

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY



TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1939

Price : HALF-A-CROWN



A DAINTY ROGUE IN PORCELAIN.

"AMENITY." Tell us, whose is it, and what ?

Do we own, or inherit, or choose it ?

It's something you often don't know that you've got

Till you lose it !

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

(For protecting and fostering the amenities of Chelsea. Founded: April, 1927)

President:

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ATHOLL, K.T., P.C., G.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O.

Vice-Presidents:

THE RT. HON. MARY COUNTESS OF LOVELACE
GENERAL SIR WALTER BRAITHWAITE, G.C.B.

Council:

Chairman: MR. C. H. ST. J. HORNBY

BRIG.-GEN. LIONEL BANON, C.B.
MR. REGINALD BLUNT, C.B.E.
MR. E. J. CHAPMAN (Chelsea Chamber of Commerce)
HON. BRYAN W. GUINNESS
MR. PERCY LOVELL, F.S.A. (London Society)
MR. BASIL MARSDEN-SMEDLEY (L.C.C.)
LT.-COL. MERVYN O'GORMAN, C.B.
MR. GRAHAM PETRIE (Chelsea Arts Club)
SIR EDMUND B. PHIPPS, C.B.
HON. DOROTHY PICKFORD, J.P.
MR. RICHARD STEWART-JONES (Georgian Group)

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:

REGINALD BLUNT, 12, Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, S.W.3.

Assistant Honorary Secretary:

MISS DAPHNE SANGER, 58, Oakley Street, S.W.3.

Bankers:

Barclay's Bank, 348, King's Road, S.W.3.

THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY ARE TO AID:—

- (1) in the maintenance of all features of Chelsea having beauty or historical interest, unless a proved necessity requires their removal;
- (2) in the preservation of the open spaces for the health of the community;
- (3) where clearances are necessary, in the construction of substituted buildings that will be a credit to Chelsea;
- (4) in preventing the disfigurement of streets and open spaces by ugly advertisements or otherwise;
- (5) in preserving the residents from smoke, noises and other nuisances arising from industrial premises; and generally,
- (6) in protecting and amplifying the amenities of Chelsea for all classes of its people.

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

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

MEMBERS.

Membership of the Society is open to all residents in Chelsea, and to non-residents who may, in the opinion of the Council, be qualified by official or other association with Chelsea. Members ceasing to be residents shall cease to be members, except with the approval of the Council and on such terms as they may think fit.

There is no annual subscription to the Society, but members must, on election, pay a minimum subscription of £1. Should further funds be needed to carry on the work of the Society, it is proposed to raise them from time to time by voluntary subscriptions amongst the members and others.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

Chelsea residents engaged in trade, and Chelsea art and other students are invited to join the Society as Associate Members, if they so desire.

The Entrance Fee for Associate Members is 5/-, entitling them to such membership for 3 years.

Associate Members may attend and speak at all Meetings of the Society, but are not empowered to vote.

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*The Twelfth
Annual General Meeting
of the Society*

to which all Members and Associates are invited

will be held at

96 CHEYNE WALK, CHELSEA

(a few yards west of Battersea Bridge)

by the kind invitation of Mr. Richard Stewart-Jones

on

Monday, May 15th, at 5 o'clock

Chairman:

Mr. C. H. St. J. Hornby

who will move the adoption of the Twelfth
Annual Report and Accounts

Mr. Henry George Strauss, M.P.

will give a short address on

“CHELSEA AND THE FUTURE OF THE
TOWN”

A Discussion will follow

Please note the Date now, this being the only intimation

The Society's Summer Meeting, 1939

will take place on

Thursday, June 8th

At

3 o'clock.

By the kind invitation of

MR. GEORGE EUMORHOPOULOS

the party will meet at

No. 7, CHELSEA EMBANKMENT

to view his Art Collection, including Chinese porcelain, Persian pottery, Egyptian, Greek and Roman glass, celadon and mortuary ware, and modern sculpture and paintings.

4.15 o'clock.

Proceeding thence to the
South Entrance of

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

the Party are invited by

GENERAL SIR HARRY and LADY KNOX

to take Tea in

The State Room of the Governor's House

after which they will visit the Chapel, the Great Hall, etc., under the guidance of Captain C. G. T. Dean, of The Light Horse Court.

TICKETS, price Two Shillings, can now be obtained from the Secretary, 12 Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, S.W.3, or from Messrs. Chapman Brothers, 241 King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.3.

EARLY APPLICATION IS PARTICULARLY REQUESTED.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at No. 96 Cheyne Walk, by the kind invitation of Mr. Richard Stewart-Jones, on Monday, May 23rd, 1938, at 5 o'clock; the Chairman, Mr. C. H. St. J. Hornby presiding.

The Minutes of the Tenth Annual General Meeting were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

In moving the adoption of their Eleventh Annual Report and Accounts, which had been circulated to all members, the Chairman referred with regret to the death of Lord Ernle, their former President; and welcomed the Duke of Atholl, whom they had invited to accept the vacant post. Mr. Hornby, referring to Chelsea's gradually altering character, said that a town was a living organism and that we must not be too ready either to decry the work of contemporaries or to resent inevitable demolition. Reviewing the work of the year he referred to the Society's support of the Borough Council with regard to the provision of working class flats, and to the presentation to their Secretary of his portrait painted by Mr. Ronald Gray. The financial position of the Society was satisfactory, and their membership had been increased by fifty-one during the year.

The adoption of the Report was seconded by Captain Edwards, supported by Mr. H. Strauss, M.P., and carried.

On the motion of General Sir Walter Braithwaite the confirmation of the Council's appointments of the Duke of Atholl as President of the Society, and of Mr. Richard Stewart-Jones as a member of Council was agreed to.

The Duke of Atholl referred with sorrow to the loss of Lord Ernle. He felt it a great honour to be elected as their President, and he would always be glad to render any help in his power should the Society find itself in difficulties from outside sources. He found Chelsea a friendly place, and would do what he could to encourage that aspect.

This concluding the Annual General business three short debates followed on Chelsea problems.

