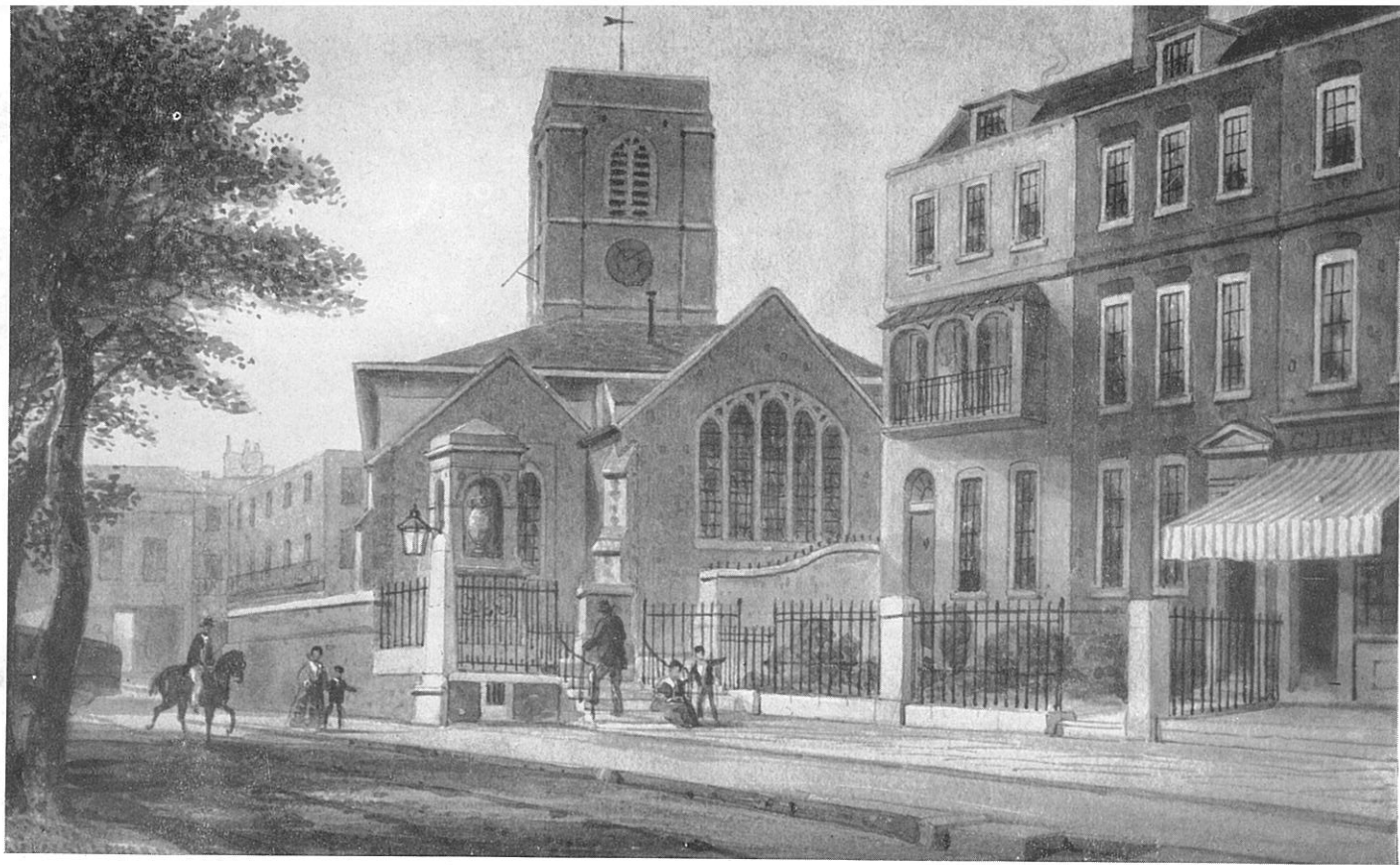


THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1952



Price Five Shillings



CHEYNE WALK BY THE OLD CHURCH, ABOUT 1830

From a water colour drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd. *Reproduced by permission of Chelsea Public Library.*
 Nos. 62 and 63 Cheyne walk are on the right. (See pages 19 and 20). In front and to the left of the Old Church
 chancel is the beautiful monument to Sir Hans Sloane by Joseph Wilton. (See page 31)

THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

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

President

MAJOR THE EARL CADOGAN, M.C.

Vice-Presidents

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Hon. Auditor

R. J. V. ASTELL, ESQ.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

- (1) To maintain all features of Chelsea having beauty or historical interest, unless a proved necessity requires their removal.
- (2) To preserve the open spaces for the health of the community.
- (3) Where clearances are necessary, to promote the construction of substituted buildings that will be a credit to Chelsea.
- (4) To prevent the disfigurements of streets and open spaces by ugly advertisements or otherwise.
- (5) To protect the residents from smoke, noises and other nuisances arising from industrial premises; and generally.
- (6) To preserve and amplify the amenities of Chelsea.

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

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

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all who agree with the objects of the Society, on payment of either

- (a) a life subscription, without an entrance fee, of £5 5s. 0d.; or
- (b) an entrance fee of 10s. and annual subscription of 10s. which, it is requested, might be paid by banker's order.

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

The subscription years runs from the 1st February.

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*The Annual General Meeting
of the Chelsea Society was held in Crosby Hall,
Cheyne Walk, Chelsea*

(by kind invitation of the Directors of Crosby Hall)

on Tuesday, 25th March, 1952, at 5.30 p.m.

In a crowded Hall Mr. Marsden-Smedley, the Chairman, opened the proceedings by welcoming all present and especially the Mayor and Mayoress of Chelsea; Lord Cadogan, the President; Lord Mottistone, the speaker at the meeting; and Miss Campbell, the Chairman of the Directors of Crosby Hall; all of whom sat with the officers of the Society on the platform.

Lord Cadogan then thanked the Directors of Crosby Hall, and Miss Campbell in particular, for the excellent tea that they had provided and for the loan of the hall for the meeting. In reply, Miss Campbell said that she was very glad to have the opportunity, on behalf of the British Federation of University Women and the Directors of Crosby Hall, of thanking the Society for the wonderful gift of the picture after Hans Holbein the Younger of Sir Thomas More and his family. It was hanging in the hall as a memorial to Mr. Reginald Blunt, the founder of the Society. It was most appropriate that it should be there in a building which had once belonged to Sir Thomas More, on land also which had been his property. They were delighted to have the picture for ever in their care.

Mr. Marsden-Smedley read out a message from H.M. Queen Mary graciously accepting a copy of the Society's Annual Report, which Her Majesty thought had been "beautifully got up."

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were then agreed and signed by the Chairman.

He called upon the Hon. Treasurer to present the accounts for 1951. Mr. Elliston pointed out that the income of the Society, totalling nearly £300 a year, came now mainly from annual subscriptions. Over £200 had been spent during the year, and £60 remained in hand. He emphasised the need for new members to increase the funds at the disposal of the Society to enable it to carry on its work. The accounts were unanimously accepted.

