



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity 27626

Spring Bulletin 2023



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This Bulletin is printed and distributed to members twice a year, and electronic mailings are sent to members at approx. monthly intervals. If you are not receiving electronic mailings, please contact Secretary@chelseasociety.org.uk or 07803 147654. For more detail, and to keep up to date with the activities of the Society, visit our website at www.chelseasociety.org.uk

The Society now has 1,070 members. This is fantastic, but please encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Society, by visiting our website and clicking on **“Join Us.”** They do not have to be resident in Chelsea. You can also follow The Chelsea Society on Instagram, where we now have 1,042 Followers.

Fleur de Villiers CMG

The Chelsea Society announces with great regret the death on 7th February 2023 of one of its Council members, Fleur de Villiers. Fleur's funeral was at Christchurch, Chelsea on 8th March 2023

FUTURE EVENTS

The Chelsea Arts Club Tuesday 18th April 2023 at 10am

Private visit to The Chelsea Arts Club. This is a private members' club located in the former Bolton Lodge at 143 Old Church Street, with a membership of over 3,800, including artists, sculptors, architects, writers, designers, actors, musicians, photographers, and film-makers.

The Chelsea Arts Club serves as a host for many functions, from instrumental and choral performances to visual arts exhibitions, literary talks, and weekend artist lunches. For this visit tickets £10 (to include coffee), are available from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post with cheque payable to Cadogan Hall, or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online). A charge is made by Cadogan Hall for card payments.



Traffic in Chelsea Monday 24th April 2023

Chelsea, like much of London, suffers from traffic.

Residents are concerned about congestion, pollution, and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Recent fatal accidents at the junctions of the Embankment and Albert Bridge and Battersea Bridge have crystallised these concerns, as shown by the massive response to the petition to improve pedestrian safety.

TfL intend to create a cycleway and bus lanes on the Embankment. (It is a TfL road), and this could make matters worse. The Chelsea Society does not have the answers to these issues, but believes we need to debate the best options. The meeting at the Chelsea Town Hall at 6pm On Monday 24 April will address the issues and allow residents to put forward their ideas and concerns. Tickets (free of charge) are available from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post, or by phone 0207-730-4500.

Mercers Hall Monday 24th April 2023 at 2pm – 3.30pm

Chelsea Society members are invited to a private visit to the Hall of this historic livery company.

Tours of the Hall are very limited so this is a rare opportunity to see one of the great Livery Halls. The Hall has a fine collection of sixteenth century portraits and has the only chapel of any livery hall. Tickets £20 from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post with cheque payable to Cadogan Hall, or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online). A charge is made by Cadogan Hall for card payments.



FUTURE EVENTS

The College of Arms Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 6 for 6.15pm – 8.45pm



The College of Arms offers a fascinating insight into the importance of Heraldry in British history, and its continuation in the 21st century. Heraldry dates back to 1127 and from the 12th Century Heralds were attached to the households of monarchs and important landowners.

Tickets £45 pp including buffet supper and wine (max 20 places).

There are steps up to the entrance, and the W.C. is on the 3rd floor – no lift. NB approx. 1 hour is spent in the Record Room looking at the

Coats of Arms and there is nowhere to sit. Tickets are available (for members and their guests only) from the Box Office at the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person (Monday – Saturday 10am – 6pm (Sunday 12 noon – 6pm – performance days only) or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online). A charge is made by Cadogan Hall for card payments so it is better to book in person, or by post, with cheque payable to Cadogan Hall.

Spencer House Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 10am – 11.45am



A private visit to Spencer House which was commissioned in 1756 by John Spencer, who became the first Earl Spencer, and is London's finest surviving eighteenth century town house.

Royalty, artists, poets, writers and politicians all visited Spencer House. The House remains in the ultimate ownership of the Earls Spencer, the current freeholder being Charles Spencer, the 9th Earl and brother of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Tickets £40, to include tea/coffee, are available from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post with cheque payable to Cadogan Hall, or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online). A charge is made by Cadogan Hall for card payments.