(1) Mr. Thomas Hope, speaking on behalf of THE CHELSEA TENANTS ASSOCIATION, referred to the efforts of this body to stop the evictions of working class residents, to press for

municipal building, and to secure adequate compensation for evicted tenants.

A debate followed in which Mr. Marsden-Smedley, Mr. Strauss, Miss Collum and other members took part.

(2) Mr. D. Matheson, the Secretary of THE NATIONAL TRUST, thanked the Chelsea Society for this opportunity of explaining its work and aims.

The Trust was not supported by Government, and till 1936 its acquisitions were all outside London, where the high land values and the pressure of inevitable change made preservation, save in exceptional cases, very costly and difficult. Mr. Matheson explained how, under a recent Act, houses could be preserved by covenant without being acquired, their owners continuing occupation and being exempted from death duties. The preservation of single houses which were parts of rows or squares was aesthetically unsatisfactory, but where a combination of owners could be got to agree in a protective covenant, a whole square or group of houses could be preserved, at least so far as the façade was concerned.

(3) The Secretary opened discussion upon the third problem, which was the projected FOUNTAIN AT SLOANE SQUARE, by explaining the proposal of the Borough Council, and emphasising the value and attraction of beautiful adornment which was recognised in towns abroad so much more than with us.

Mr. L. S. Merrifield warmly supported the project of the fountain in Sloane Square, which he thought should be big in mass though not necessarily very high or wide, and should be executed in bronze, and with figures. A lively discussion followed, in which Mr. Strauss favoured a stone fountain, and a public competition for design, with capable assessors. Large expenditure alone would not ensure a really fine thing. Mr. Marsden-Smedley and several other members advocated their views, and the Chairman wound up the debate, saying that whilst much money might not necessarily provide a good fountain, a niggardly restriction of cost would certainly result in a bad one.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman and to Mr. Stewart-Jones, proposed by General Banon and carried by acclamation.

There were about 100 members present.

THE SUMMER AND AUTUMN MEETINGS, 1938

THE Summer Meeting of the Society was held on June 22nd, 1938, at Argyll House, by the kind invitation of the Marquess and Marchioness of Crewe, and afterwards at Chelsea Rectory, to which we were welcomed by the Rector and Mrs. Arrowsmith.

A programme had been prepared giving particulars of the history of these two eighteenth century houses, and a note about the principal pictures and other treasures in Argyll House; and with the help of this and of Lord Crewe's kindly guidance, a delightful hour was spent in Leoni's "Little country house upon the King's Road, between Chelsea and London," and in the quiet garden behind it; the family portraits by Gainsborough, Romney, Hoppner and Sir Joshua Reynolds being greatly admired in their new setting.

The party, which numbered about 140, afterwards moved to the Rectory, where tea was served in the beautiful old garden, after which the London Madrigal Group, under the direction of Mr. T. B. Lawrence, gave a charming programme of sixteenth century folk and part songs, including several by Weelkes, Morris and Wilbye. The afternoon was fine and warm until the last half-hour, when a shower drove the Madrigal Singers into the Rectory for the conclusion of their songs.

In response to suggestions received that members might be given an opportunity of meeting in the Autumn as well as in the Spring and Summer, arrangements were made for visits on November 17th, 1938 to the Lots Road Generating Station, by invitation of The London Passenger Transport Board, and to the works of The Reliance Rubber Company, with the courteous co-operation of Mr. S. A. Parr, its General Manager.

The parties had to be restricted to thirty at each place, it being impossible to conduct a larger number satisfactorily through a busy and noisy factory.

That these visits were much enjoyed is evident from the many letters of appreciation afterwards received, and for Mr. Parr's careful efforts to expound the somewhat complicated processes of the making of hot water bottles, his guests (each of whom was presented with a specimen on leaving) were particularly grateful.

The two parties, with other members who had been unable to join them, re-assembled for "Tea and Talk" at 96 Cheyne Walk, where the Secretary explained the present position of affairs in the attempt to save Lombard Terrace. As an experiment on this occasion no charge was made for the visit tickets or for tea; but "The Hat" went its rounds, this time in triplicate, in the small hands of Stella Hichens, Gillian de Sabran, and Christina Phillips; the Chelsea Pensioner's Hat being supplemented by Thomas Carlyle's black felt wide-awake from the house in Cheyne Row, and one from the Treasurer, described as "in need of re-lining."

Their contents (including one or two donations from members of the parties who could not come to tea) amounted to £6 9s. 6d., and well covered the expenses of a successful day.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Founded—April, 1927

“To protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea”

*The Council of the Chelsea Society presents
the Twelfth Annual Report, for the year
ending March 31st, 1939*

WHEN this Society was formed 12 years ago its founders knew well that in pledging themselves “to protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea” they were shouldering no light task, since progress and development are apt to entail destruction rather than protection, and progress must be guided rather than obstructed. Their work, it seemed, must somewhat resemble that of the little posse of policemen which may sometimes be seen accompanying a procession of demonstrators. The marchers are free to march. Their escort may shepherd the moving mass into more orderly form and safer routes, and they must do what they can to prevent mischief and disorder; but with it, willy nilly, they must keep pace, or be left uselessly behind.

In the year under review, whilst the Society failed, on the one hand, to prevent the destruction of a cherished amenity, their action, on the other hand, enlisted wide-spread sympathy and publicity which have undoubtedly strengthened their cause, and have gained for it the active and welcome support of the local authority.

LOMBARD TERRACE.

The demolition of Lombard Terrace began twelve years ago, and an attempt to secure its preservation was one of the first efforts of this Society. In its first Annual Report your Council recorded:

It is greatly regretted that the efforts made to save this interesting little row of old houses at the bottom of Church Street and close to Chelsea Old Church have proved unavailing. A statement of the historic associations of the Terrace was printed with forms of petitions for its preservation, and these were signed by over 450 people, and forwarded by Sir Samuel Hoare, M.P. for Chelsea, to Major Sloane Stanley, the owner: who, however, replied regretting that he could not see his way to save the old houses. He has undertaken that the Chelsea Society shall have an opportunity of seeing the plans for the new buildings which are to be erected on the site. It is hoped that these will not be of a height or character that will greatly obscure the Old Church Tower, which stands close to them, but it is inevitable that the present balance and façade of this typical corner of the old riverside, which Sir William Orpen appealed for as "a thing of beauty in all lights and at any time of the year," will be sadly altered by the destruction of the Terrace.