Lord Cadogan then presented Mr. Elliston, on his retirement from the Hon. Treasurership of the Society, with a copy of the 1810 edition of Thomas Faulkner's *History of Chelsea*. He pointed out that Mr. Elliston had been Treasurer since 1945, and wished him well in his retirement in the country. In thanking the Society for the gift, Mr. Elliston said that he had been associated with Mr. Reginald Blunt, and it had always been a labour of love to work for the Society.

Turning to the Chairman's Report for 1951, Mr. Marsden-Smedley drew attention first to the great success of the Chelsea China Exhibition at the Royal Hospital. As regards the Society's other activities in 1951, he said that the two most important had been, first, the action taken regarding the River Wall in West Chelsea, and secondly, the effort to secure the survival of the Chelsea Bun House in Sloane Square.

Regarding the Bun House, he thought that everybody agreed that it had been a wonderful addition to the scene in Sloane Square the previous summer, and he felt that it should be continued to provide similar facilities in the future. There were many difficulties in arranging for its continuance, but he considered that they could all be overcome. There need be no charge at all on public funds, and he was sure that it would always be well patronised.

As regards the River Wall, Mr. Marsden-Smedley gave a short review of what had happened in the past about it. It was not the first time that it had been proposed to continue

the Embankment beyond Battersea Bridge. The Wall was in danger of falling down but he was not convinced that repair was impossible. In spite of its comparative cheapness the expedient of repairing the Wall had hitherto been rejected by the Authorities, and it was now proposed to replace the Wall with a large Embankment across the bay. The Society were opposed to this scheme and had prepared an alternative plan, indicating how the Wall might be rebuilt a few feet riverwards so as to meet as far as possible the views of the public.

The Chairman reported with regret the deaths of the following members of the Society :—Mrs. H. C. Colles, Miss V. Collett, Mr. G. W. Currie, Mrs. Arthur Gore, Mr. Ronald Gray, Mr. B. W. Horne, Alderman Mrs. L'Estrange Malone, J.P., L.C.C., Dr. G. J. K. Martyn and Miss J. Watson. He also referred to the death of Mr. Ernest Gillick, the Sculptor, whose wife had been a member of the Society for many years.

The Chairman's Report for 1951 was then adopted.

Lord Cadogan moved that the Council of the Society be confirmed in office, with the exception of Mr. Strauss, who had retired on his appointment to the Government, and Mr. Elliston; but with the addition of Major E. D. Halton as the new Hon. Treasurer. This motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Astell for auditing the accounts and proposed his re-appointment as Hon. Auditor. This was carried unanimously.

He then called upon Lord Mottistone to give his address on "Whistler's Reach" a report of which is given on page 25. At the end of the address the Chairman congratulated Lord Mottistone on it, and called for the appreciation of all present to be signified in the usual way.

The Chairman then asked Mr. James Ellis, the architect, to explain his plans for the re-construction of the River Wall, which he had produced for the Chelsea Society. In amplification of his proposals, as illustrated in five drawings on view at the meeting, Mr. Ellis said that he had based his plans on preserving, as far as possible, the present line of the Wall and the general lay-out of the Bay. This would enable the amenities of the Bay to be preserved and developed. He had also kept fully in mind the need for financial economy.

In answer to a question regarding the Authorities concerned with the re-construction of the Wall, the Chairman showed how other Public Authorities, including the L.C.C., the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Works, and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government were also involved.

In answer to another question about the cost of re-construction, Mr. Marsden-Smedley said that it would fall largely upon Chelsea ratepayers. After some discussion Mr. Richards proposed, and Mr. Martineau seconded, a motion that the Chelsea Society

- (i) do reaffirm its view that, if the River Wall must be rebuilt, it should follow approximately its present line instead of crossing the Bay as projected by the Chelsea Borough Council;
- (ii) do adopt in principle the scheme shown in the drawings prepared by Mr. James Ellis, A.R.I.B.A., A.A.Dipl., indicating how the River Wall might be rebuilt a few feet riverwards so as to meet as far as possible the contentions put forward by the public; and
- (iii) do forward a copy of this resolution together with Mr. Ellis' drawings to the Chelsea Borough Council with a request that they be guided by it.

This motion was carried unanimously.

Replying to a question about the houseboats in the Bay, Mr. Marsden-Smedley said that as long as their present number was not increased, he saw no objection to them, especially having regard to the present shortage of housing.

In answer to an enquiry about the possible sale of the Rectory in Old Church Street, Mr. Marsden-Smedley said that he had no specific information on the point, though he had heard rumours about it. A number of plans had been put forward in the past for preserving the Rectory, and he hoped that if anyone heard of any definite plan to sell it, they would let him know.

Replying to a question about the improvement of the open space at the World's End, Mr. Marsden-Smedley said that the present development of the area by the Chelsea Borough Council would much improve the whole district.

The meeting then terminated.

Chairman's Report for 1952

THE MAYOR OF CHELSEA

Among the events of 1952, the Society have had occasion to congratulate yet another of their members, Miss M. K. Cook, on becoming Mayor of Chelsea. The Society also takes pride in the fact that, following the practice of her predecessors, the Mayor has agreed to become a Vice-President during her term of Office.

BICENTENARY OF SIR HANS SLOANE

The Society has asked the London County Council if they would consider placing a plaque on the King's Road front of the old burial ground to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Sir Hans Sloane on 11th January, 1953. The old burial ground was considered the most suitable place for this purpose as Sir Hans Sloane had given it to Chelsea in 1733 when there was no more room in the Old Church graveyard. Furthermore, the old burial ground, part of which is now a public garden, is centrally situated in Chelsea. In any case the plaque could not be placed on the Manor House where Sir Hans Sloane lived, as this building has long since been pulled down. A biographical notice by Dr. de Beer is given on page 27, an illustration of the statue by J. M. Rysbrach in the Physic Garden on page 28, and the monument to Hans Sloane by Joseph Wilton appears on the left side of the *Frontispiece* and illustrations on page 20.

BOROUGH COUNCIL CORONATION COMMITTEE

The Council of the Society authorised the Chairman to represent them on the Borough Council Coronation Committee. Among the views put forward on behalf of the Society, it was suggested that a Refreshment Kiosk be erected in Sloane Square, so that people might congregate there and take refreshments under the trees,

and that the fountain to be installed in Sloane Square in 1953 be put in position before the middle of May. It is feared, however, that these two proposals are impracticable for reasons given below.

SLOANE SQUARE FOUNTAIN

It is interesting to recall that in 1930, when Sloane Square was replanned, the Royal Fine Art Commission wrote to the Chelsea Borough Council suggesting that at some future date consideration might be given to a fountain or some suitable sculpture to be placed there in such a position as not to embarrass the War Memorial. At a subsequent meeting with the Borough Council, the Commission, represented by the late Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Sir Giles Scott and Professor Adshead, recommended among other things that "some fitting erection" should be placed in the middle of Sloane Square. In 1936 the Chelsea Society gave strong support to a proposal that the Coronation of His late Majesty King George VI should be commemorated by a fountain in Sloane Square. The Borough Council approved this suggestion but the project had to be abandoned owing to expense.

