

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY



FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1942

Price : HALF-A-CROWN



CHELSEA OLD CHURCH
from a photograph by A. S. Long

“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 !

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Alldin's Coal Wharf occupied the Arch House at the South West end of Old Church Street.	

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-President:

GENERAL SIR WALTER BRAITHWAITE, G.C.B.

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MR. RICHARD STEWART-JONES (Georgian Group)

MR. GRAHAM B. TUBBS, A.R.I.B.A. (Chelsea Arts Club)

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:

REGINALD BLUNT, 60, Glebe Place, Chelsea, S.W.3.

Assistant Honorary Secretary:

MISS DAPHNE SANGER

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.

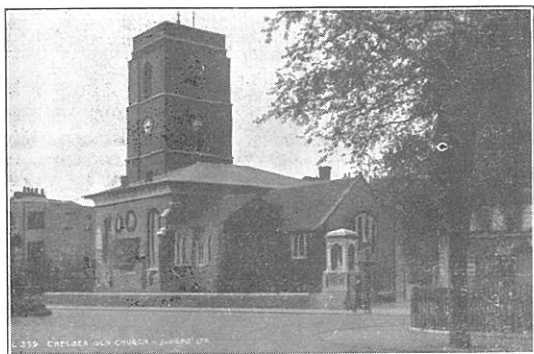
There is no annual subscription to the Society, but members must, on election, pay a minimum subscription of £1. Should further funds be needed to carry on the work of the Society, it is proposed to raise them from time to time by voluntary subscriptions amongst the members and others.

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.



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Founded—April, 1927

“To protect and foster the amenities of Chelsea”

Fifteenth Annual Report

IN presenting their fifteenth Annual Report for the year ending March 31st, 1942, the Council of the Chelsea Society has decided to devote most of its space to the question of the future of Chelsea Old Church.

Whilst it is unlikely that any final decision in this matter will shortly be reached, it is obvious that during its consideration from various angles, the views and feelings of Chelsea as a whole, and of its congregation in particular, must be sought, heard and weighed in regard to their beloved Old Parish Church.

The Chelsea Society, as a body of Chelsea people keenly interested in the place of their abode, and pledged to the protection and preservation of its amenities, has naturally been asked to co-operate in obtaining these views for presentation if and when an Enquiry is held; and your

Council feels that this Report may provide a timely and helpful means of achieving this.

The weight and value of any such verdict largely depend on a knowledge of the actual facts of the case upon which it is to be based; and it is these which your Council now proposes, so far as may be, to provide.

THE PAST.

For the Members of our Society there can be little need even to summarise the story of this remarkable Village Church. The admirable illustrated Handbook by Archdeacon Stewart, which was revised and re-issued by our Council in 1932, is fortunately still obtainable at our Public Library, price 1/-. and the Society can congratulate itself on having kept available so excellent a record, and added to it the very interesting lecture on its monuments, given to our members in the Church itself, by Mrs. Arundell Esdaile, in June 1931.

No English village fane was ever surely so charged with famous memories. One of its early Rectors laid down his head upon the Executioner's block on Tower Hill, being, like his master, "the King's very good servant, but God's first." Sir Thomas More, greatest of Chelsea worthies, rebuilt one of its chapels and sang in its choir. and John Donne, Fuller, Wesley, Romaine and other famed preachers occupied its pulpit.

Lady Jane Cheyne, out of her own privy purse, paid for its re-roofing. George Herbert and his saintly mother, Isaac Walton, and Venn, Dean Swift and Atterbury, Gorges and Trelawny, Mayerne and dear Dorothy Osborne, Ann Sackville, the benevolent Lady Dacre, Jean Cavalier the brave Camisard, Sir Hans Sloane the great Collector—these are but a tithe of the long roll of famous folk who gathered here to worship. Here King Henry VIII pledged his troth to Jane Seymour; at these altar rails the young Princess Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey knelt; and thence onwards and downwards through a score of generations one could carry the famous roll of its

little congregation forward, from Margaret Roper and Mary Astell to the Wellesleys and the Cadogans, the Kingsleys and Henry James and Lord Davidson of Lambeth of yesterday.

THE PRESENT.

To all this, about midnight of April 16-17, 1941, an enemy land-mine, falling close to the foot of the tower, brought downfall and destruction, dealing death, alas, also to five devoted fire watchers; one of them a young man who had made his first Communion there on the previous Sunday, Easter Day.