When the western end was pulled down, the two houses forming the eastern corner were protected under the Rent Restriction Act; but an agreement was then unfortunately come to between the Borough Council and the owner by which, in exchange for an advance of the Cheyne Walk frontage, fifteen feet of the eastern end should be surrendered for the widening of the southern exit of Church Street; and when Petyt Place was subsequently built, the tenant of No. 1 was apprised of this agreement, by which that house would obtain an extended river view.

When a modification of the Rent Restriction Act took effect last summer, notice to quit was given to the remaining Lombard Terrace residents with a view to immediate demolition; and an appeal was at once made to your Council for intervention.

A meeting with the owner and his agent was arranged, at which the pledge given to Petyt Place was revealed, and it soon became evident that any attempt to save Lombard Terrace was jeopardised in three directions: (1) by the reluctance of its owner to consider it worth preserving; (2) by the pledge to Petyt Place, and (3) by the agreement for the

widening of the Old Church Street; with the additional handicap that success is overcoming any one of these difficulties was contingent on the solution of the other two.

Efforts, however, were made in each direction, and your Council felt, after their interview with Major Sloane Stanley—whose personal courtesy they desire to acknowledge—that, were his hands free, he might have been prepared to reconsider his decision. The Petyt Place tenant, in response to an appeal from our President the Duke of Atholl, offered to consider, though very unwillingly, the disposal of his lease; and the Chelsea Borough Council forwarded to the London County Council a report in which, after detailing the present situation in regard to the Terrace, they stated:

“There is still a very considerable body of opinion which considers that the demolition of these two houses would rob the neighbourhood of an artistic feature and that the widening of Old Church Street would endanger the fabric of the Old Church by encouraging heavy traffic to pass near its foundations.

“These protests have been brought to the notice of the owner of Nos. 64 and 65, Cheyne Walk, who, through his solicitors, Messrs. Lee & Pembertons, of 44, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, W.C.2, is now enquiring whether the London County Council will release him from carrying out the agreed demolition and the surrender of land for the purpose of widening Old Church Street.

“In 1936, when the Council considered the town planning of the Borough, the widening of Old Church Street was not included in its town planning suggestions.

“So far as this Council is concerned, there does not appear to be any reason why the completion of the approved building scheme should now be accelerated, and the performance by the owner of his obligation to surrender land might well be postponed during the preservation of the existing buildings, Nos. 64 and 65, Cheyne Walk, to the satisfaction of the Council.”

Warm support to your Council's efforts was given in the press, by the Georgian Group, and in letters from the Mayor of Chelsea, the Old Church Committee, the Rector, the Bishop of Lichfield, Mr. Arthur Bryant and many others; whilst offers of financial aid came from many quarters. Pictures of the Terrace appeared in several papers, including a charming drawing by Mr. Hanslip Fletcher in the *Sunday Times*.

Mr. Guy Little (of Messrs. Milles & Co., Solicitors) kindly undertook a considerable amount of legal correspondence with the various interested parties, from which it eventually became clear that the ultimate issue must lie with the L.C.C., whose decision to insist on the widening of Old Church Street would render all other negotiations futile.

The matter came up before the County Council on December 22nd, under a Report from the General Purposes Committee which, after reviewing previous transactions in regard to the site, stated:—

"The owner of 64 and 65, Cheyne Walk has asked whether the Council would be prepared to waive the condition as to the surrender of land for widening Old Church Street, with a view to preserving these houses as a part of old Chelsea. The question of the demolition of the houses has aroused considerable public interest. The Chelsea Metropolitan Borough Council has expressed the view that there does not appear to be any reason why the completion of the approved building scheme should now be accelerated and that the performance by the owner of his obligation to surrender land might well be postponed during the preservation to the Council's satisfaction of the existing buildings, 64 and 65, Cheyne Walk.

"It does not appear that the houses by themselves are of sufficient architectural merit to warrant action being taken for their preservation, and doubt has been expressed whether the condition of the buildings will permit them to stand for any lengthy period. The claim for their preservation is based on the relation of the buildings to Chelsea Old Church as seen from the river embankment. Photographs of the existing

houses will be exhibited in the ambulatory to the Council Chamber during the meeting of the Council.