PAST EVENTS

Charterhouse in London

Chelsea Society members enjoyed a tour of the buildings conducted by one of the Brothers.

There had been a Carthusian monastery there since 1371. It was dissolved in 1535 and became a Tudor nobleman's home. It became a school in 1614, which moved to Godalming in 1872, and is now a residence for elderly gentlemen (and has recently admitted some ladies).



Camilla

Angela Levin has written a compelling biography of Camilla, now Queen Consort, which reveals how she transformed her role and established herself as one of the key members of the royal family. Members of The Chelsea Society and our guests had the opportunity to listen to Angela and to meet her on Monday 27th March.

Angela Levin is a journalist who has worked for the Observer, Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday and the Daily Telegraph, and has written three previous books on the royal family. In recent years she has been in global demand as a royal expert, contributing to many documentaries about the royal family, and is regularly seen and heard on TV and radio.



PAST EVENTS



Gen. Sir Nick Carter

General Sir Nick Carter addressed nearly 100 Members and guests on “The global strategic context in an era of constant competition and conflict in the light of the war in Ukraine.”

Gen. Carter was Chief of the General Staff, (the head of the British Army) 2014-2018, and was Chief of the Defence Staff (the head of all UK armed forces) 2018 – 2021. A vote of thanks was proposed by Sir Paul Lever, a member of the Council of the Society and former UK Ambassador to Germany.

Gen. Carter was commissioned into The Royal Green Jackets in 1977, and commanded a battalion on operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. He had tours of duty in Iraq as a Brigade commander in 2003/4 and repeated tours in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2013. He commanded 55,000 NATO troops during the Afghan ‘surge’ and became Deputy Commander of the NATO mission. He led the team that reorganised the Army following the 2010 Security and Defence Review, and is now Senior Visiting Fellow at Stanford University, USA.

Putin’s Wars: Why he invaded Ukraine and why he lost

Nearly 100 Members of The Chelsea Society and our guests had the rare opportunity to meet with Dr Mark Galeotti on Monday 16th January 2023.

He is the author of many books, including “Putin’s Wars” and has studied Russia for many years. He was on the first list of British people banned by Moscow. He is a specialist in the Russian military and security services, and is an Honorary Professor at University College London and Executive Director of the UK-based consultancy Mayak Intelligence.

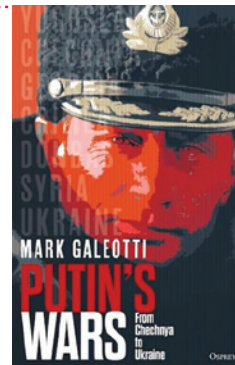


Photo Competition

Prizes have been awarded to Zakaria Ghazal and Hayley Glover for their photographs of Chelsea. This is part of Alison Jackson’s “Day in the Life” photography competition.



Zakaria Ghazal



Hayley Glover



Remembrance Sunday

The Chairman of The Chelsea Society, Dr. James Thompson, laid a wreath at the War Memorial in Sloane Square on Sunday 13th November 2022.

The two minute’s silence was broken only by the cry of seagulls – a poignant reminder of those who died at sea.

NEWS

Make Battersea Bridge Road Junction safe - TFL Consultation JAN 2023

The Council of RBKC, The Chelsea Society, Cheyne Walk Trust and Lots Road Neighbourhood Forum together with many Chelsea Residents’ Associations urged all Chelsea Associations to respond to the TFL Battersea Bridge consultation on behalf of their Association and to ask their members individually to respond in order to ensure that the Battersea Bridge/Cheyne Walk junction is made safe whilst avoiding new and additional traffic problems in Chelsea.



Albert Bridge

We are pleased that RBKC have responded to our request to repaint the four tollbooths on Albert Bridge, which were deteriorating.

The parts accessible from the footpaths were completed in January, and the remaining work will be done later in 2023.

We have already saved the cabmen’s shelter at the north end of the bridge and have persuaded Historic England to list it in Grade II.