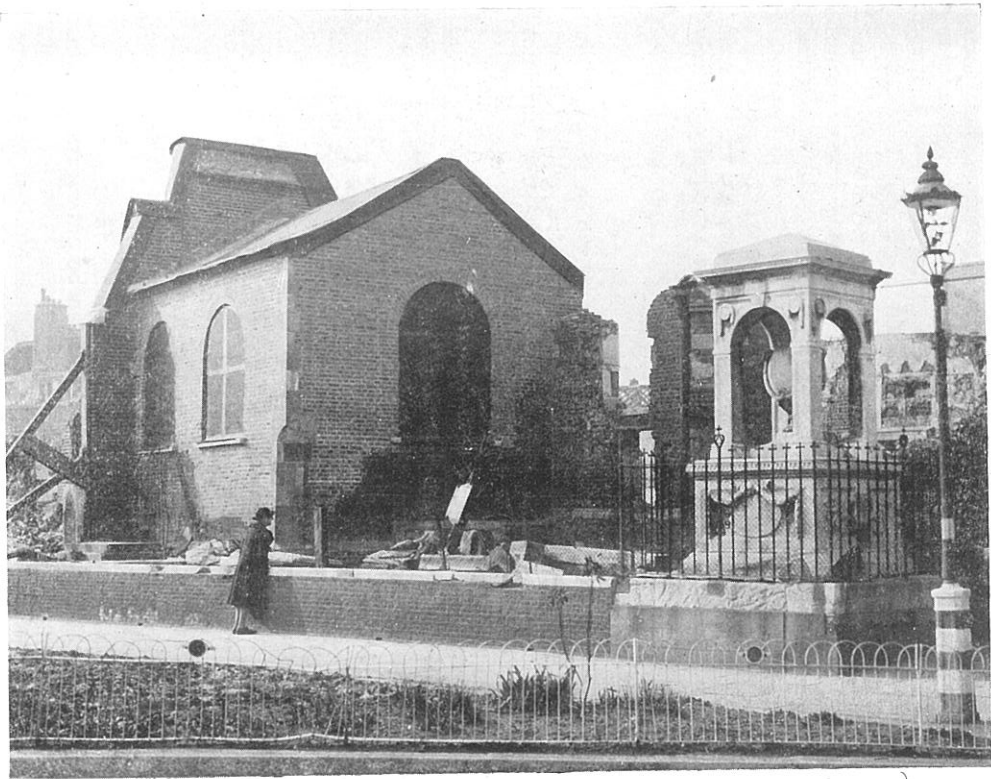
At first sight, ruin seemed almost complete. But, as the demolition gangs got to work and the debris was cleared, it became slowly evident that, as if by a miracle, a large portion of More's Chapel, including its 14th century roof, its arch towards the Chancel and the piers with the famous Holbein capitals, had escaped destruction, together with the great Stanley and Dacre tombs.

The 14th century glass in this Chapel had, it will be remembered, been removed to safe custody at the cost of our Society. When the clearance began, a firm of monumental masons was employed by Mr. W. H. Godfrey, and his representative examined all debris before removal and carefully retrieved fallen tablets, monuments, stone-work, furniture and timbering which appeared capable of repair or use. These were assembled, listed, and stored in a safe place; and it is matter for great satisfaction that Mr. Godfrey, in face of many difficulties was able to get this done. The skilled work was slow, costly and tedious, but its results were remarkable.

Mr. Godfrey has kindly contributed the following notes on this work of salvage:—

FABRIC.

“Considerable parts of the medieval triple East End have survived, and the South or More Chapel is practically intact. Of its two arches, that towards the Chancel, with the carved capitals to its responds, has



MORE'S CHAPEL, REBUILT, AND SIR HANS SLOANE'S TOMB
from a photograph by T. Buchanan

suffered no injury, while the western arch toward the nave still stands and only requires re-setting. The 14th century timber roof is little damaged and the whole has already been repaired and protected from the weather.

The walls of the Chancel stand to about half their height, and those of the Lawrence Chapel remain to nearly roof-plate level. One of the two 14th century windows in this Chapel is intact.

The arches from the Nave to the Chancel and Lawrence Chapel have fallen, but their stones are not seriously damaged and could be re-set. Little remains of the nave walling except the portion that backs on to the Dacre Tomb. The floor slabs are in position and a good deal of the constructional timbers of the roof has been preserved. The tower is practically entirely demolished.

MONUMENTS AND FITTINGS.

Of the 83 monuments and wall tablets described in the account of the Old Church prepared by the London Survey Committee, there are only nine that have not been recovered from the ruins and none of these is important. A number of them have been broken but few are beyond repair. Among the more valuable monuments those of Sir John and Thomas Lawrence have suffered most from fracture.

The architectural framework of the Cheyne tomb was thrown down but little injured, and the beautiful effigy of Lady Jane Cheyne has only a slight injury to one foot, although it was thrown into the Churchyard. The Dacre monument has been preserved intact. The Stanley tomb had a miraculous escape and only one of its urns was displaced. The whole is in safe keeping. The Duchess of Northumberland's monument, already fragmentary, has survived as it was before. The Jervoise arch, which was performing a structural function in the Church was thrown, but the stones for the most part separated at their joints and can be put together again. The Hungerford, Colvile, Littleton, Buckley, Hamey, Powell and other wall tablets have received only minor injuries and are safely removed.