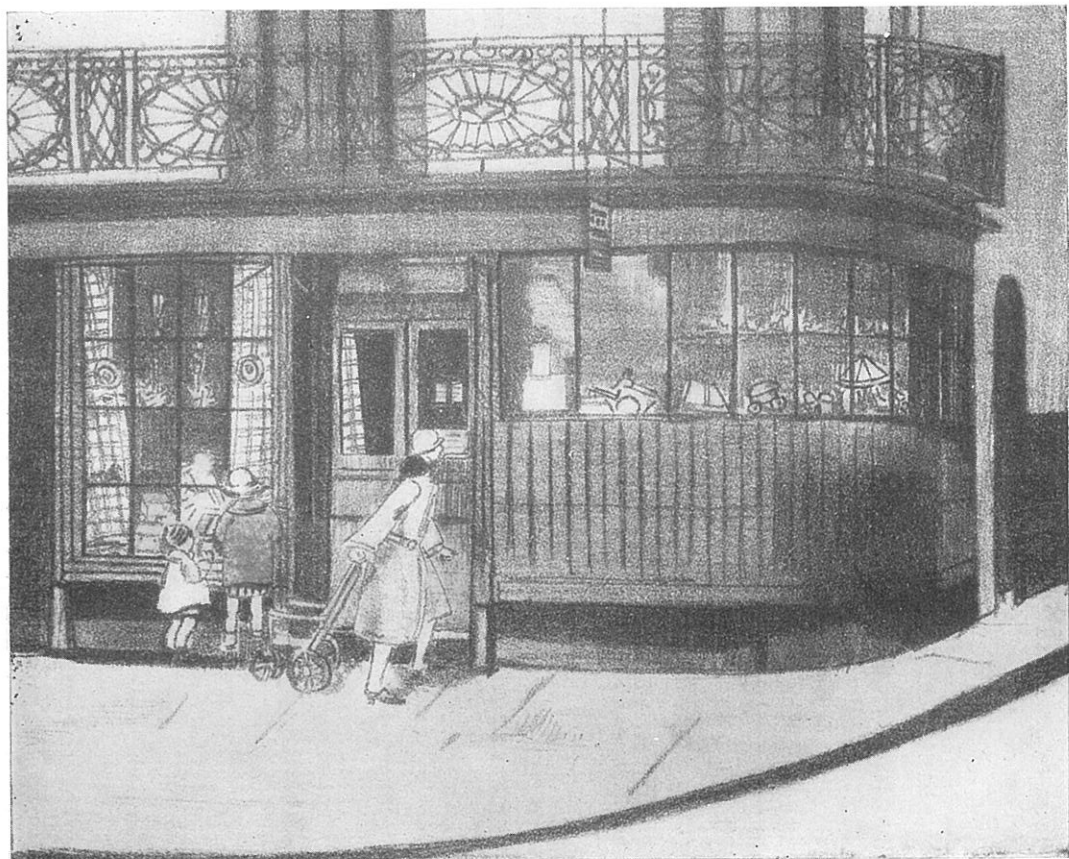
"We have weighed the advantages and disadvantages which seem to be offered by the alternative courses that might be followed. In the design of the new Buildings, which are single-family dwelling-houses, care has been exercised to produce a development which will be in harmony with the existing terrace houses westwards of the site in Cheyne Walk, and in sympathetic relation to Chelsea Old Church. In all the circumstances we feel that permission should be given for the completion of the scheme of development, and the applicant called upon to meet the requirements imposed under the London Building Act in regard to the widening of Old Church Street."

An amendment "to refer back to the Committee with instructions to take all possible steps not involving a charge on the rates to facilitate the preservation of Lombard Terrace" was moved by our fellow Councillor Mr. Marsden-Smedley, seconded by Miss C. Fulford and supported, amongst others, by Sir Ronald Storrs "as a Chelsea man and a member of the Chelsea Society."

Mr. H. Berry (Chairman of the Town Planning and Building Regulation Committee) said that he had received letters from the Georgian Society and the Chelsea Society which showed a desire to preserve what in their view was worthy of preservation. He thought, however, that good cases might be weakened by pressing a less important one. The Council had doubtless made a mistake in 1926 when it permitted the old terrace to be pulled down and the building line advanced. That mistake destroyed the whole composition. If the buildings now in question came down the church would not be dominated as was suggested. The tower would continue to be the dominant feature of the grouping.

On a show of hands the amendment was lost and the Committee's recommendation approved.

Its fate thus sealed, Lombard Terrace was finally demolished within a month.



IN MEMORIAM. LOMBARD TERRACE.

In regard to the doubt expressed by the County Council Committee as to the stability of the remainder of the Terrace it should be recorded that the buildings had recently been surveyed by an architect member of the Committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, who reported their structure generally to be sound and without any serious defects, the basement dry and without sign of mildew, and the whole capable, after substantial internal repairs, of a prolonged further existence.

At our request Sir Eric Maclagan had the interesting cob-web pattern cast-iron balcony railings examined; but as the Victoria and Albert Museum had recently acquired a very similar specimen from Adelphi Terrace, they did not feel justified in bidding for their acquisition.

The well-lettered old stone tablet let into the corner wall has been saved, and Major Sloane Stanley has promised your Chairman to consider its re-insertion on the new house, to read "Here was Lombard Terrace."

BUILDING.

With the exception of a new block of flats erected on the site of Chelsea Lodge, the home of the late Edwin Abbey, R.A., there has been less than usual of noticeable new building in Chelsea during the past year. Your Council can, however, offer their congratulations to the Borough Council upon the recent completion of the three large blocks of industrial dwellings to be known as Chelsea Manor Buildings, consisting of 94 flats housing 422 persons. They note, with particular satisfaction, that some 24,000 square feet of courtyards, playing grounds and grass plots have been included in the site, and that every flat has its bath, its gas heater and its balcony.

During the last few months the Borough Council has obtained compulsory purchase orders for a large area in

Cadogan Avenue, and for property in connection with their rebuilding scheme for Onslow Dwellings; and they are also now negotiating for the acquisition of a site in Riley Street for another improvement scheme. In their Report for 1936-7 your Council emphasised that "the onus must surely lie with our authorities to acquire other available local sites for municipal dwellings in Chelsea, whilst this is still possible"; and that "the suggestion that the Onslow Dwellings in Pond Place might be rebuilt with largely increased accommodation seems worthy of further consideration."

It is pleasant indeed to chronicle that both these aims are now well on the way to realisation. Our first Chairman, Sir Albert Gray, in framing the constitution of this Society, stressed amongst its aims "the amplifying of the amenities of Chelsea for all classes of its people"; and having repeatedly expressed the view that "Chelsea should wish, and work, to retain all classes of its community who want to stay there," it is right therefore, that we should give a special welcome to these efforts.

It should be added that the Borough Council honoured our Society by inviting its Secretary to perform the opening ceremony at the new Chelsea Manor Buildings.

It is interesting to note in this connection that whilst Flat development has greatly increased the density of population in certain areas, business developments, on the other hand, have reduced it to an even greater extent elsewhere. The large department stores are continually in search of fresh storage room. Both Harrods and Peter Jones have acquired large goods depots in the Sloane Avenue and Denyer Street neighbourhoods, covering sites formerly occupied by working class houses. Whilst therefore, the the inoccupancy of large warehouses has proved a set off against the overcrowding of flats, both have alike contributed to the elimination of working class houses, and the eviction of their tenants.