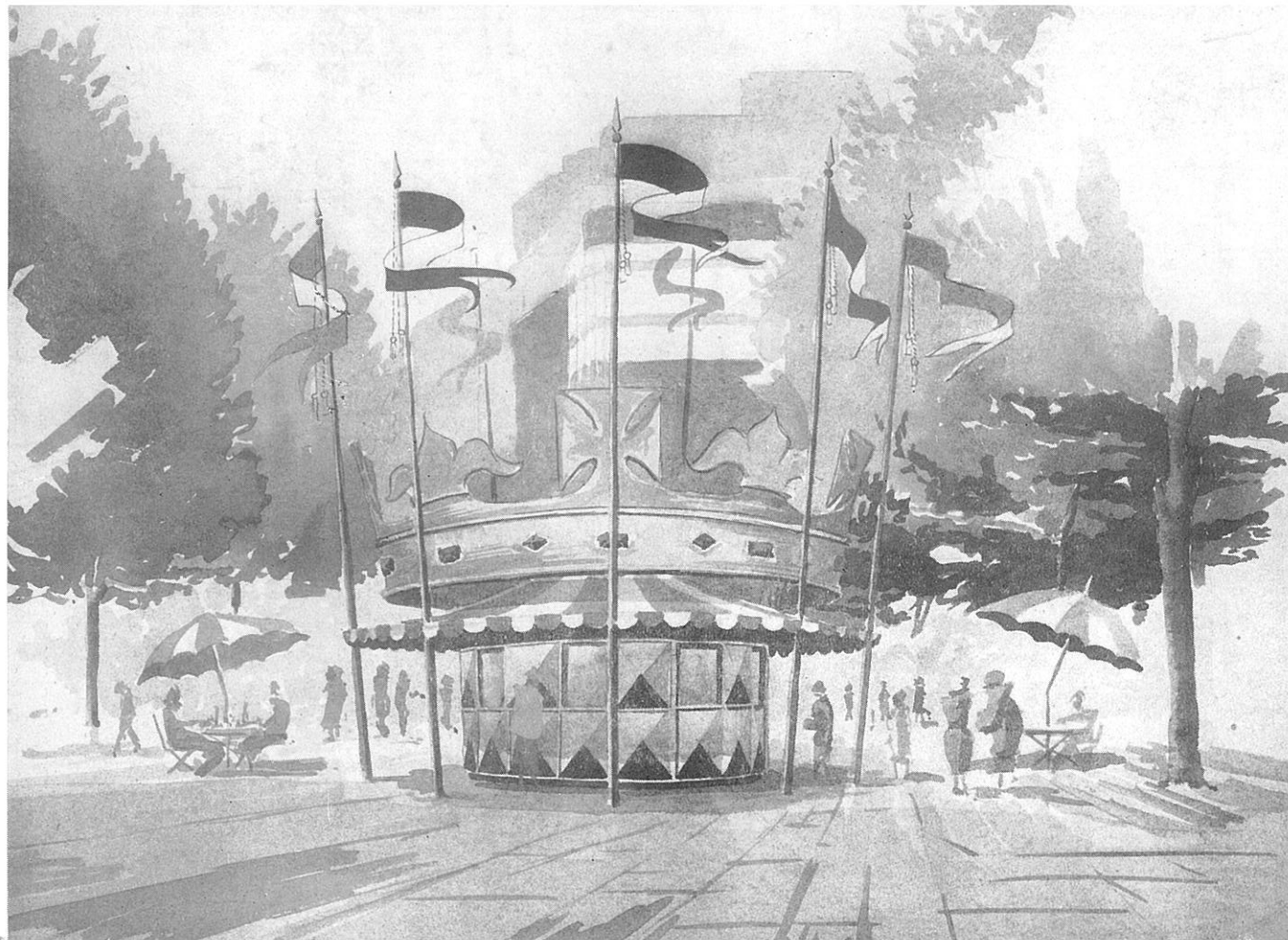
In 1948 the Chelsea Borough Council accepted the gift of a fountain offered by the Royal Academy under the terms of the Leighton Trust. A competition having been held, in which Mr. Gilbert Ledward, R.A., was adjudged successful, his design was referred to the Royal Fine Art Commission, and in 1949 was approved by the Borough Council. It was not until 1952, however, when the fountain was three parts constructed, that it was noticed that, as the centre of Sloane Square was still deemed to be a highway, Parliamentary powers would have to be obtained before the fountain could be put up. Items for inclusion in the annual L.C.C. General Powers Bill have to be submitted before the close of the previous year, unless advantage is taken in cases of urgency of the special "late procedure". No such action having been taken in 1952, the clause will be

SKETCH FOR A
REFRESHMENT
KIOSK

By James Ellis,
A.R.I.B.A., A.A.D.P.

It was proposed
to place the Kiosk
in Sloane Square
during the summer
months in
Coronation Year.

See page 15)



included in the L.C.C. Bill for 1953, which cannot be submitted for Royal Assent before July. Thus although the fountain will be ready well before that time, it cannot be put up in time for the Coronation. An article about the fountain, with an illustration, is given on pages 32 and 33.

REFRESHMENT KIOSK IN SLOANE SQUARE

During the summer of 1951 the Bun House in Sloane Square proved immensely popular. Moreover it was financially self-supporting. Consequently there can be little doubt that the refreshment kiosk, which the Chelsea Society proposed should be placed in Sloane Square during the summer of Coronation year, would have appealed equally to the public. To illustrate the Society's proposals a sketch, which is reproduced on the opposite page, was prepared by their architect, Mr. James Ellis. It may be noted that the Bun House was erected in 1951 without Parliamentary powers, had objection been made in the proper form it would have had to be immediately removed. This legal difficulty precludes any possibility of a refreshment kiosk being placed in Sloane Square without promoting legislation. It is hard to see why the Chelsea Borough Council did not include powers to erect a kiosk in the "fountain" clause of the L.C.C. General Powers Bill referred to above, when it could have been done without adding to the cost. The Chairman of the responsible Committee, however, gave an undertaking at a meeting of the Chelsea Borough Council to reconsider the question of obtaining the necessary legislation in the near future.

MARY GILLICK'S DESIGN FOR THE QUEEN'S HEAD ON THE COINAGE

Mrs. Ernest Gillick, who has long been a member of the Chelsea Society, has designed the uncrowned effigy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for coins to be struck by the Royal Mint. The output of coins bearing Mrs. Gillick's design will be over two hundred millions a year. It will be

the most widely known likeness of Her Majesty in existence. Mrs. Gillick has worked on this design at her studio in the old Moravian Chapel off the King's Road. She has brought honour to Chelsea and the Society, which all will wish to commend; and the only regret must be that Ernest Gillick did not live to share and enjoy the pleasure of his wife's success. An article and illustration appear on pages 36 and 37.

TOURNAI—CHELSEA CHINA EXHIBITION

It is proposed to hold in 1953 an exhibition of porcelain to illustrate the links between the Tournai and Chelsea china works in the 18th century. Members of the Society have been studying the points of similarity and difference. It is expected that the Exhibition will be sponsored by the Belgian Institute. Preliminary work on the Exhibition was begun early in the summer of 1952. A Committee has been set up, of which Mr. Nieuwenhuys, Counsellor of the Belgian Embassy, is Chairman, Mrs. Basil Marsden-Smedley, Honorary Secretary, and Mr. Wauters of the Belgian Congo Bank, Honorary Treasurer.. The Society is represented by the Chairman. Among other members of the Committee are Mr. William King of the British Museum, Mrs. Morgan and Mr. Goldblatt, private collectors, and Professor Emil Cammaerts. An article on Tournai Porcelain appears on page 35.