A good many of the fittings of the Old Church have also been recovered. The chained library had been removed before the disaster. The font has been

retrieved and also the pulpit, altar rails, communion table, and a good deal of other woodwork. Other items include the Dacre helmet, Ashburnham bell, clock face and works, parts of the organ, figure of St. Luke, weather vane, etc.

NOTE.

An important point to remember is that the Old Church was the focal point of Chelsea history. Where local history is so rich in interest as here, it is not a mere survival but a living experience which fertilises the present. If all that made up the Old Church is allowed to pass into a mere memory, the historical consciousness will evaporate. On the score of the preservation of works of art alone it will probably be necessary to provide some home for the monuments themselves, and it is difficult to see how this can be done in a more fitting way than to re-assemble them in their old position where they can make their own lesson felt. Chelsea without the Old Church and without the evidences of its past generations will be a very different place from its character of yesterday, and the whole of London will be the loser."

THE FUTURE.

That is the position to-day. - In considering the future, several questions at once arise, and must be honestly and squarely faced.

1. Is it possible to reconstruct an old building which has been largely destroyed?
2. The Old Church having been taken from us, is any church needed there?
3. From what sources will adequate funds be available?
4. Can the particular atmosphere and historic associations which were the supreme interest and charm of Chelsea's Old Church find survival in what must be largely a new building?

A few contributions towards answers to these questions may here be submitted for consideration.

1. Chelsea, as it happens, can furnish within her own borders at least two examples of successful reconstruction. The magnificent roof and beautiful oriel of Crosby Hall re-erected in Cheyne Walk after its demolition in Bishopsgate, is a very remarkable instance of rebuilding, even under the additional handicap of dissociation from its original site and surroundings.

Wren's charming quarters for one of the Captains of Invalids at the Royal Hospital, which was demolished by a bomb during the last war, was re-built by the Office of Works with such exactitude from Sir Christopher's drawings that it is already almost impossible to detect the new work, and the harmony of the whole East or London Court remains quite undisturbed.

There are, of course other examples on a larger scale elsewhere and abroad; and where the design is simple and unpretentious, as at the Campanile in Venice, the work is accomplished with clear success.

It is also well to remember that our Church had already at least once been largely rebuilt. As Chelsea passed gradually from a small riverside village of fishermen and farmers, to become the retreat of great families and a "Village of Palaces," its earlier church in which More had worshipped was found quite inadequate to its growing population, and, except for the chancel and two chapels, was entirely pulled down in the second half of the 17th century, a new tower being built farther west into Church Lane in order to give room for a much extended new nave.

2. The primary dedication of a church is to the worship of God by the congregation of its neighbourhood. The Old Church worshippers continue in existence as a congregation, and hold regular services in a Ward of Cheyne Hospital adjoining their lost Church. It is a poor makeshift; but there the 17th century altar (which was damaged but carefully restored) with its brass ornaments, has been set up; the sacred vessels have been recovered from the ruins, and regular congregations make their Communion every Sunday. Members

of the congregation have brought gifts to dignify the chapel, one, a finely printed Oxford Bible (2 vols. folio), another a Persian rug, a third, an Oak credence table, a fourth a lectern, while other details of the Church furniture have been retrieved and made serviceable through the care of Mr. West, the Verger. Mr. Webster, organist of the Old Church, gives his services, playing on a grand piano (the property of the Children's Hospital) for the later services, Morning and Evening, every Sunday. A Sunday School has been restarted in a neighbour's house, and in the absence of the Incumbent on war service in the Navy the Chapel is served by the Rev. Turner. Thus the Old Church still lives in the spiritual life of its people.

It is true that St. Luke's, the Parish Church, could and would gladly accommodate them, and that there are (or were) other Chelsea churches to which they might go. But that does not meet their hope.

The tradition of six or seven centuries of worship on one hallowed spot is not easily destroyed. It may be ignored, but with results which the Church cannot afford to incur.

No one will envy or minimise the work of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in coming to decisions on these matters. They will be faced with conflicting sympathies and contradictory pressure. In weighing the factors which will go to make up their decision it is hoped that such things as strong local sentiment and unbroken historical continuity will not be discarded as amongst the imponderables.

The Diocesan Reorganisation Committee which will examine and make recommendations to the Bishop in this matter will formulate these after consultation, as far as practicable, with the incumbents, patrons and parochial councils of the churches concerned; and presumably their congregations will be able to express their views through one or other of these channels.