Nor must it be forgotten that the larger houses now being displaced by "luxury flats" had residential domestic staffs, many of whom have now to live out; whilst, in the traffic



CHELSEA MANOR BUILDINGS.

streets, most of the smaller shops had residential quarters which form no part of the larger business premises. Indeed in some of these quarters the electoral registers to-day show hardly any residents.

All these points combine to emphasise the necessity for the provision of further working class accommodation, and fully justify the acquisition of the new sites to which reference has been made.

ALBERT BRIDGE.

It is understood that Albert Bridge is the next on the list for rebuilding. Its disappearance will evoke no tears; but the construction of the new bridge, and particularly of its northern approach, will demand most watchful consideration. The traffic-light system at Chelsea Bridge is not satisfactory, and a roundabout at the bottom of Oakley Street may prove inevitable. If this is so, it might be possible to avoid the demolition of houses in Cheyne Walk and the Crescent by forming the roundabout in part over the waterside, if the adjustment of levels can be satisfactorily achieved.

It will be remembered that in the Society's Town Planning Suggestions of 1934 special consideration was advocated in regard to buildings surrounding our squares, gardens and open spaces. An enquiry has recently taken place at the Town Hall concerning the demolition of a large number of houses in Sloane Street, built about 1800, and of reasonable size and attractive character, overlooking Cadogan Place. It is regrettable that the owners of this site should be forced by the high profits required from the Estate to substitute seven storied flats for these pleasant houses, characteristic of their period.

WILLIAM ASCROFT.

Many years ago our Secretary, who had known William Ascroft, the artist of Cheyne Walk, had photographs taken of some interesting pieces of Chelsea china in the biscuit state,

which the artist had found whilst exploring a basement near Justice Walk, the site of the famous eighteenth century Factory. After Ascroft's death, an effort was made through his widow, to recover these specimens, but without success at the time owing to their having been packed away in a Hammersmith Depository. Subsequently to the widow's death last year a sale catalogue of her effects was received from the Depository, and a visit revealed that these included a very large number of sketches, pastel drawings and oil paintings of Chelsea. The Secretary having ascertained that Mr. Denton, our Chelsea Librarian, was also viewing the lots and would attend the sale, Dr. Bellamy Gardner—an unrivalled authority on the history and work of the Chelsea China Factory—was informed, and the matter left in their very capable hands.

As a result our Public Library acquired for a trifling sum, several hundreds of the sketches, many of considerable local interest; and Dr. Gardner was able eventually to trace and to secure the pieces of Chelsea biscuit which had not been catalogued but were unearthed amongst some unconsidered trifles in a wash basin.

An exhibition of the sketches acquired by Mr. Denton was arranged in June in the Public Library, and evoked much interest, and some speculation in the identification of the views.

THE OLD CHURCH.

The Old Church was re-decorated throughout, last May, and is reported by the Surveyor to be in good order. A fine pair of brass altar candlesticks designed by Mr. Francis Cooper, has replaced the seventeenth century Italian pair which were stolen in the spring.

The obelisk monument erected in the east end of the churchyard by the Royal Horticultural and Linnaean Societies in 1815 to the memory of Philip Miller, the first curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, as reorganised by Sir Han-

Sleane in 1722, and the author of "The Gardener's Dictionary" (first published in 1724), being in urgent need of repair, has now been carefully restored, and the lettering recut under Mr. Godfrey's supervision. Your Council has contributed £10 towards the cost of this work, in honour of one who, though sometimes a difficult and irritable Curator, was acknowledged as "a prodigy of science, learning, industry, research and practical skill."*

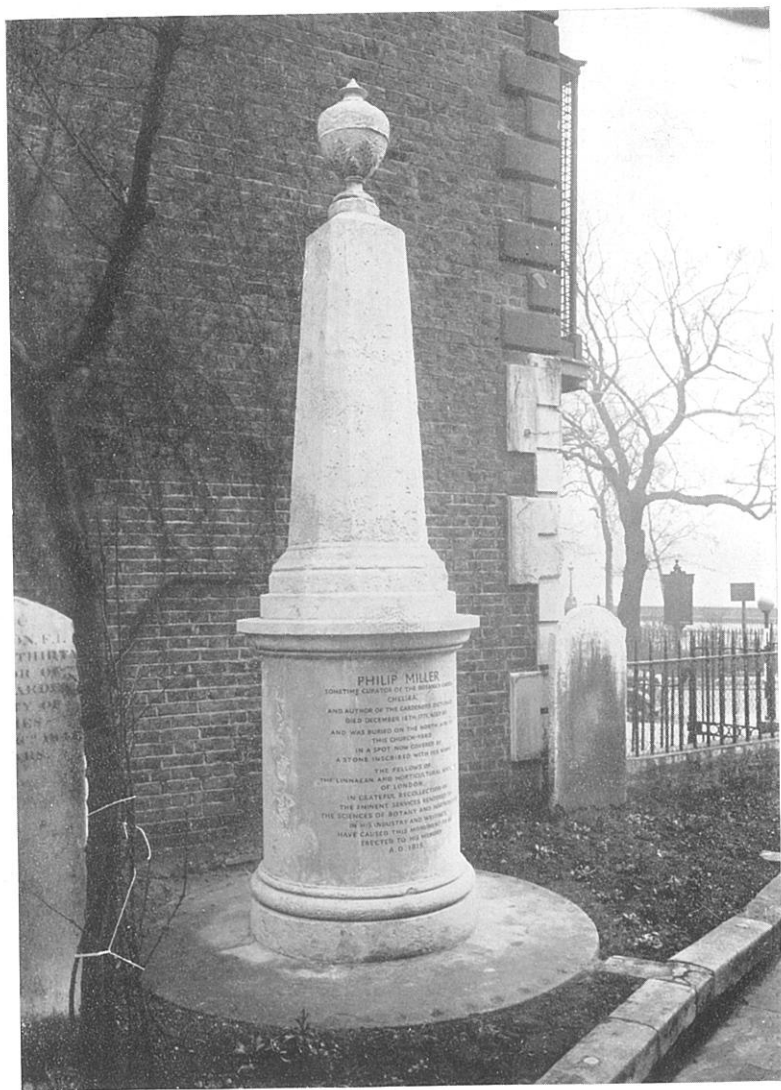
THE ROYAL HOSPITAL.