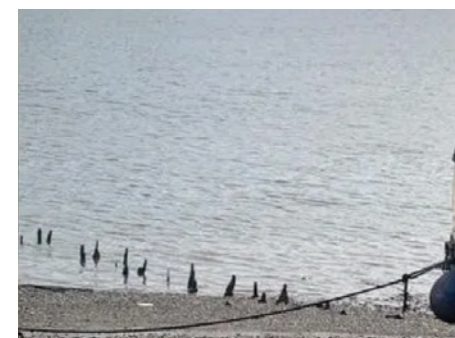
Dogs who can save your life!

We all know about the Guide Dogs, who do such a lot to help visually handicapped people, but there is more – One of our members, Philippa Gordon, told us about her little dog Poppy, and how Poppy and other dogs have been trained to save our lives.

Philippa says “Poppy is an amazing asset in my life. She is a Helpful Hound medical assistance dog and saves my life on a regular basis. Poppy is trained to alert me prior to hypo and hyperglycaemic occurrences with my Type 1 diabetes. I was diagnosed 38 years ago after I had the mumps virus which is thought to have caused it.

If you would like more information, or wish to donate to help some of the amazing work the Helpful Hounds charity does, or if you believe an assistance dog would help you or someone else, please contact Philippa on 07770-937305, or the charity direct on 01202 591602.

See www.helpfulhounds.org.uk



Saxon Fish Trap

The Chelsea Society is concerned that the Saxon fish trap near Battersea Bridge may be threatened by relocation of boats at Chelsea Reach.

It is thought to have been constructed in the reign of King Offa 757-796 AD, and it should be listed.

NEWS



Sloane Street

Sloane Street is closed northbound from 8th January to “late summer” 2023 – when closure will switch to the southbound carriageway!

This is to facilitate works by Cadogan, which they say will improve the street.

Misara

The Chairman and Vice-chairman of The Chelsea Society, and the Chairman of our Planning Committee, were delighted to attend the AGM of the Milner Street Area Residents’ Association on 24th November 2022 at St. Simon Zelotes church, and to listen to Dr. David Starkey.



Save our Buses

The Chelsea Society was pleased to hear that Transport for London have decided not to abolish routes 14, and C3; nor to re-route the 19 to go via South Kensington instead of via the King’s Road and Sloane Street; nor to limit the 49 to a service between East Acton and South Kensington.

The Society had made strong objections to these changes and had encouraged all of its 1,000+ members to send an e-mail themselves, to TfL. However, the number 11 and number 211 bus routes are still under threat, and Greg Hands PM has organized a petition to save them, which all members have been urged to sign.

Crane on the Kings Road

We noticed on 15th January 2022 a huge crane in the Kings Road erecting a tower-crane for the construction of a new building to replace the now demolished Kings Walk shopping centre.

It was dismantled on 12th November 2022, and we look forward to the completion in 2023 of the new building on that site.



PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

The Chelsea Society exists because its members have for nearly 90 years loved Chelsea for its character, its style, and its charm, and wish to maintain those characteristics for themselves and future generations.

We recognise that change is inevitable but the Society will seek to influence change so that it does not impact adversely on those characteristics. The Society will therefore encourage the design of new and altered buildings so that their size, proportions, architectural style and setting are compatible with the characteristics of Chelsea.

Where changes of use are proposed, the Society will seek to maintain the balance which has been achieved in Chelsea between residential accommodation for people of all income-groups, shops, offices, restaurants, schools, hospitals, open spaces, and other uses.

The Society values the relationship it has established over many years with the Councillors and Officers of the Royal Borough, and it will seek to maintain and enhance that relationship, and with the Mayor of London. The Society will nevertheless engage in constructive opposition to the policies and actions of the Borough Council and the Mayor whenever necessary. The Society is always willing to engage with architects, planning consultants, and their clients, and we find that if engagement takes place at an early stage, before too much money has been spent on the project, the result is more likely to be beneficial both for Chelsea and the developer.