THE CHELSEA POTTERY

On 30th September, 1952, a large number of members of the Society were entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs. David Rawnsley, and Mr. George Buchanan in the new *Atelier Libre* in Radnor Walk. Everyone took great interest in the processes and products and wished success to this new venture. An article and illustration appear on pages 41 and 42.

NEW CHELSEA GROUP

Captain Richard Edwards, Deputy Mayor of Chelsea and a member of the Council of the Society, opened an exhibition at the French Institute of paintings and ceramics collected by the New Chelsea Group, to which invitations had been sent to members of the Society. The exhibits included many pictures of scenes in Chelsea. Among them were proofs of pages from a new book on Chelsea to be published in 1953, entitled *Still the Enchanted Village*, by Peter Bernard and illustrated by Leopold Pascal. The book is to be published in Paris as a sister volume to *The Inspired Village*, illustrated by Maurice Utrillo, about Montmartre. *Still the Enchanted Village* will be limited to 300 copies, and the cost to subscribers will probably be about 12 guineas a copy. The illustrations in colour are particularly fine: one is reproduced on page 24.

MUNICIPAL STUDIOS

The Society is much concerned to see that Chelsea remains a place where artists can live and work. The principle difficulty is the shortage of studios. Over a number of years the Society has urged the provision of more studios in Chelsea, and most strongly supported the promotion of legislation to enable the Borough to provide studio accommodation (see *Annual Report* 1948-49, page 16). As a result the L.C.C. General Powers Act, 1949, conferred on Chelsea, alone among London Boroughs, powers to build new studios, construct studios in existing buildings, acquire existing studios and equip them with artists' fittings.

The first studios to near completion under these powers are on the Lucan Estate in Lucan Street. They are on the top storey. They will not be residential, but cooking facilities will be provided. Six are to be built on the Cremorne Estate at World's End, and artists may also be able to rent a flat below. Nineteen other studios are planned among the flats to be built on sites in Hortensia Road,

Limerston Street and Dovehouse Street. Great credit is due to Chelsea Borough Council for the attention it has paid to the preservation of this traditional feature of the locality.

RIVER WALL

Opportunity has been taken to give effect to the Society's representations that, if the River Wall must be rebuilt, it should be done so as to preserve the little harbour and boat beach (see page 10). In the first place the Society referred the question to the Royal Fine Art Commission as a matter of public amenity and artistic importance, who intimated to the Authorities concerned that before final approval was given to any scheme involving rebuilding they would like to see the plans. Secondly, the Society, in common with the London Society, National Trust, Crosby Hall and others lodged objections with the Minister of Housing and Local Government to a late amendment to the London Development Plan. Notice has since been received from the Ministry to attend a hearing of objections. In the meantime, the Society has offered to withdraw its objection, if the Development Plan be amended to allow rebuilding no further riverwards than the line agreed to at the Annual General Meeting of the Society in 1952. The existing Wall is almost certainly capable of repair at infinitely less cost. It is indeed to be hoped that good sense will soon prevail and allow the scheme to build across the bay to be abandoned. The east end of the River Wall appears in Leopold's Pascal's painting reproduced on page 24.

OLD SWAN HOUSE

The Society was represented at a meeting of interested Associations at County Hall on 14th July, 1952, to discuss what was to be done to check the decay of Old Swan House, which has been empty since 1931. Although the building has little appeal to contemporary taste, it is an outstanding example of the work of Norman Shaw, and as such ought to be preserved. The report of the architect of

the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings on its condition is encouraging, and it is much to be hoped that a suitable occupier will be found in the near future to put the building into repair, and to maintain and preserve it.

NO. 3, CHEYNE WALK

Whilst conveying to the National Trust the Society's grateful acknowledgement for all the benefits conferred on the locality since they opened the Chelsea "show" house at No. 3, Cheyne Walk, regret was expressed on behalf of the Society at the decision to close the house and dispose of the freehold

With the opening of No. 3, Cheyne Walk, the Society undertook extensive responsibilities (see 1947 Report, page 13). With the aid of Mr. Stewart-Jones, the then Honorary Secretary, they collected and arranged suitable 18th century furniture, pictures, books and Chelsea China from a number of sources. They later contributed on loan a number of pictures and books of local or topographical interest. The "show" house has now been closed, and the collection of musical instruments bequeathed to the National Trust by the late Major Benton Fletcher have been transferred elsewhere. Four large drawings of Old Chelsea by Walter Greaves, given to the Society by Mr. George Cross and hitherto on view at No. 3, Cheyne Walk, have been accepted on permanent loan by Crosby Hall.

CHEYNE WALK HOUSES BY THE OLD CHURCH

The Society's attention has been drawn to the dilapidated condition of two houses of architectural and historic interest, namely, Nos. 62 and 63 Cheyne Walk, next to the Old Church. Now that the Old Church is rising from its bombed ruins, it seems desirable that something should be done about the neighbouring buildings. The two houses originally formed part of a row of five houses, known as Church Row or Prospect Place. They were built in the



Nos. 62 AND 63
CHEYNE WALK

Before and after the bombing in 1941. These two houses had a late 18th Century appearance, but were in fact much older.

As will be seen from the account on page 19 they had undergone many changes.



See the *Frontispiece*, which gives a view of these houses about 1830.

To the left is the corner of Chelsea Old Church graveyard with Joseph Wilton's monument to Sir Hans Sloane.



late 17th century, but since then have undergone many architectural changes. In 1755, Nicholas Sprimont of the Chelsea China factory was living in No. 63. A pagoda balcony was added in the 19th century. In 1908 extensive alterations were made to both houses on their incorporation into the Cheyne Hospital for Children, for use as the matron's house and part of the nurses' home. In particular an archway was cut through the ground floor of No. 63. In 1941, No. 63 was largely demolished by bombs, and No. 62 suffered some damage but is still partly occupied. The Hospital Management Committee would like to improve the dilapidated appearance of these houses, which are now the property of the Ministry of Health; but it appears that Treasury economy cuts prevent their doing so. The architect has advised that both houses should be pulled down, since, although No. 62 could be repaired, it would be a very expensive and uneconomical undertaking. The houses are shown in the illustration on the opposite page, and in the *Frontispiece*.

NOS. 105 AND 106 CHEYNE WALK

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government requested the Borough Council to obtain the views of the Society before they would agree to the Borough Council's proposals to rebuild the terrace in Cheyne Walk west of Milman Street in harmony with the remaining houses in the row. The Society arranged for one of its members to meet the architect, and after discussion approved the designs, subject to an interchange of views on points of detail. They have so informed the Borough Council.