Chelsea Old Church, however, was more than a venerable place of worship. Its South Chapel was the chief personal memorial of one of the greatest Englishmen, Sir Thomas



MANDER'S FISH SHOP, LOMBARD STREET
(later 72, Cheyne Walk)

from a drawing by W. Burgess

More. The Church in its entirety, was a historic monument, commended to the special protection of H.M. The King. It was an unique example of a village church in London. "In its monuments, as in its history," as Herbert Horne wrote, "Chelsea holds a place apart. There is scarcely another parish within the environs of London which can boast of so long a roll of illustrious or memorable inhabitants: certainly no other suburban church which contains so many remarkable and various memorials of its parishioners." Of these monuments the greater part has been saved, and safely stored, either practically intact or in repairable condition, and the problem of their replacement is the concern of much wider than parochial interest.

It is surely inconceivable that this aspect of the question should not enter into the purview of the Committee, and be given the full consideration which is its due.

3. Your Council is not at present in a position to make any statement about Finances, but they have received a most encouraging assurance from an authoritative source that if only the parish can establish that they want their church rebuilt, and if the diocesan authorities can be persuaded to be favourable, there will be no difficulty about funds from the government.

4. It is impossible to dogmatise, and difficult even to forecast about abstractions. If we so will, we may hope to watch the old familiar fabric rise course after course exactly in the admirable simplicity which had so endeared it in our memories; as we see the memorials great and small return one by one to their long accustomed places, the kneeling pyramids of the Hungerford and the Lawrence families, the moving appeal of Sara Colville's upstretched arms with the light falling on them, just as it used to do, the pensive serenity of Lady Jane Cheyne, still resting on her elbow—as these things and so much else are brought back, it is difficult to believe that they would not carry with them for us much—and more as time goes on—of that atmosphere of a richly storied past and of great and noble worshippers, which was among the secrets of the fascination of Chelsea Old Church.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Mr. Walter Godfrey, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., who is the Director of the National Buildings Record now in session at All Souls, Oxford, has been for many years Architect and Surveyor to Chelsea Old Church.

Mr. Godfrey was the author of the four Volumes on Chelsea in the great SURVEY OF LONDON series, including the excellent monograph on the Old Church which forms Part III of the Chelsea set.

He knows every inch of the Church, inside and out, and indeed, were he not already in occupation, he would unquestionably have been chosen to superintend any rebuilding.

His experience is long and wide; "fake" in any form is abhorrent to his whole outlook; and if rebuilding should ultimately be sanctioned, those who hope for it may rest assured that under his guidance, it will be carried out faithfully, honestly and reverently. It is entirely due to his efforts that with the assistance and approval of the Diocesan authorities, Sir Thomas More's Chapel has already been repaired and protected as far as possible from future peril.

The Council, whilst realising that a representative General Meeting of the Society would not be feasible this year, invites and will welcome the opinions of its members on the matters raised in this Report.

Letters should be addressed to their Secretary, at 60, Glebe Place, Chelsea, S.W.3.

WAR-TIME CHELSEA.

Lady Clare Hartnell's untiring energies during Chelsea's first two war years have been warmly appreciated, and her notes on her stewardship will be read with interest:—

"As Mayor of Chelsea during the two first years of the war, I have been asked for a brief account of this very eventful period of our history.

It has been a time of great loss, but perhaps also of some gain. The loss of our Old Church is a blow struck at the very heart of Chelsea, and the destruction

of the Infirmary of the Royal Hospital and of the beloved old houses in Cheyne Walk have removed many other historic treasures. Valuable lives were lost through enemy action, and countless homes ruined in all parts of the Borough.

Heavy as have been our losses there is also a credit side. Although at one time nearly two-thirds of our citizens had left London and gone to live in safer areas, those who remained, joined by many volunteers, rallied to the Civil Defence Services and carried out their duties with such devotion that even in the hours of greatest crisis Chelsea was never short of enthusiastic workers and helpers.

During the autumn and winter of 1940-41, we had indeed reason to be proud of and grateful to our Civil Defence personnel. All were severely tested and responded grandly. Wardens, police, stretcher bearers, rescue and demolition men, Red Cross, and Canteen workers—all were worthy of equal praise. Their coolness and courage were recognised by the bestowal of 19 medals and commendations; a sadder proof of devotion to duty is that nine of them 'laid down their lives for their friends.'

Perhaps during these testing days Chelsea became more of a family than ever before—a family whose life has centered in the Town Hall to a very remarkable degree. People who had previously regarded it as merely a disagreeable spot where they paid rates or came to make some complaint, have come to look upon it as the place where they are sure of help, service, and advice whenever they are in difficulty or trouble. Hundreds of families whose homes were destroyed have been comfortably re-housed. Through grants from the Lord Mayor's Fund and local generosity thousands have been re-clothed and given assistance in many ways and Members of the Council and its staff have come to be regarded as the very real friends of our citizens.

The Air Training Corps, numbers over 150 lads, and a Girls' Training Corps has now been formed—a pioneer effort which is being widely followed in other Boroughs; whilst the Sea Cadets go from strength to strength.

