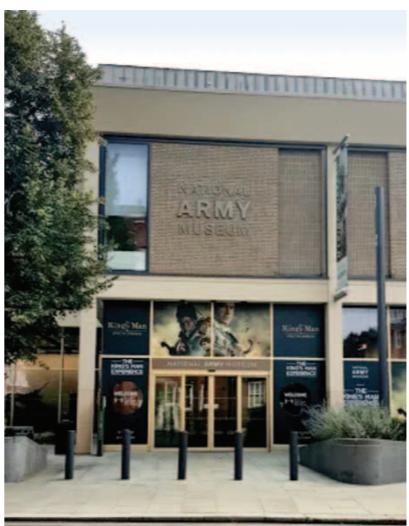
The National Army Museum in Royal Hospital Road invited members of The Chelsea Society to three very interesting talks as follows.

12 October 2021, 6.30pm – 9.00pm 'George III: The Life and Reign of Britain's Most Misunderstood Monarch'. Andrew Roberts

19 October 2021, 6.30pm – 9.00pm 'George III and William Pitt the Younger in Peace and War.' Andrew Roberts and Lord Hague

25th October 2021, 6.30pm – 9.00pm 'Could Britain have won the American War of Independence?' Andrew Roberts and General David Petraeus.

It was a stellar line-up of Speakers, and many members attended.



PAST EVENTS

The Garrick Club



Named after the great eighteenth century actor, David Garrick, the Club was founded in 1831 by a group of literary gentlemen under the patronage of the (then) Duke of Sussex as a haven for discourse between artists and patrons.

Many of the nation's art lovers and personalities were members of the Garrick, including Rossetti, Trollope, JM Barrie, Thackeray and Dickens. Infamously the Club played host to a very public quarrel between these latter two literary giants.

It houses the largest and most significant collection of British theatrical works of art and has over 1,000 paintings, drawings and pieces of sculpture on display. Artists represented include Zoffany, Lawrence and Millais. Portraits of every British actor of note from David Garrick to John Gielgud can be found on the Club walls.

On 13th October members of The Chelsea Society enjoyed a private tour of the Club.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

The Constitution of the Society requires it to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea by:-

- Stimulating interest in the history, character and traditions of Chelsea;
- Encouraging good architecture, town planning and civic design, the planting and care of trees, and the conservation and proper maintenance of open spaces;
- Seeking the abatement of nuisances;
- Making representations to the proper authorities on these subjects.

The Chelsea Society exists because its members have for nearly 90 years loved Chelsea for its character, its style, and its charm, and wish to maintain those characteristics for themselves and future generations. We recognise of course that change is inevitable but the Society will seek to influence change so that it does not impact adversely on those characteristics. The Society will therefore encourage the design of new and altered buildings so that their size, proportions, architectural style and setting are compatible with the characteristics of Chelsea.

Where changes of use are proposed, the Society will seek to maintain the balance which has been achieved in Chelsea between residential accommodation for people of all income-groups, shops, offices, restaurants, schools, hospitals, open spaces, and other uses. The Society values the relationship it has established over many years with the Councillors and Officers of the Royal Borough, and the Committee will seek to maintain and enhance that relationship, and with the Mayor of London.

The Committee will nevertheless engage in constructive opposition to the policies and actions of the Borough Council and the Mayor whenever necessary. The Society is always willing to engage with architects, planning consultants, and their clients, and we find that if engagement takes place at an early stage the result is more likely to be beneficial both for Chelsea and the developer.

The Society is not a Residents' Association nor a Trade Association but it recognises the valuable contribution made by the many Associations in Chelsea in relation to their immediate locality and their particular interests.

The Planning Committee envisages a relationship of mutual support between the Society and the relevant Associations whenever possible.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

The Local Plan

The Council of RBKC has consulted on the revision of the Local Plan. This is the basic document by reference to which all planning applications are decided.

The Council is under pressure from both the Mayor of London and from central government to deliver over 4,000 new homes in the Borough over the coming years.

A number of key issues have already been identified:

- Housing/homes are treated as a single commodity and an overarching priority. But there is no attempt to distinguish between different types of accommodation, for example between luxury flats built for absentees and affordable housing for key workers.
- The consultation paper is full of references to "growth" and "development" without any explanation of what these terms mean and why they should be encouraged in Conservation Areas, of which Chelsea has many.

The Chelsea Society has responded in detail and this can be found on our website: <https://chelseasociety.org.uk/the-local-plan-2/>



South Kensington Station – Chelsea Society objects



The Chelsea Society is pleased that on 18.11.21 the Planning Committee of RBKC rejected by 5 votes to nil the application for the "around-station-development" against which we, and others, had campaigned. TfL should now get on with providing much-needed step-free access to the concourse, and we call upon our GLA Councillor, Tony Devenish, to press them to do this.

In addition to the submissions already made, the Chairman of the Planning Committee of The Chelsea Society, Sir Paul Lever, said "The applicants have in the meantime made some minor alterations to the proposed design, but our objections to it remain unchanged. They relate to the design, character and size of the proposed building and its incompatibility with the surrounding Conservation Area. It is modern, unsympathetic, overly dominant and destructive of important vistas and views. To approve its construction would be in breach of the Council's Statutory duty of Care to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas under the terms of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990."

For details see our website.

Embankment Gardens

RBKC is considering improvement plans for Chelsea Embankment Gardens, using consultation with the local community as its foundation.

From April 2022 funds will be made available for the improvements, and ahead of this we would like to hear your thoughts on the current space and what you would like to see included.

Most of the features within the boundary of the open space can be discussed in the scope of works, including benches, trees, planting, paving, footpaths, bins and fencing. We also encourage you to put forward any additions you think would create a better experience for park users.



Dovehouse and Chelsea Greens

The Society has been consulted about these, and we are pleased that work will soon be done to improve them.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Cabman's Shelter

The Chelsea Society persuaded RBKC to serve a dilapidations notice under s. 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, and we are pleased that restoration work is now progressing.

We look forward to seeing the shelter fully restored before Easter.



NEWS

Don't divide Chelsea!

The Chelsea Society has objected to the proposal by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission to divide Chelsea into two parliamentary constituencies. Individual members have also objected.

For details see website.



Chelsea at War

Summer 1940 – June Spencer, a debutante and dress designer, volunteers as a driver for the London Auxiliary Ambulance Service in Chelsea. It's gruesome dangerous and frightening work, but off duty she appears to rise above it.

"My life off-duty was like another world. I'd be shopping in the West End, dining at the Ritz, wearing smart dresses, going to balls, generally enjoying the social scene that I had just been introduced to when I was presented to the King."

A book about her experiences, written by Naomi Clifford and based on June's diaries, is published by Caret Press and is available now for purchase.

June's experiences are remarkably similar to those of Marie Vassilchikov, and recalled in her "Berlin Diaries." Instead of relaxing away from the war at country estates these two young women preferred to be in the middle of the appalling tragedy and devastation of London and Berlin.

The Cadogan Arms



The Chelsea Society is pleased to see that The Cadogan Arms, on the King's Road, has re-opened in all its Victorian splendour.



We look forward to the re-opening of another Victorian gem
The Queen's Head in Tryon Street



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can follow The Chelsea Society on our website - chelseasociety.org.uk and on Instagram @thechelseasociety where we now have 837 followers!

Our mailing address is: 30 Paradise Walk, London SW3 4JL

The Secretary's e-mail is secretary@chelseasociety.org.uk and her telephone number is 07598 534290

Copyright © 2021 The Chelsea Society. All rights reserved.