BRICK VAULT NEAR THE OLD CHURCH

In February, 1952, a lorry sank through the roadway on the bombed area immediately north of the site of Petyt House. Investigation revealed a brick vault, 30 feet long, 8 feet wide and 8 feet high, running parallel with the river. The western end of the tunnel was blocked below the

pavement of Old Church Street by a wall of London stock bricks; and when this was penetrated indications were found of a narrow continuation westwards under the street. A small blocked opening was also noticed on the northern side of the tunnel. The floor, which was covered to a depth of two feet with debris, including fragments of 18th century wine bottles and clay pipes, is of brick. The bricks appear to be similar to those used in the 17th century reconstruction of the Old Church. The vault resembles those already found elsewhere in Chelsea, as recorded by Reginald Blunt in *Red Anchor Pieces* and the *Catalogue of Water Colour Drawings 1800-1820* (1929). It presumably formed part of the foundations of some building in Old Church Street.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Representations have been made on the pointing of the brickwork in the new buildings at the Duke of York's Headquarters, and on the nuisance caused by the emission of smoke and grit in West Chelsea. Enquiries about a sickly smell from a source outside Chelsea elicited the fact that it had occurred temporarily while repairs to industrial premises were in hand. The removal was secured of an unsightly sign at the western end of Cheyne Walk.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY'S BIRTHDAY

On behalf of the Society the following telegram was sent to Her Majesty Queen Mary on the occasion of Her 85th birthday :—

GREETINGS

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY,
MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, S.W. 1

The Chelsea Society would be honoured if Her Majesty Queen Mary would graciously accept their loyal and heartfelt greetings on Her Birthday.

The following reply was received from Her Majesty's Secretary :—

I am commanded by Queen Mary to thank you for the kind words of your birthday greetings on behalf of the Chelsea Society.

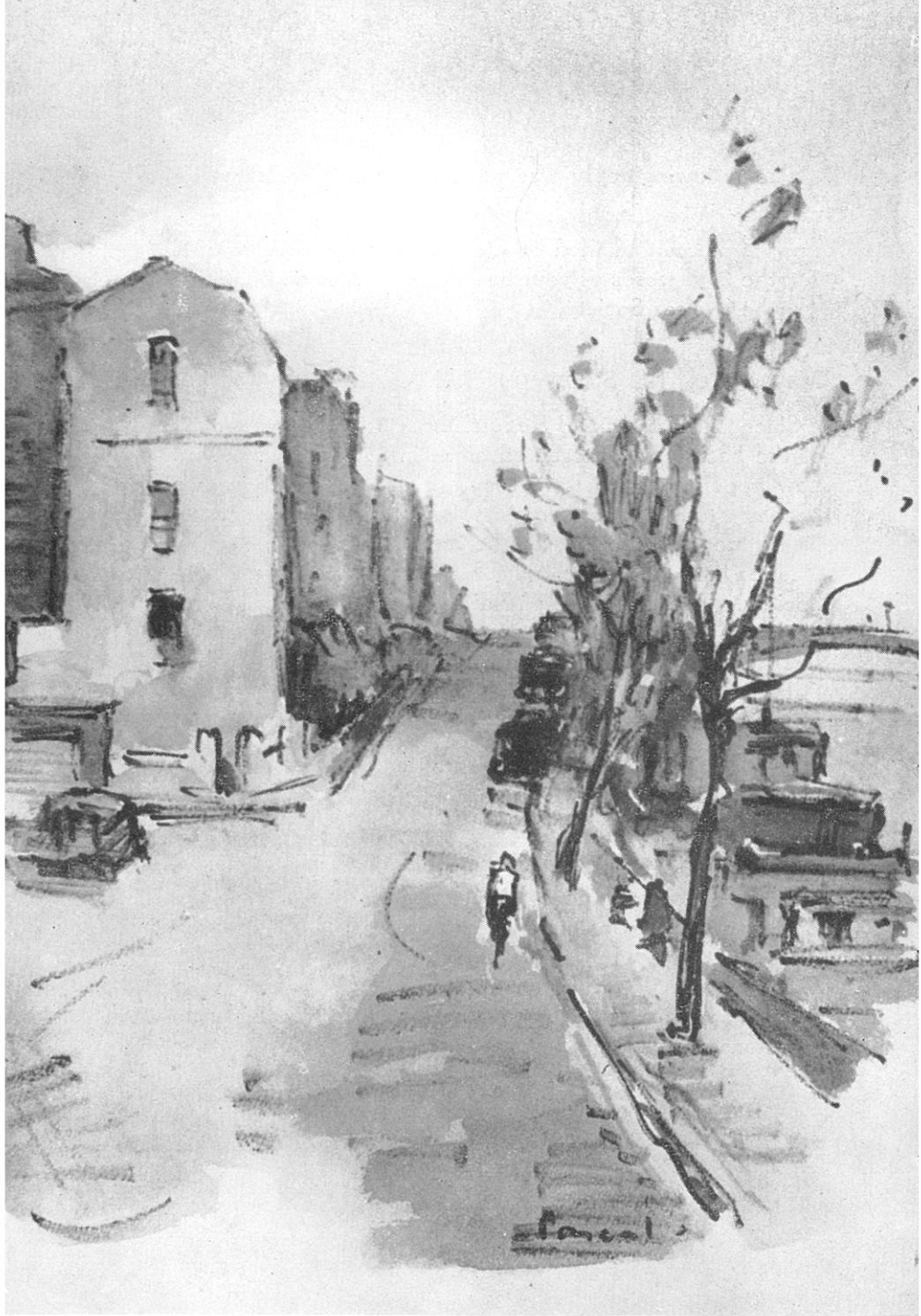
MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY IN H.M. GOVERNMENT

Since the last *Annual Report*, three of the six members of the Society who accepted office in 1951 have received new appointments. Lord Lloyd, a Lord in Waiting, has become Joint Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department. Unfortunately he has given up his house in Chelsea and has reluctantly decided to resign from the Society. The Marquess of Salisbury, formerly Lord Privy Seal, has become Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, and recently Lord President of the Council. Sir Arthur Salter, the Minister of State for Economic Affairs, is now Minister of Materials. Lord de L'Isle and Dudley, Commander Noble and Mr. H. Strauss retain their original appointments.

OBITUARY

The Society will have learnt with deep regret of the deaths of Lady Chalmers, Miss Aileen Collum, M.B.E., Dame Katharine Furse, G.B.E., Mr. C. F. Lewis, Miss M. G. V. Naish, Mrs. G. W. Powell, O.B.E., and Lady Young. A tribute to Dame Katharine Furse by Miss Hilda Buckmaster appears on page 39.

Basil Marsden-Smedley



CHEYNE WALK BY THE RIVER WALL

By Leopold Pascal

An illustration for *Still the Enchanted Village*, by Peter Bernard (See page 17)

WHISTLER'S REACH

*Address by The Lord Mottistone, F.R.I.B.A., at the
Annual General Meeting on 25th March, 1952*

Before beginning his address, Lord Mottistone mentioned that the London Society, of whose Executive Committee he is Chairman, approved of the aims of the Chelsea Society, and he hoped would always support them. As a resident of the City, from which Crosby Hall had been removed, he felt that it was appropriate that he should be speaking in that fine building, though he would not compare himself with it either in age or beauty.

The removal of the Hall to its present site was certainly not a necessity. It had been a labour of love, and supremely worth while. Recently the village cross of Meriden had been brought to London temporarily for an exhibition, and the removal of Temple Bar and the Skylon was now under discussion. These instances showed that buildings, like people, could be transported, although something was almost always lost in the process. One thing that remained immutable, however, if not totally destroyed, was the spirit of a neighbourhood. This indefinable quality may be seen lingering on in the odd corner, the crooked lane, and above all in the unexpected curve.