Several new boys' and girls' clubs have been started in Chelsea, since it is recognised that young people, between school and service ages, whose home life has

been so sadly interfered with by war conditions, most urgently need the occupation and the discipline of such social activities.

I paid our evacuated children many visits at places as far apart as Clacton and Exmouth. It was a great delight to see them looking so well and apparently happy in safer and healthier surroundings. I cannot speak too highly of the kindness with which they were treated in the reception areas, nor of the care and devotion of the masters and mistresses who accompanied them. It must be a matter of deep regret to all of us that in so many cases parents have insisted on their children returning to London.

In the Council Chamber we regret the passing of old friends and the absence of many of the younger Councillors on active or national service, but we welcome new colleagues who have already proved their worth. Sad and anxious days have brought us closer together, and it may well be that the spirit of comradeship engendered in these times of trial will remain a factor in the life of Chelsea when peace is restored and the difficult period of reconstruction has to be faced."

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL.

General Sir Harry Knox, Governor of the Royal Hospital, has been good enough to contribute the following notes on the year's doings and happenings there:—

"The flag still flies in the Figure Court of the Royal Hospital and, in spite of Dictators and enemy action, the Chelsea Pensioners still smoke their pipes in the Colonnade. It is interesting to remember that the Royal Hospital was officially opened for the reception of In-Pensioners on the 28th March, 1692, so that for two hundred and fifty years Wren's glorious buildings have continued without a break to be used for the purpose for which they were erected.

In the Chelsea Society's Report for 1940/41 I was able to say that, in spite of enemy action and of damage to our buildings, we had suffered no loss of life or limb. Before that Report appeared in print we had, however, on the night of the 16th/17th April, suffered grievous damage. At 11.15 p.m. a land mine was seen descending

on the East Wing of the Infirmary. Its explosion destroyed the East Wing, killing all in it. We lost three Sisters, one Nurse, a Wardmaster, and eight In-Pensioners killed, one of them being H. Rattray, a dear old gentleman who was within a very few days of completing his 101st year. Three In-Pensioners also died of wounds. The damage to the rest of the Infirmary and to all the neighbouring buildings was very considerable, but we count ourselves fortunate, considering the violence of the explosion, that we escaped heavier casualties in the other crowded Wards of the Infirmary, and in a large shelter close by in which many of the ladies resident in the Royal Hospital were sheltering, who escaped without injury.

The rescue work was carried out by the able-bodied people in the Royal Hospital, assisted by willing helpers from the Chelsea Defence Services and a Detachment of Grenadier Guards from Chelsea Barracks. The patients were carried over piles of debris, placed in ambulances and moved to various hospitals in London and the neighbourhood, all the work being carried out under intense enemy attack, numerous bombs falling in the neighbourhood. There were many acts of gallantry, and great devotion was displayed by the rescue parties. The rescuers were assisted in their work by the brave behaviour of the old patients, who were all sick men, and many of whom had been buried in their beds under the debris of falling ceilings, beams, etc. None was braver than Sister May, who was in charge of the Infirmary when the bomb fell. In spite of severe injuries she displayed great gallantry, refusing all assistance until her patients had been attended to.

A Memorial Service was held in the Chapel on the 24th April, and a Requiem Mass at St. Mary's, Cadogan Street, on the following day.

The Infirmary is now established at Ascott House, Wing, the home of Mr. Anthony de Rothschild, in most beautiful surroundings in charge of the Deputy Physician and Surgeon and the Matron, and our sick old In-Pensioners enjoy even greater comforts than were their lot in the old Infirmary.

At Chelsea we have continued our various war activities. The In-Pensioners in their gardens grew a succession of excellent vegetables, being encouraged in their efforts by prizes given by Mr. Courtney Page.

Secretary of the National Rose Society. Vegetables have also been grown in the Ranelagh Gardens, these activities being supervised by Mr. Beezley, our Grounds Superintendent. Trenching the lower levels of the South Terrace was continued during the autumn, many of the In-Pensioners taking part.

The In-Pensioners have assisted in Chelsea and its neighbourhood in connection with Service Flag Days and War Weapons Weeks, and it has been gratifying to see how much their assistance has been appreciated.

We still have our Detachment at Rudhall, Ross-on-Wye, and, owing to the kindness of Lady Roberts and the Committee of Princess Christian's Home, Knaphill, we have had for many months some eight old men enjoying a change in the country. Similarly Mrs. Foot, White Hill, Berkhamsted, has most kindly and generously taken four of our In-Pensioners as residents in her delightful house.

We were not this year able to send In-Pensioners to Netley, but, in substitution for it, a great many were given a change by visiting their Regimental Depots.

Our Annual Inspection was carried out on Oak Apple Day by Field-Marshal Lord Milne, and the Band of the Coldstream Guards was in attendance. The Inspecting Officer remarked on the fitness of the In-Pensioners, and informed them that he considered them the best advertisement he had yet seen for Lord Woolton. It is satisfactory to know that food restrictions have not fallen too heavily on the In-Pensioners.