Chelsea Boats

For many years the Council of RBKC used their planning powers to control the size and appearance of boats in Chelsea, and very many applications for planning permission for individual boats have been made and determined. We therefore requested (in relation to Chelsea Reach and Cadogan Pier), that the Council modifies the statement on page 6 of the draft River Thames Conservation Area Management Plan accordingly, and adopts the amended Plan without further delay.



The Councillors say that they recognise the fact that the houseboats moored at Chelsea Reach are part of the essential character of the Thames Conservation Area and that they do not wish this character to be eroded with the introduction of larger vessels that do not resemble a traditional houseboat. We believe that all the elected Councillors in Chelsea Riverside and Royal Hospital Wards support our objective to prevent any changes which would be inconsistent with this. When we met with the Leader of the Council on 16th November 2022 she said that it is the Council’s policy to protect the visual amenity of the riverside, and she confirmed this at the AGM of the Cheyne Walk Trust on 21st November.

However, the Councillors do not now seem to be clear as to whether they have power to exercise control. The Chelsea Society, the Cheyne Walk Trust (CWT), and local residents have therefore thought it necessary to pay for the written Opinion of Leading Counsel, which we have sent to them.

Having read RBKC’s detailed response on 20th January 2023 to the Opinion of our Leading Counsel, and having considered it carefully, we take the view that the Councillors are receiving advice from their officers which is mistaken. In our view planning permission has always been necessary for the occupation of each berth by a boat. The Council has power to exercise proper control over the size and appearance of each boat and should do so, having regard to the 1983 design guidance mentioned below.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Chelsea Boats cont...

The Councillors say that the design guidelines for houseboats will be included in the forthcoming Thames Conservation Area Management Plan, but **what is the point of having policies on the size and appearance of boats unless they are going to be enforced?** The Chelsea Society, the Cheyne Walk Trust, and local residents do not find this position acceptable, and it could be an issue at the next election.

In the part of Chelsea Reach where the Council has control as landowner of Old Ferry Wharf, they say that they have put in place measures to protect the character of the area and management of the houseboat moorings, including restricting the number of moorings and size of vessels served from Old Ferry Wharf.

They have refused to tell us what these measures are, save that no individual vessel will exceed 32 metres in length, and 3.5 metres in height measured from the main deck, and that no vessel shall have more than two floors (including the floor within the hull). We think that these dimensions are much too large, and that a boat recently positioned there may exceed even those limits.

Otherwise, the Council have simply referred us to the Key Decision and clauses 3.3 and 3.4 of the Officers' report of 29th March 2022, which are too vague to enable the Society and CWT to form a view as to whether the proposed measures would be adequate to protect the amenity of that area.

THE VISUAL AMENITY

Our reasons for challenging the Council on this issue are set out clearly in Annex 9 of the Council's own Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement of 1983 as follows:

Historical context

The Chelsea Riverside has historical connections from early times. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle records a Synod held in 785 at Celchyth where it is said King Offa of the Mercians resided, and the riverside has, of course, featured prominently in the history of the area over the years. There is a fish-trap still in existence at Chelsea Reach which is thought to have been constructed in the reign of King Offa.

9.2 Visual Importance

The houseboats are a prominent feature in a river landscape which has been considered "romantic" at least since the days of Whistler. They lie within a conservation area and are a feature in the river scene when viewed from Chelsea Embankment, from Battersea Bridge and from the river itself.

9.8 Overall Design Comments

*The houseboats are permanent features of the Chelsea scene, occupying a considerable area of one of the most prominent locations in the Borough. They are located in a Conservation Area and adjoin property included on the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historical interest. **It follows that every bit as much care must be lavished on their detailed design and appearance as would be the case with conventional buildings in this part of Chelsea.***

9.6

Although most of the houseboats are not capable of being moved, they are nevertheless floating structures on a major navigable river moored along a foreshore which has been associated with boats since at least Tudor times. Any structure which, by virtue of its shape or materials, displays no vestiges of the boat building tradition is very likely to look out of place and would probably not receive planning permission.