Lord Mottistone gave instances of the charm of London. Among them in Chelsea itself there was the gentle curve of Whistler's Reach, with its surprising and unexpected small boat harbour, a welcome change from the rather harsh Embankment to the east. Here the Greaves family kept their rowing boats, in one of which one likes to imagine Whistler setting off to paint his celebrated "Nocturne in Blue and Silver", which was so immoderately criticised by Ruskin, and so led to Whistler's dramatic libel action. Here too the great Turner lived; and he also used to embark in the little boats owned by the Greaves family. Apart from these historical associations, however, was not

this part of the river vibrant with life and the charm of variety? Here, instead of being hemmed in and canalised, the river seems to have elbow room, to be able to flow in its own sweet way in the gracious sweeping curve that nature gave it.

Lord Mottistone asked whether this attractive corner of Chelsea was to be replaced by the dull respectability of an almost straight Embankment, all for the sake of a dual carriage way and a strip of garden no better and no worse than that on the other side of Battersea Bridge. Surely the clever plans devised by Mr. Ellis showed that there was no necessity for such a drastic change, to destroy the mystery and charm beloved of Turner, Whistler and countless other artists, to sweep away the little harbour with its jumble of boats, and those who live in them or find pleasure with them, and to turn away in disappointment those thousands who come yearly to enjoy this unique scene. London has suffered a lot. She bears many a mark of sorrow and pain, but in smoothing away these scars let us make sure that she does not lose her endearing *crooked* smile.

SIR HANS SLOANE AND CHELSEA

by Dr. G. R. de Beer, F.R.S.

Sloane's connexion with Chelsea must have started soon after 1679 when he came to London from Killyleagh, County Down, where he was born, to pursue his studies of medicine, botany and chemistry. He worked in the laboratory of the Society of Apothecaries whose grounds by the riverside at Chelsea accommodated the barge of the Worshipful Society, as well as the Physic Garden which had then recently been established under the care of Mr. Watts. Sloane also made the acquaintance of the Hon. Robert Boyle, 'father of chemistry and brother to the Earl of Cork', himself for a time an inhabitant of Chelsea.

Sloane's elder brother, William, was described as "of Chelsea in the County of Middlesex", but it is not known when his connexion with Chelsea began.

After his Grand Tour in France in 1683 and 1684, Sloane returned to London and there is direct evidence of his visits to Chelsea in his letters to John Ray, the illustrious botanist. For example, on 20th December, 1684:—"Yesterday I was at Chelsea Garden to see how the plants were preserved there this cold weather. . ." Again, on 7th March 1684/5:—"I was the other day at Chelsea, and find that the artifices used by Mr. Watts had been very effectual for the preservation of the plants, in so much that this severe winter has scarcely killed any of his plants. One thing I much wonder to see that the *Cedrus Montis Libani*, the inhabitant of a very different climate, should thrive here so well, as, without pot or greenhouse, to be able to propagate itself by layers this spring." So well indeed, did these first Cedars to be seen in England thrive there, that their last survivor died in 1903, probably as a result of the change in the moisture supplied to its roots resulting from the construction of the Chelsea Embankment.



STATUE OF SIR HANS SLOANE

By John Michael Rysbrach in Chelsea Physic Garden

From a Country Life photograph

For the next 30 years, during which Sloane made his famous voyage to Jamaica, and established himself in practice, living in Bloomsbury in the house which is now No. 3 Bloomsbury Place, progressively amassing his enormous collections, first of plants and then of all objects of natural history, books, manuscripts, works of art, gems, and precious stones, there is every reason to believe that he did not forget his love for Chelsea and its garden. In 1712, he bought the Manor House of Chelsea from Lord Cheyne and used it as a country house to which he was in the habit of driving at the end of the week.

As Lord of the Manor, Sloane became the landlord of the Physic Garden, and since the Society of Apothecaries was in financial difficulties, for a yearly payment of only £5 he conveyed to the Apothecaries the garden with its green-houses, stoves and barge-house, for them to hold in perpetuity on condition that every year for 40 years, the garden should supply the Royal Society with 50 specimens of plants, all of different species, grown in it.

By this means, Sloane not only assisted the Society of Apothecaries to get over a difficulty, but performed a vital service to the study of medicine, which in those days consisted very largely in the use of herbs and simples, knowledge of which was the basis of their training, so that they should know how to distinguish "useful plants" from "those that are hurtful."

Sloane also made presents of sums of money for essential building work and repair in the garden. Out of gratitude, the Society of Apothecaries had a statue of their benefactor made by John Michael Rysbrack which in 1733 was placed in the garden, where it stands to this day.

Sloane also took up the cudgel on behalf of his neighbours by challenging the ruling of the Surveyor-General who denied the Chelsea landowners and farmers access to the King's Road which led from Whitehall to Hampton Court. Sloane's petition was successful, and from Bloody

Bridge, now Sloane Square, to the western end of the boundary of Chelsea, the inhabitants regained their right of access to the road.

Another of Sloane's benefactions was the gift to the Parish in 1733 of a piece of land, three quarters of an acre, "opposite the small houses near the Conduit in the King's Road", in order to provide an additional burial ground and a site for a workhouse. This is the piece of land between Sydney Street and Dovehouse Street, part of which has recently been converted into a garden.

In about 1739, Sloane bought Beaufort House, which was in such bad repair that he decided to pull it down, for which he has been much criticized. The gates were given to the Earl of Burlington for his villa at Chiswick, where they may still be seen.

In 1742, in his 83rd year, covered with honours, having been elevated to a baronetcy, and passed the Chair of the Royal Society and of the Royal College of Physicians, Sloane finally gave up his practice and came, together with his vast collections to spend the remaining 11 years of his life entirely in Chelsea. A quizzical description of the move and of the character of Sloane is to be found in the Journal of his caretaker, the quaker, Edmund Howard. Another, and more sympathetic description was given by Thomas Martyn, who used to see the old man in a wheelchair in the garden of the Manor House when he was on his way to school, from Church Street.

There are descriptions of visits to Sloane and his now world-famous Museum by the Swede Pehr Kalm, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Madame du Bocage. Surrounded by his friends Peter Collinson, George Edwards, and John Hawkins, Sloane continued to curate his collections, and made a will providing for the establishment of a completely new type of institution, to house his collections when, as he hoped, at his death they became the property of the nation. This was the British Museum,

which came into existence by Act of Parliament on 7th June, 1753, Sloane having died on 11th January of that year. He lies, together with his wife, under a monument by Joseph Wilton in the churchyard of Chelsea Old Church, a fitting reminder of the grace, dignity, and good taste, of a great and grand old man. (Illustrated on the *Frontispiece*).

Even after his death, Sloane and his family continued to provide landmarks in Chelsea. His elder daughter, Sarah, married George Stanley of Paultons; his younger daughter, Elizabeth, married Charles Cadogan of Oakley. Towards the end of the 18th century, Henry Holland obtained a lease of what was then part of the Cadogan Estate, and built Sloane Street, Sloane Square, and Hans Place.

In addition to these commemorations of Sloane's and his family's names in the streets of Chelsea, it is worth remembering that James Salter, nicknamed Don Saltero, who had a coffee-house and a mock museum at 18 Cheyne Walk, was said to have been Sloane's servant and to have accompanied him on his travels.