The State Rooms in the Governor's House are still used by the Chelsea Borough War Comforts and by Lady Knox's Red Cross Working Party. Many gallant ladies have continued their unremitting labours for the benefit of the three Fighting Services, the Merchant Navy and the Civil Defence Services.

Viewed from a distance the Royal Hospital does not appear greatly changed. On closer inspection, however, its honourable war scars are sadly evident. The Infirmary is gone; there is little glass left anywhere; the windows are boarded up, with small panes of glass or talc to admit light; the beautiful Painting over the Altar in the Chapel is sadly cracked and damaged; there is an ugly gap at the north end of the East Wing of the Long Wards, but the grand old buildings are in the

main sound, and, in spite of their great age, have stood up magnificently to the shock of enemy attack, and I can proudly state that the In-Pensioners who live in the buildings have proved themselves worthy inhabitants."

THE CHELSEA BOYS' CLUB.

This Society has always regarded the Chelsea Boys' Club at Lacland Place as one of the leading amenities of Chelsea, bridging, as it does, the critical years between school and employment or enlistment. Members will be glad to read the following encouraging notes from the Club's treasurer, Mr. A. Napier:—

"I have gladly accepted an invitation to give the Chelsea Society some news about this club for working boys which the Society has nobly supported for several years.

The club has been converted into a dormitory shelter, so that when the sirens go, the members will be able to carry on their activities, and, if need be, sleep in the bunks which are now provided for them. Thanks to the dollars of the Philadelphia Garden Club and the skill of the Borough Engineer, the premises can still be put to nearly all their former uses and, strange to say, the process of conversion has rendered the main club room positively beautiful, with its rafted ceiling, shaded lights, colonnades, and walls of emerald green and sunshine yellow.

The attractions of the club have grown in other ways as well. The heating is now efficient. The canteen is one of the best in London, and makes a handsome profit. Solid meals are superbly cooked by three devoted experts, including Mrs. Gilbert, a club parent, to whose gracious presence the homely spirit of the place is largely due.

We are thinking of taking a neighbouring house as an annexe, if terms can be arranged, but this is still a castle in the air. The club is full to the limit of its present capacity. There are about 100 members, of whom 60 are under 16. The high proportion of 'juniors' is due to the deliberate policy of Mr. Bird, the Warden. In his experience, it is the boys who join at 14 that

show most character at 18. Five such 'old' boys, while awaiting their call-up, have been acting as deputy leaders with great success. On one of the very few occasions when Mr. Bird was not there, I went round to ask how things were going. "Splendidly," said Mrs. Gilbert, "the boys have been perfectly charming."

The juniors occupy themselves on traditional lines—football, physical training, boxing, music and handicraft. A few juniors and most of the seniors are occupied with pre-service training. Twenty are Sea Cadets; seventeen are in the Air Training Corps; and a growing number are joining the London Irish Rifle Cadet Corps, of which the Headquarters are in the Duke of York's School. A unit of thirty cadets will be formed in the club itself, and will attend instructional classes on the premises if only that neighbouring house can be secured.