The beautiful cupola on the North Front was recently found to be in perilous condition owing to cracks having developed in the brickwork. To prevent further splaying the buttresses have been strengthened with reinforced concrete and braced by a girdle of steel ties and angle-pieces. The wooden beams embedded in the brickwork on the inner side of the dome have also been replaced by reinforced concrete, making the structure again secure. Some human remains unearthed last February on the south side of Infirmary Court, close to the original north wall of Chelsea College, may have been those of prisoners of war, or victims of the plague. A clay pipe of late seventeenth century workmanship, was also found here.

TREES.

A letter addressed to the Secretary last June by Mary, Countess of Lovelace, drew attention to the fact that the view of the river from houses on the Embankment was unnecessarily obscured, owing to the plane trees being much too close together. Lady Lovelace suggested that every alternate tree should be removed, and replaced by much smaller trees such as mountain ash, wild crab-apple or cherry. The letter was forwarded to the Borough Surveyor, who replied that the whole question of the Embankment trees would receive very careful consideration after the summer recess.

* The other contributors are the two Societies mentioned above, and the Society of Apothecaries.



THE PHILIP MILLER MONUMENT.
CHELSEA OLD CHURCH.

The present spacing of the trees on the river side of the Embankment is from 30 to 36 feet apart; but the Kew authorities recommend a distance of at least 60 feet. In regard to replacement by smaller trees, traffic exigencies would, of course, have to be carefully considered.

Although in answer to a resolution passed at a meeting of the Society in March of last year calling attention to the irreparable damage caused to trees by careless and unskilled treatment, the Works Committee replied that they were "completely satisfied with the way in which the trees are treated," it is to be noted that the work of pruning has this winter been entrusted to a new firm, whose tender was not the lowest.

"TWO GOOD PROPOSALS."

It is greatly to be regretted that neither of the two proposals of our Borough Council which were welcomed in our last Report shows any likelihood of early fulfilment. In regard to the suggested Picture Gallery at the Public Library it was found, on measuring up the first floor space which might be made available for this purpose, that the resulting wall area would be somewhat less than that already existing in the present ground floor rooms which would have to be utilised for other purposes; and it became obvious under these circumstances that there would be no gain in pursuing the matter further.

It is, however, much to be hoped that it may be possible, in better times, to provide elsewhere more adequate accommodation for our local pictorial and other records, which are of unique interest, and for which the present exhibition space is already quite insufficient.

The other proposal, a fountain at Sloane Square to commemorate the Coronation of their present Majesties, has been put aside, in company with much other good intention, in view of more urgent municipal expenditure. A similar fate appears to have befallen the attractive scheme mentioned in last year's Report to form a small public garden with seats

on the strip of riverside land just west of Chelsea Bridge. It is lamentable, but inevitable, that there is scant hope of adding to the amenities of Chelsea "until this tyranny be overpast."

As we foreshadowed a year ago, the traffic authorities have insisted on the removal of the pavement extension just east of the bottom of Oakley Street, designed to divert through traffic from the inner Cheyne Walk road—now a one-way thoroughfare—to the Embankment. Its object was only partially achieved; but some relief might still be obtained if the board which was placed at the end of the Garden, directing "Local" traffic to the left and "Through" traffic to the right, were retained.

MEMBERSHIP.

The Council record, with great regret, the death last May of Lady Gray, the widow of their first Chairman and an enthusiastic member of this Society from its inception.

The following 45 new members have been enrolled during the year:

Miss E. Wilbraham; Mrs. L. J. Wilbraham; Miss Audrey Playfair; Sir John Mellor, Bart., M.P. and Lady Mellor; Miss H. E. Ryland; Miss M. B. Lloyd; Miss R. Landale; Mrs. Lionel Banon; Miss May Fountain; Mr. B. W. Horne; Miss Muriel Fulford; Mrs. M. A. Taylor; Mrs. Algernon Dale; Sir Ronald Storrs, K.C.M.G. and Lady Storrs; Miss Margaret Atkin; Miss S. Carbutt; Miss Ethel Fildes; Miss Margaret Pole; Miss A. M. Chatfield; Mr. and Mrs. Finlay Kitchin; Mrs. G. Hely-Hutchinson; Miss Frances Burnett; Miss Anne Dalby; Mr. Guy Locock, C.M.G. and Mrs. Locock; Miss G. Vans Agnew; Mrs. Ivonne Nichol; Mr. Peter Fleming; Miss A. L. Hunt; Miss O. Hargreaves; Miss M. Wintour; Miss Muriel Manfield; Miss A. Coltman; General Sir Harry and Lady Knox; Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Wilson; Mrs. Basil Marsden-Smedley; Mr. Alfred Hutchison; Miss Anthony Brown; Mrs. Ernest Cooper; and Miss Eleanor Best.

Thanks are again tendered to Miss Daphne Sanger for her valuable help as Assistant Honorary Secretary; to Mrs. Frederick Braund, Hon. Bryan Guinness, Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, Mr. A. E. Dent, Mr. R. Stewart-Jones, Dame Rosalind Paget and Lady Meinertzhagen for donations received during the year; to all those new members who sent Entrance Fees in excess of the minimum £1; and particularly to those existing members who took the trouble to enrol fresh candidates amongst their friends. It has to be emphasised that the funds of the Society, which requires no annual subscription, are chiefly dependent on such recruiting, than which no better help can be given to the continuance of its work.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

C. H. ST. J. HORNBY,

Chairman.

April 17th, 1939.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

"CHELSEA GATE." The close abutment of the Western Gate of the Royal Hospital upon the pavement had long been recognised as a source of danger to its users. Last year the Gate was set back 23 feet, every care being taken to use the old bricks in rebuilding the pillars. The result is an undoubted improvement both from the traffic and the aesthetic standpoints.