It is indeed fitting that the Arms of Sir Hans Sloane, Bart., are included in those of the Borough of Chelsea which owes so much to him, and that his memory be revived in this year 1953, two centuries after his death.

NOTE

The Clerk to the Committee of Management of Chelsea Physic Garden draws attention to the fact that "the Garden is maintained strictly for the study of botany and for providing material and opportunity for botanical investigation, and is therefore not open to the public."



MODEL FOR PART OF THE SLOANE SQUARE FOUNTAIN by Gilbert Ledward, R.A.
(See pages 12 and 22)

SLOANE SQUARE FOUNTAIN

From Notes by the Sculptor, Gilbert Ledward, Esq., R.A.

This fountain is being presented to the Borough of Chelsea by the Royal Academy of Arts through the Leighton Fund, a trust founded by two sisters of Lord Leighton for the purpose of placing pictures, statues and other works of art in or near public buildings. Among other works already erected through this fund are "The Sower", a bronze statue in Kew Gardens; the figure of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the courtyard of Burlington House; and the wrought-iron lamp standards at the west entrance to St. Paul's Cathedral.

The site chosen for this fountain is the middle of Sloane Square, where it will be visible from Upper and Lower Sloane Street, as well as from the King's Road. The limited space available here precluded anything spectacular, such as the fountains in Trafalgar Square, but nevertheless the play of water will be an essential feature. The design provides for the lighting of the fountain, if desired, by night.

The fountain will consist of a vase-shaped bronze basin, surmounted by a bronze female figure holding a shell, and set in an octagonal pool lined with blue tiles. The figure will be slightly larger than life size, and the complete fountain about eleven feet in height. Water will flow from the vase into the surrounding pool; and a mist jet from the top of the shell will send up a fine spray, thus keeping the bronze figure and basin permanently wet. Mr. Ledward believes, as Adrian Stokes has so ably expressed it, that "there are few things more satisfying than a bronze figure as it gleams under the spray from a dripping fountain."

Mr. Ledward, who was born in Chelsea, has chosen a local theme for the continuous frieze in relief that will decorate the bronze vase. It is an allegorical treatment of

the romance of Charles II and Nell Gwynne. It will be recollected that Charles II not only founded the Royal Hospital, but also laid out the King's Road, originally a private thoroughfare, across the site of what is now Sloane Square. Further westwards beyond Worlds End, this road passes conveniently near Sandford Manor House, where Nell Gwynne is believed to have stayed on occasion. It is therefore not inappropriate that this fountain should be set up on the route that Charles II and Nell Gwynne must have traversed so often.

TOURNAI PORCELAIN

When Chelsea's China Factory was about six years old in 1751, F. J. Peterinck founded works at Tournai, Belgium (then in the Austrian Netherlands), where softpaste porcelain, and later 'faïence', were to be made with a great measure of success and popularity until nearly 1880.

The links between the two factories were many. Some designs, though doubtless originating from earlier common sources, can be found in delightful variety on both Tournai and Chelsea pieces. Many of the figures and groups made at Tournai are closer to the Chelsea idea and execution than those of any other manufacture. The gilding and colour of some Tournai porcelain resembles the work of Chelsea's gold anchor period.

Chelsea's *dishevelled bird* appears as a *oiseau imaginaire* on many a Tournai plate and bowl. *Aesop's Fables* too, as a pattern or in groups, are called at Tournai by their contemporary French name—*Fables de la Fontaine*.

Some artists worked at both factories. Nicholas Sprimont, who come from Liège, was established in England before the Tournai works began; but it is believed that he had some connections with the growing China works not far from his original home. One at least of the Duvivier brothers worked at Tournai and at Chelsea (and also at Worcester). Willems is another name in Tournai and Chelsea records; while Gauron, fine sculptor, who made many moulds for Chelsea including *the Pietà*, went later to Tournai, and an identical group exists in Tournai paste presumably by the same hand. Gauron, in fact, went on to Brussels, and, in a letter asking to set up porcelain works of his own, tells the town authorities that he possesses "all German, French, and English secrets of porcelain making."

H. M-S



MARY GILLICK

Mrs. Ernest Gillick, with the plaster cast of her design for the Queen's head on the coinage, in her studio in Moravian Close (see pages 15 and 37). Two examples of Mary Gillick's previous work are to be seen in Chelsea: the medallion portraits of Sir Thomas More and Sir John Crosby over the entrance door of Crosby Hall, which were unveiled by the present Queen Mother when Duchess of York in 1925; and her "Four Women" tablet placed in Chelsea Old Church in 1934 partly at the instance of the Chelsea Society, as described and illustrated in the *Eighth Annual Report*, page 33 and *frontispiece*. A fully illustrated article on Mary Gillick's medals, etc., by Walter H. Godfrey, appeared in the *Architectural Review* of January 1921.

THE QUEEN'S EFFIGY ON THE COINAGE

by Mary Gillick

In March 1952 I was invited to join a competition for designs for the coinage. No names were known to the judges; and it was with great pleasure that I heard that I could develop my design and have a sitting from the Queen at the Palace.

From March to October I worked in my studio in Chelsea. My aim was above all to obtain a good design, with the head well placed in the circle. The lettering was to be an essential part of the design, and not just something added afterwards, anyhow, anywhere. After that I tried for as good a portrait as possible.

The chief changes from recent coin designs are that the head is not cut off at the neck, and the shoulders are shown; also that the name Elizabeth begins at the top, so that it is not upside down when looking at the head.

I began the work in wax, then took a plaster of Paris mould. In this mould the lettering is incised looking-glass wise. Next came a plaster cast from this mould. This was worked on and added to, so a second mould became necessary: more work on this mould, and then on the next cast, and so on.

The lettering on the silver and bronze coinage differs, and further differences occur with the lettering for the Commonwealth countries. Each of these changes meant two moulds and two casts. In the end I found I had sixty three moulds and casts.

All through the work I have known what my husband's advice would have been, and have tried to follow it. It has been a great experience, and to me one of absorbing interest.



"DIANA OF THE UPLANDS" By Charles W. Furse, A.R.A.

By courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery. This picture is referred to on page 39. An amusing account of Dame Katharine Furse, posing while her husband painted this picture, taken from her Memoirs, is given in the Note on page 40.

DAME KATHARINE FURSE

To some people Charles Furse's painting of his wife as "Diana of the Uplands" is as much a piece of Edwardiana as the "Stag at Bay" is Victoriana, but to those who had the honour to know Dame Katharine Furse, "Diana of the Uplands" well depicts one whose choice of way was always the lonely path and the perilous crag.

Katharine Furse first came to Chelsea at the age of 25, when the Edwin Abbeys lent Mr. and Mrs. Furse their studio in Tite Street. The Furses soon moved to a home of their own on Chobham Ridges where Katharine was happily busy with her wood-carving and with her duties as the beautiful hostess of her popular and successful artist husband. Their "honeymoon" married life lasted but 4 brief years. Charles Furse died in 1904, 3 days after the birth of their second son.