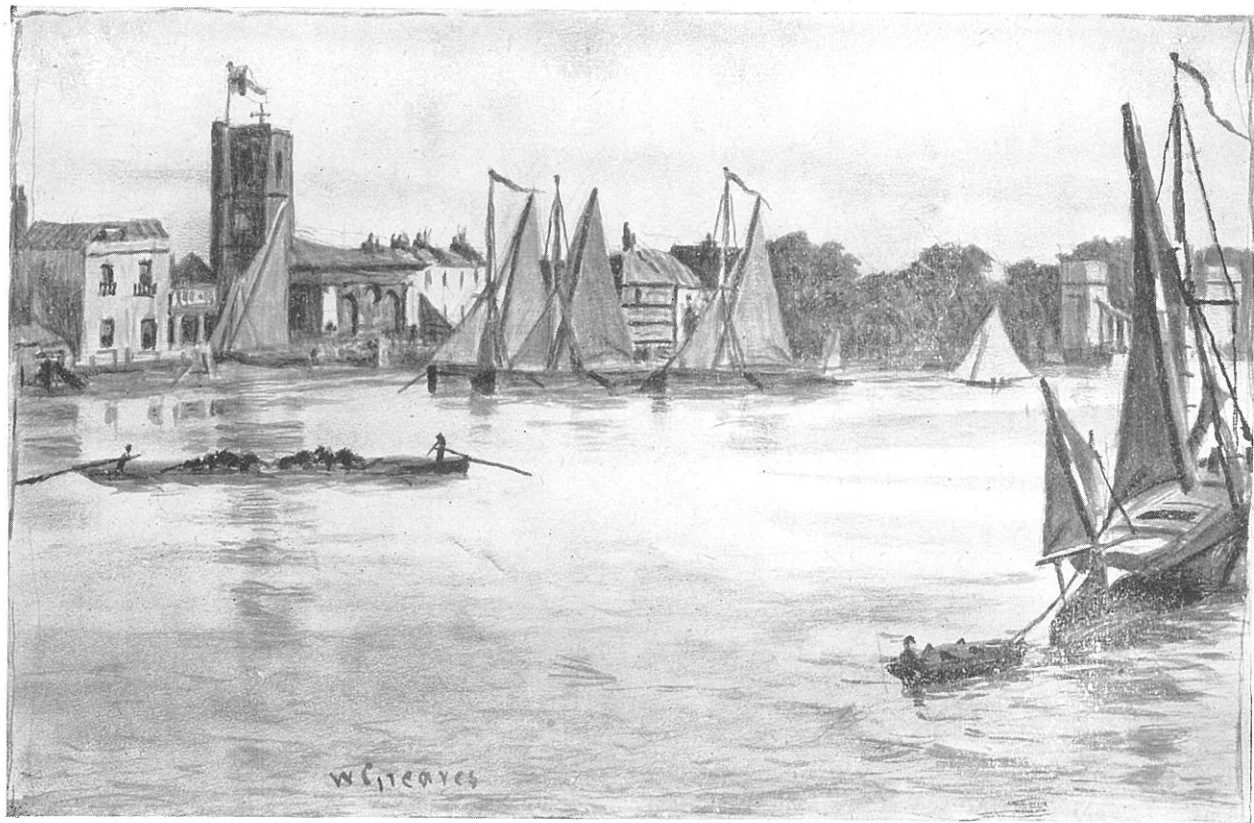
The cadets enjoy the club life after training hours are over and on their evenings-off. The library with its easy chairs is much in demand, and there are always candidates for the billiard-room, the dart-board, the tennis-tables, and the canteen.

There have been many visitors to the club. It seems that youth organisers from all over England, when they want to see a good example of a small boys' club in operation, are advised by the National Association to go to Chelsea."

CHELSEA POLYTECHNIC

To some lovers of Chelsea during these past two most difficult years of its history, the little Borough, bruised and battered, its art life numbed, its smaller traders crippled, its homes deserted, has sometimes seemed to be living a half stunned existence. For these, a visit to the great institution in Manresa Road might prove a timely tonic.

Under the alert guidance of its Principal, Dr. Harlow, Chelsea Polytechnic, while still carrying on many of its established courses, has reshaped its curriculum with admirable elasticity to the demands of the War Ministries and the changed requirements of other authorities. Laboratories



BARGES OFF ALLDIN'S WHARF
from a drawing by Walter Greaves

have been refitted for special purposes, engineering plant, gathered from bombed schools and other institutions, has been installed for training munition workers.

Accommodation has been provided for Civil Defence, laboratories for testing war materials, and a studio for training refugee Czecho-Slovakian students in Applied Art.

Students and workers alike are fed on the premises, and the opportunity thus afforded has been utilised for training not a few women in canteen work to enable them to play a part in the ever expanding problem of large scale feeding.

A Polytechnic Home Guard Unit has been formed, facilities have been provided both for the Chelsea Squadron of the A.T.C., and for the Chelsea Girls' Training Corps, formed to provide pre-entry training for girls desirous of enrolling later in the respective women's services.

To each succeeding call, in spite of a depleted Staff, a helpful response has been achieved. The Chelsea Polytechnic is very much alive, and the quiet hum of industry is audible throughout the hive. Adapt-ability, whether as one word or two is a good war slogan.

RAILINGS.

The removal of railings as scrap iron has given rise to much heated controversy. The urgency of the national need has been reinforced by the opinion of many artists that civic beauty has been enhanced by their abolition. On the other hand the need for discrimination has been officially admitted, and appeals have been sympathetically considered where owners knew where and how to protest in time.

Several of the best known examples in Cheyne Walk received exemption, but the interesting panels of oriental character in the forecourt of No. 6 were only reprieved after an appeal from our Secretary made through Mr. Walter Godfrey. The railings of the forecourt of Argyll House were taken, nor was the central gateway spared. This gate, though

damaged by time, was, as *The Survey* records, "of excellent design, evidently dating from 1723, when the house was built, with side panels and a good overthrow of scroll-work, the latter bearing John Perrin's initials, interlaced backwards and forwards like other monograms of that period." Argyll House was built for Perrin (or Pierene) by the Venetian architect, Giacomo Leoni.

It will probably be admitted by the majority that the Old King's Road Burial Ground and the St. Luke's Gardens have gained much, and lost nothing by the removals which have taken place there.

COUNCIL, MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCE.

The Duke of Atholl, who died at Dunkeld on March 15th, became one of the first Vice-Presidents of the Chelsea Society in 1932, and succeeded Lord Ernle as President on the death of the latter in 1936.