SANDFORD MANOR HOUSE. Though just over the local boundary, this charming old house has always been associated with Chelsea, and its traditional link with Nell Gwynn has doubtless helped to cement the connection. The little Manor, which is interesting quite apart from its historic tenants, has recently undergone some discriminating repair, including the removal of more than a dozen coats of paint from the pine-wood panelling and the beautiful little Jacobean staircase, and the abolition of some later excrescences.

It is hoped that a visit to this little-known house may be arranged later on.

ROYAL AVENUE. A proposal to beautify Royal Avenue by placing large tubs of bright flowers down its length was sent to the Society last year, and forwarded to the Royal Hospital Commissioners. The difficulties are, as usual, the cost of upkeep and protection.

DUKE OF YORK'S HEADQUARTERS. Periodic rumours continue to crop up of sinister designs in regard to this valuable open space. In May last Mr. Hore Belisha, in reply to a question, again asserted that there was no present intention of disposing of any part of the site. Sir John Mellor, M.P. (a member of this Society) emphasised in the Commons that there should be no disposal of this very important ground without the approval of Parliament.

THE SMOKE MENACE. Recent reports from London's observation stations have established that it is now no longer the factory chimneys but the domestic coal grate that is chiefly

responsible for atmospheric pollution. Speaking last October at a meeting of the Commercial Gas Association, Mr. Herbert Morrison, M.P. said that in London every year roughly 240 tons of soot fell on every square mile. It had been calculated that smoke cost the people of London between £1 and £1 10s. a head per annum—the equivalent of a Council rate of about 1s 4d. or 1s. 5d. in the £. It was the refusal of Parliament to grant powers to control domestic smoke production which left the biggest gap in the coercive powers of local authorities.

Within the limits of its powers the L.C.C. was carefully examining the whole possibility of transforming London into a smokeless city, at least so far as concerned domestic smoke. If the smokeless fuel industry through its various branches could satisfy them that practical alternatives to the combustion of raw coal existed, the Council would not be slow to act.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY. The Juvenile department of the Chelsea Public Library having been annexed, in the September crisis, as a First Aid Station by the Air Raid Precautions Committee, temporary accommodation for the Children's Library had to be provided in the Victoria Gallery. It is hoped that some means of rectifying this unfortunate displacement may eventually be devised. Meanwhile Mr. Walter Godfrey's suggestion that a small local museum (already in existence) should be housed in the room behind the gallery in the Old Church may, it is hoped, shortly be carried out.

CHELSEA BOOKS. Publishers are sometimes unduly cautious in embarking upon volumes which may be regarded as primarily of local interest. But two such books, both authoritative, both embodying fresh material and prolonged research, and both written by Chelsea men and members of this Society, now await publication which it is hoped may not long be delayed.

One is a history of the Royal Hospital, compiled by Captain Dean, who has unearthed a great deal of new and interesting matter concerning this historic foundation.

The other, by Mr. Randall Davies, F.S.A., whose work on the Old Church is a Chelsea classic, tells the fascinating story of the Cremorne Gardens, and throws new light on the chequered vicissitudes of that ill-starred resort. Both will be valuable additions to Chelsea's rich and variegated record.

THE BRESSEY REPORT. The long-awaited Highway Development Survey (Greater London) by Sir Charles Bressey and Sir Edwin Lutyens was issued last summer. The main feature affecting Chelsea is the new recommended route westward from Battersea Bridge to Wandsworth and Putney Bridges. "The suggested route," says the Report, "would be a combination of viaduct and embankment following the riverside westwards to Chelsea Creek and Chelsea Basin, both of which would be crossed by large span bridges giving a clearance of 20 feet at high water The new embankment would provide an admirable opportunity for improving a rather unsightly stretch of the riverside, and should be considered in conjunction with the scheme for extending the Victoria Embankment route eastwards through the City, so as to afford a continuous route nearly eight miles long, skirting the Thames from Putney Bridge to the Tower."

There can be no doubt to-day of the necessity of an improved western extension of the Victoria and Chelsea Embankments "which together form one of the most valuable traffic arteries in the County of London," but which at present discharge at the western end into narrow and indirect local streets that filter through into King's Road.

The viaduct, as schemed, would start just west of Battersea Bridge, spanning the creek and West London Railway, and coming to earth again at Tynemouth Street. To what extent it will encroach on the forecourts of the Lindsey Row houses is not clear, though it must inevitably obscure their river outlook.

Sir Charles informed our Secretary that this part of the scheme was in the hands of Sir Edwin Lutyens, from whom every consideration for Chelsea amenities could be relied on. It is to be hoped that he is right.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letters on the following, amongst other local subjects, have been received, and information supplied where possible:

Mr. Angus Brodie (Royal Hospital Gates and Gardens)

Dr. Bellamy Gardner (William Ascroft, and Roubiliac head)

Mr. J. Forbes ("Haistwell", 17th or 18th century)

Hon. Mrs. R. Talbot (Beautifying of Royal Avenue)

Captain Edwards (Chelsea Bridge Gardens)

Mr. D. Spottiswood (Restoration of Williamsburg, U.S.A.)

Sir E. Phipps (Chelsea Picture by W. Jeffs, 1832)

Miss G. Stondale (17th century Flemish Tapestries)

Mr. Leopold Spero (More and Fisher)

Mr. E. Davies (Stone Tablet, Lombard Terrace)

Mrs. Sanger (Tree in Oakley Street garden)

Mr. A. Hutchison (Cheyne Walk cables)

Lord Crewe (Offley and Gorges families)

Miss Lindsell (Formation of a Society)

Mrs. A. Hamilton (New Manor Place, 1860)

Miss Hilda Reid (History of Christchurch Parish)

Mr. Maresco Pearce (Chelsea Trees)

Chelsea Tenants Association (Playgrounds Petition)

Chelsea Borough Council (Cadogan Avenue Area)

Mrs. R. Porter (Harriet Street, Lowndes Square)

THE SOCIETY'S ISSUES.