Katharine Furse came back to Chelsea in 1913 when she took a house in Beaufort Street. Her father, John Addington Symonds, had died in 1895, and now her mother, who was in failing health, had gone to live with friends in Oxford. The two boys, Peter and Paul, were at school; so Katharine Furse was free to join her great friends, Rachel and Isabel Crowdy in training with the Red Cross in the V.A.D. In September 1914 she was sent to Boulogne in charge of a Rest Centre. Her originality and drive were such that it was not long before she was recalled to become Commandant-in-Chief. In 1917 she was one of the first five women to have conferred upon them the honour of Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire.

As the man-power shortage got worse, the newest and liveliest section of the Navy, the Royal Naval Air Service, persuaded the Second Sea Lord to recruit women. To Dame Katharine Furse was entrusted the task of forming the W.R.N.S. In two short years, opposition was everywhere overcome and Wrens were to be found serving with success in a wide range of categories in nearly every shore

establishment at home and in Malta. When the war ended Dame Katharine urged the early demobilisation of the W.R.N.S. There should be no outstaying of the W.R.N.S. welcome in the Home Ports, and no service medals for those who had had honour enough in being accepted to serve with the Navy. Not even a Volunteer Reserve remained.

Duty done, she returned to her beloved Swiss mountains. Once more she could indulge her passion for climbing and sport. At Murren she became famous as the first woman to adopt the head-first position for the Cresta run. In 1940 she published her autobiography, under the title "*Hearts and Pomegranates*"—in which the *leit-motif*, (to use her own words) is "the comradeship of endeavour". It was this comradeship with Dame Rachel Crowdy that brought her back into the work for peace and international goodwill through the League of Nations Union; and later with the World Association of Girl Guides.

H. M. A. B

Note on the illustration on page 38

The following account is taken from Dame Katharine Furse's Memoirs, *Hearts and Pomegranates* (1940).

"The painting of 'Diana of the Uplands' was amusing, being a portrait of me, but as I had developed the useful habit of fainting when posing, different people stood for the pose. Diana was painted in the studio at Yockley, as Charles had the design of the wind-blown figure in his mind and knew exactly what he wished to produce. But there came a moment when he was very anxious to see the whole effect, so I dressed up and my stepmother-in-law, Gertrude, was brought in to try the bellows under the skirt, which was tied up to a support, to help the 'wind'. We hired two greyhounds for this picture, a white and a black, and when he wanted to paint a piebald, Charles made a '*combinazione*' of the two."

THE ART OF THE POTTER

'Atelier Libre' is a term well known to artists and students in Paris. Premises, efficiently equipped, and always with good lighting and space, are used by a group of people who share their advantages, can work as though in their own studios, can arrange lectures, discussions, exhibitions, mutual tuition and criticism.

The only rules are some subscription (as though to a Club), payment for materials used, and consideration and understanding for other members and their needs and interests. Many men and women now famous have begun their work thus.

David Rawnsley and his wife, and George Buchanan who has long been a member of the Chelsea Society, have founded such a centre for the art of the potter in the workshops and storehouses in Radnor Walk, used for many generations by the Buchanan family in their work as coach builders.

A sign outside announces "THE CHELSEA POTTERY". Here Mr. and Mrs. Rawnsley and Mr. Buchanan entertained the Chelsea Society to tea on Tuesday, September 30th, and showed them the various sides of their enterprise.

The Mayor of Chelsea and the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress were there and many members of the Chelsea Society with their friends. Everyone could explore the rambling sheds and lofts, admire the exhibition of pottery and pictures, and could themselves take a hand (under instruction) at 'throwing a pot' on the wheel, or painting and decorating plates and tiles, later to be baked for them to keep.

The great kilns—electric fired—stand on the ground floor near the still used wheelwright's forge (where a huge iron saucepan provided boiling water for the excellent tea served in the studio loft above). Every corner of the building and



THE CHELSEA POTTERY

A view of part of the premises in Radnor Walk (*See pages 16 and 41*)

the yard outside is used for some part of the potter's art, and even the roof when weather permits.

The Chelsea Society wish to thank Mr. and Mrs. Rawnsley and Mr. Buchanan for their delightful and original hospitality, and to wish them every success in this truly enterprising venture which should further Chelsea artistic life and knowledge.

H. M-S

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

FRIENDS OF ABINGDON Annual Report, 1952

BATH PRESERVATION SOCIETY Annual Report, 1951-52

CAMBRIDGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY Annual Report, 1952

CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CIVIC SOCIETIES Report, 1951-52, and
Information Sheets

CLAPHAM ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. Programme, 1952-53, and
Information Sheets

CITY OF DURHAM PRESERVATION SOCIETY. Annual Report,
1952

JOURNAL OF THE LONDON SOCIETY 5 Reports

PETERSFIELD SOCIETY Annual Report, 1952

GENERAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1952

INCOME	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward						
1st January, 1952 ...				81	3	8
„ Members:—						
Life Members ...	65	10	0			
Annual Subscriptions ...	164	4	0			
Donations ...	8	0	6			
Entrance Fees ...	11	0	0			
				248	14	6
„ Sales of Annual Reports				1	18	0
„ Interest on £200 of 3½% War Stock for half year ...				3	10	0
„ Interest on £500 of 3½% War Stock for half year ...				8	15	0
„ Transfer from P.O.S. Bank				237	0	6
„ Interest on deposit in P.O.S. Bank ...				6	9	0
				£587	10	8

EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Annual Reports ...				181	12	11
„ Clerical Assistance ...				28	18	8
„ Postage ...				14	12	3
„ Printing, Stationery and Books ...				22	18	3
„ Architect's Plans ...				15	18	3
„ Subscription to Council of Civic Societies ...				1	1	0
„ Photographs ...				2	14	5
„ Duplicating Machine ...				20	14	6
„ Purchase of £300 of 3½% War Stock ...				224	8	3
„ Bank Charges ...				1	9	4
„ Balance:—						
Cash in hand ...	1	13	10			
At Barclays Bank ...	48	10	9			
P.O.S. Bank (interest)	22	18	3			
				73	2	10
				£587	10	8

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer
20th January, 1953

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.
Hon. Auditor
23rd January, 1953

NOTE:—The certificates for £500 3½% War Stock in the name of The Chelsea Society are deposited with Messrs. Barclays Bank, Ltd., 348, King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.3.

REGINALD BLUNT MEMORIAL FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1952

INCOME	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward 1st, January			
1952	56	3	3
„ Interest for 1952	1	3	8
	£57	6	11

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer
20th January, 1953

EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
By Lettering for Portrait of Sir Thomas			
More	12	19	6
, Balance in P.O.S. Bank	44	7	5
	£57	6	11

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.
Hon. Auditor
23rd January, 1953

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH RESTORATION FUND ACCOUNT

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December, 1952

INCOME	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward 1st January,			
1952	117	3	7
„ Interest for 1952	2	18	6
	£120	2	1

E. HALTON,
Hon. Treasurer
20th January, 1953

EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.
By Balance in P.O.S. Bank	120	2	1
	£120	2	1

Audited and found correct.
R. J. V. ASTELL, A.C.A.
Hon. Auditor
23rd January, 1953

ANALYSIS OF POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNT

As at 31st December, 1952

	£	s.	d.
General Fund Account	185	17	9
Reginald Blunt Memorial Fund Account	44	7	5
Chelsea Old Church Restoration Fund			
Account	120	2	1
	£350	7	3

List of Members

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

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|--|---|
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