9.6 (1)

A boat-shaped hull is preferable to a rectangular pontoon and is likely to result in a less rectangular superstructure.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

9.6 (2)

The relationship between the height and bulk of the superstructure and the size of the hull is important. As a general guide the overall height from waterline to roof should be kept as low as possible, and should not exceed 2½ times the height from water line to the top of the hull, and the superstructure should not (a) cover more than 80% of the hull's plan area at deck level, nor (b) at any point rise sheer from the water.

In the case of pontoon construction, the height ratio would clearly need to be exceeded in order to obtain sufficient head room, but such vessels should only have one level of accommodation to keep the height as low as possible.

9.6 (3)

*A "box" shape structure is to be avoided, as it is no way associated with traditional boat construction and therefore detracts from the nautical style associated with the river. **To design a superstructure to look like a small wooden house is as discordant and ridiculous as designing a house in a conservation area to look like a boat.***

The current draft Local Plan provides at 6.25 that

"The character and appearance of a conservation area is not only provided by the high quality and appearance of individual buildings within the area but their relationship with each other and with the spaces between them. ...Therefore, development that impacts positive elements within the area or affects its setting, including through an effect on views, gaps and vistas and other character and appearance issues identified in conservation area appraisal documents, needs to be assessed to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is conserved."

Cadogan Pier

We are also concerned with Cadogan Pier, and have asked the Council to confirm that:

- (a) The planning unit at Cadogan Pier is each individual berth. (Many applications for boats in individual berths at the Pier have been made and determined).
- (b) That the use of the Pier is for leisure and working craft only, and that permission will not normally be granted for any craft which are incapable of navigating the river under their own power or sail.
- (c) That permission will not normally be granted for residential use of any boat.
- (d) That in dealing with a planning application for a boat in a particular berth, the Council will expect compliance with the guidance notes set out in paras. 9.6 and 9.7 of Appendix 9 of the 1983 River Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement.

The Council have failed to respond to this request.



PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Tite Street

As members will know, St. Wilfrid's Care Home closed some time ago, and the site will be sold and redeveloped.

This will be a hugely important development, on which The Chelsea Society will focus its attention at each stage and make its own representations to Councillors and Planning Officers. We will also meet with the buyers when we know who they are.

The existing building is very undistinguished, and we are in principle willing to accept redevelopment. We would also be willing in principle to accept the use of part of the site for private houses/flats.



However, we consider that the key points are:

- Height no greater than the existing building.
- No loss of green space and open views across the site
- No obstruction of light to the listed artists' studio windows on the West side of Tite Street.
- Use of part of the site for another care home. (We think RBKC should use it to make the provision which they have so far failed to make following the closure of Thamesbrook).
- Design of the new buildings must be compatible with the existing buildings in Tite Street, many of which are listed. We do not want an ultra-modern building in this Conservation Area.



PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Chelsea Gardens

EMBANKMENT GARDENS

The Cheyne Walk Trust in 2022 formulated a plan to improve the appeal of the gardens with sustainable improvements, including judicious replanting and an economic maintenance scheme. The Trust approached RH ward Councillor Emma Will who agreed to support Hallie Swanson of the Cheyne Walk Trust Committee as chair of a joint Chelsea Embankment Gardens Steering Group, to formulate a resident-supported plan.



The CEGSG with expert support from Sue Medway, Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, secured RBKC agreement to a significant reappraisal and improvement programme with works starting this year.

RBKC appointed garden architects Boon Brown, who shared their excellent scheme for the gardens with CWT members who attended the Trust's AGM in November 2022. The exciting scheme now being implemented is shown here.



CHELSEA GREEN

The Chelsea Society has for some years been urging RBKC to upgrade Chelsea Green. This has now been done and the result is shown below.



WHISTLER'S GARDEN

The Chelsea Society is pleased that this is now looking much better.





THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Chelsea Society now has 1,070 members, and 1,042 Followers on Instagram. Please encourage your friends to join the Society by visiting “Join Us” on the website, and to become a “Follower” on Instagram.

Our Secretary, Clare, can be contacted on secretary@chelseasociety.org.uk or 07803 147654. Please make sure she has your current e-mail address and telephone number.

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

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