A few copies of the following Illustrated issues by the Society remain on hand, and can be posted on application to the Secretary at 12, Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3, enclosing postal order or stamps for the amounts stated:

Annual Reports (except the 3rd and 4th, out of print) (1928-38)
1/- each.

Catalogue of the Chelsea Exhibition (June 1927). 1s.3d.

"Chelsea a Hundred Years Ago" (November 1929) can be obtained at Chelsea Public Library.

Chelsea Old Church—An illustrated Historical Guide Book by Archdeacon Stewart, edited, with various additional matter by Reginald Blunt, can be obtained at the Old Church, 1s.0d.

"The Story of a Flitting a Hundred Years Ago," compiled by the Secretary of The Chelsea Society to commemorate the Centenary of the Carlyles' coming to Chelsea; including an excellent portrait in photogravure of Thomas Carlyle. Issued at 2/6. Remaining copies, 6d.

"Sir Thomas More of Chelsea." Descriptive Programme of the Centenary Commemoration arranged by the Chelsea Society, July 6, 1935. 6d.

"Town Planning"—Suggestions in regard to a Plan for Chelsea; approved by the Council of the Chelsea Society. 1/-.

"Choice Chelsea." Catalogue of a Chelsea Loan Exhibition, 1936. 6d.

[Reprinted, by special request, from a Christmas Card.]

FLAT- IRONY

(with apologies to the Walrus and the Carpenter.)

The Builder and the Architect
Were walking close at hand
They wept like anything to see
Such old, old houses stand.
'If these were only cleared away'
They said, 'it would be grand.'

'If seven men with seven picks
Should hack for half a year
Do you suppose,' the Builder said,
'That they could get them clear?'
'I doubt it,' said the Architect,
And shed a bitter tear.

'O Landlords, come and walk with us,'
The Builder did implore,
'A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along this river shore.
We want to build more blocks of flats,
And more and more, and more.'

The Builder and the Architect
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a seat
Conveniently low,
And one by one, as owners came,
Another house would go.

'The time has come,' the Builder said,
'To talk of chromium baths,
Of service lifts and swimming pools,
And crazy pavement paths,
Of radio sets in every room
And smart electric hearths.'

'It was so kind of you to come,
And only think how nice
A Cheyne Walk of towering Flats
With every new device.'

The Architect said nothing but
'Just name your lowest price.'

'I weep for you,' the Builder said,
'I deeply sympathise!'

With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size
Holding his pocket handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

'Dear People,' cried the Architect,

'Can nothing more be done?
Has Chelsea no old houses left?'

But answer came there none.
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd pulled down every one.

R. B.



CHEYNE WALK IN 1791.

NOTES on the ILLUSTRATIONS.

The charming little head of a child, in Chelsea Porcelain, which forms our frontispiece, was recently discovered by Mr. C. T. Fowler, a collector of old English china, "perched on the top of an old coal bell among a lot of heterogeneous objects in a London shop." Nicholas Sprimont, the famous owner of the Chelsea China Factory, was godfather to Francois Roubiliac's little daughter Sophie; and it seems highly probable—though the authorities at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where this unique and delightful specimen is now on loan, have not accepted the attribution—that he should have commissioned the sculptor to model his small daughter's head for reproduction at the Factory.

The date would be about 1751—3, between the raised and red anchor periods of the famous porcelain works.

The "In Memoriam" sketch of Lombard Terrace is reproduced from a watercolour drawing by M. J. Reach, and gives a pleasant record of the rounded corner toy-shop, and the "cobweb pattern" cast-iron balcony which were features of this vanished relic of Georgian Chelsea.

The photograph of the Philip Miller monument in the Old Church yard was kindly made for this report by Mr. R. D. West, the valued Verger of the Church, after the cleaning and relettering of the obelisk had been done, and before the replacement of the circular railings.

The view of Cheyne Walk, c. 1791, is reproduced by the permission of the Chelsea Public Library Committee, from a very interesting water-colour drawing recently acquired by them. Its date has been approximately fixed by the Librarian, who traced "Mullord Breeches Maker" whose name appears on the board in the right foreground, in the Rate Books for the years 1790-2.

This admirable drawing—certainly one of the most valuable of the Library's recent acquisitions—provides much picturesque detail of the Chelsea riverside in the late eighteenth century, with its inn-signs swinging over the roadway, its river steps and sailing barges, the Old Church bell turret, and old Battersea Bridge in the distance.

The photograph of Chelsea Manor Buildings was lent by the Borough Council. These three blocks of industrial dwellings, to which reference is made in the Report, were formally opened on March 30th.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ending March 31st, 1939.

Dr.			£ s. d.		£ s. d.		Cr.		
To	Balance brought forward								
	April 1, 1938	123	18	6				
	In Treasurer's hands	1	2	1				
			<hr/>			125	0	7	
„	Entrance Fees—New Members		56	19	0				
	Associate			5	0				
			<hr/>			57	4	0	
„	Donations				7	5	6	
„	Sales: Reports, &c.				6	9		
„	Summer Meeting—Tickets sold		19	5	0				
	Programmes		1	11	0				
„	Autumn Meeting—The Hat	6	9	6				
			<hr/>			27	5	6	
„	Interest on 3½% War Loan				2	10	10	
			<hr/>			£219	13	2	
	By Annual Report, Printing,								
	Blocks, &c.							35 14 0
„	Stationery, Prospectus and								
	Typing							6 5 1
„	Postage: Reports and Notices							5 12 0
„	Summer Meeting Expenses							19 13 0
„	Autumn Meeting Expenses							5 5 10
„	Milles Jennings & Co., Legal								
	Expenses							3 3 0
„	Donation towards Repair of								
	the Philip Miller Monument							10 0 0
„	Balance at the Bank, March 31,								
	1939	127	13	10				
	In Treasurer's hands		6	6 5				
			<hr/>						134 0 3
						£219	13	2	

NOTE.—The Society holds £100 3½% War Loan.

I have examined the above account with the Books and Vouchers and find it correct, and I have verified the Investment held.

LEONARD F. HARRISON.

5th April, 1939.

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* Associate Member.

† Member of Council.

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