His interest in the Society's work was more than nominal, and though seldom able to attend its meetings, he repeatedly expressed his desire to be of service when occasion should arise; and in the negotiations concerning Lombard Terrace his help and guidance were wisely sought and freely given.

Though first and foremost a Scotsman and a soldier, these preoccupations by no means eclipsed his interest in the borough which he had chosen for his southern home.

By the death last April, of Mary Countess of Lovelace the Society has lost one of its oldest supporters.

It was, indeed, at her house in Swan Walk that the first meeting to inaugurate the Chelsea Society was held in the Spring of 1927, and she continued, as an original member of its Council, to take a steadfast interest in its work and progress, lending Wentworth House for its gatherings on many occasions. Lady Lovelace bequeathed to the Chelsea Public Library an interesting little collection of pottery made for her

by William de Morgan, who was amongst her life-long Chelsea friends.

Yet another valued member has just been lost to us in the death of Philip Wilson Steer, O.M., who helped the Chelsea Society both by criticism of its work and by loan of his own, and from his valuable collection of Chelsea China. World famous as an artist, Steer was also a devoted Chelsean, whom neither floods nor bombs could dislodge, and it is well that the memory of him should have been so humorously perpetuated in Henry Tonks' delightful drawings of the Cheyne Walk menage.

The increasing blindness of his last few years was borne with fine resignation, nor did it, till quite recently, prevent his being as familiar a figure along the western part of Cheyne Walk, as our blind President, Lord Ernle had been, to the last, at its eastern end.

That rarest and most coveted of our civil honours, the Order of Merit, has twice been brought to Cheyne Walk. For Henry James it was a death-bed offering of homage; but to Steer, and to the delight of his friends and colleagues, it came eleven years ago, in the ripe fulness of his powers and energies.

Dr. H. C. Colles, a valued supporter of the Society, has accepted an invitation to join the Council.

The following have been enrolled as members during the year: Miss M. Hastings, Mr. A. Maxwell Hyslop and Mrs. Hyslop, Mrs. A. Ochs, Mrs. Green, Mr. Walter H. Godfrey, F.S.A.

Donations to the Society's funds were received from Miss H. Porter and Miss Ropes "In happy memory of Yvonne Green, who loved Chelsea and who died whilst striving to protect it."; Mrs. Frederick Braund, Mr. G. W. Currie; Mrs. Donovan Touche, Mrs. Sandwith, Hon. A. Napier, Mr. A. Dent, Mrs. Parkin, the London Society, Miss M. Gilliat Naylor.

Its diminished income has not permitted of any grants

being given from the Society's funds this year. The statement of accounts calls for no special comment, but the Council desires to emphasise its appreciation of the encouragement and support which occasional donations (see blue inset facing page 6) bring in these difficult times to a Society which has, for fifteen years, carried on its work without asking for any regular subscriptions from its members.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

C. H. St. J. HORNBY,
Chairman.

March 30th, 1942.

NOTES.

Members are particularly asked to advise the Secretary of any change of address, in order that Reports and Notices may not go astray.



Small Bequests to the funds of THE CHELSEA SOCIETY would be welcomed, and would help to consolidate its position.



Chelsea Old Church—An illustrated Historical Guide Book by Archdeacon Stewart, edited with various additional matter by Reginald Blunt, can be obtained from The Secretary. Post free, 1s 4d.



Copies of the Society's Annual Reports (1928-41)—except the 3rd and 4th, out of print; Post free, 1s. each.



Their illustrations have always been an integral and much appreciated feature of these Reports. Rather than forego them, a cheaper paper has been used, blocks have been loaned, and other items omitted.

CORRESPONDENCE dealt with during the year has included letters from :—

Mr. A. Dent. Piercing of the Embankment Wall to give access to steps, and consequent flood risks.

Miss Quinn, on the work of the late Mr. J. Henry Quinn for Chelsea.

Lord Fisher. "Chelsea Rate Books, 1740-50."

Mr. H. S. Guinness. Cheyne Walk Forecourt Railings.

Many members have also written about the destruction of the Old Church and other damage to Chelsea through enemy action.

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Economy of paper and of costs has dictated the omission of the List of Members, and other items.

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ending March 31st, 1942

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward, April 1st, 1941	100	14	2	By Printing Annual Report ...	17	2	0
Less due to Treasurer ...	4	2	3	Stationery and Typing ...	3	0	8
				Postage of Reports, etc. ...	3	8	1
			96 11 11	Balance at the Bank, March 31st, 1942	97	8	1
Entrance Fees—New Members			7 8 0	Less due to Treasurer ...	4	3	
Donations	12	1	6				97 3 10
Sale of Reports and Books ...	1	3	2				
Interest on £100 3½% War Loan			3 10 0				
	£120	14	7		£120	14	7

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

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

A. J. ASHMORE.

April 10th, 1942.