



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

ANNUAL
REPORT 2024



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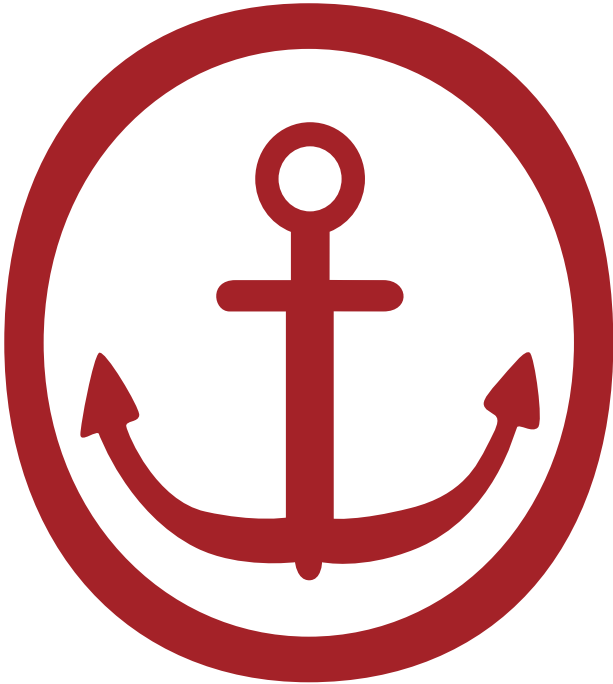
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ANNUAL REPORT 2024

EDITOR'S FOREWORD



I am conscious as the new editor of the Annual Report of The Chelsea Society, that we have been publishing an Annual Report for nearly 100 years. The first one was in 1928 when the editor was Reginald Blunt, the founder of the Society. They are an invaluable record of everything of note that has happened in Chelsea since April 1927.

In 1928 we had 111 members and today we have 1,132.

We have a complete set of the Reports, and have had them scanned so that they can appear on the Society's website for all the world to read. An index to the Reports has also been published on the website so they are much more accessible. This 2024 edition contains a digest of the Reports for the first ten years, and some notes about the very distinguished people who formed the first Council of the Society.

The centenary of the Society is in April 2027, and to mark that occasion we plan to publish a digest of all ten decades of the Reports in the form of a book.

This 2024 edition also contains a selection of the old picture-postcards collected by one of our members, showing Chelsea as it appeared long ago. With his permission we will be publishing the whole collection at the centenary of the Society.

Michael Stephen

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THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity 276264

Founded in 1927

To Protect the Interests of all who Live and Work here and
to Preserve and Enhance the Unique Character of Chelsea

www.chelseasociety.org.uk

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The Constitution of the Society is at

<https://chelseasociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Constitution-21.11.16.pdf>

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Held at 6pm on Monday 18th November 2024 at
Chelsea Old Town hall, King's Road, London SW3**

1. The Chairman, Dr. James Thompson, welcomed Members and official guests and the meeting was opened by the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Cllr. Will Lane.
2. The President, Mr. John Simpson CBE, the world-affairs editor of BBC News, addressed the meeting on the conflicts in Ukraine and in Gaza/Lebanon.
3. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 13th November 2023 were approved as published on p.6 of the Society's Annual Report for the year 2023.
4. THE COUNCIL of the Society:
 - (a) Mr. Mike Doyle had retired
 - (b) Dr. Sarah Ingham retired by rotation and did not seek re-election
 - (c) Ms. Amalia Cebreiro retired by rotation and was re-elected
 - (d) Mr. Paul Davis had been co-opted and was elected
 - (e) Mr. Richard Jaques had been co-opted and was elected
5. The Vice-chairman, Mr. Michael Stephen, reported on the Society's campaign to save the houseboats at Chelsea Reach
6. The Chairman, Dr. James Thompson, delivered his report for the year ending 18th November 2024
7. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Ben Coleman MP
8. The meeting was addressed by Cllr. Kim Taylor-Smith, Deputy-leader of the Council of RBK&C.
9. The Treasurer, Mr. Chris Lenon, presented the accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 2024, which were approved.
10. Members asked questions on the following subjects:
 - The future of the art-deco cinema on the Fulham Road
 - The proposed tower-block at the south end of Battersea Bridge
 - The collapse of the building in Durham Place in 2020
 - The provision of public w.c. facilities
 - Pigeons on Dovehouse Green
 - The increase in traffic caused by more buildings
 - Traffic noise caused by supercars and motorcycles
 - Use of the cabmen's shelter near Albert Bridge.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

On 18th November 2024



Mr. President, Member of Parliament for Chelsea, Chelsea Councillors, Representatives of other Amenity Societies and Churches, Honoured guests, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I will begin by thanking the Society's Council members for their dedicated work during the year in helping to preserve and improve the amenities of Chelsea for the public benefit.

I am delighted that Amalia Cebreiro is continuing as a member of Council and has been re-elected, and that Paul Davis and Richard Jacques have been elected.

Mike Doyle retired from the Council in May, and I thank him for his contribution to the Society.

Dr. Sarah Ingham is not standing for re-election, after a stellar stewardship of the Annual Report, which she edited from 2016 to 2023. It is a great achievement, and will be a permanent record of her contribution. She is succeeded as editor by the Vice-chairman, Michael Stephen.

Turning to planning matters, we have heard the Vice-chairman's report on our efforts to save the houseboats on Chelsea Reach.

The next major battle is to oppose a development plan for the former St Wilfrid's care home in Tite St. The 44 care beds it provided are ignored in the proposed plan and the new building is predominantly for luxury flats. Even more important, they plan to build over the garden. We are working hard to ensure provision for the elderly, the preservation of this green open space, and the vistas which are part of the setting of the listed Tite Street artist's studios - part of the artistic heritage of Chelsea.

Sir Paul Lever leads on this issue as Chairman of our Planning Committee, which also comprises David Waddell, Jules Turner and Michael Parkes. They deal with most of the planning applications, and their report for the year 2024 will be published in our Annual Report.

Traffic continues to be a great nuisance. We have joined with other amenity groups to form CAST (Chelsea Alliance for Safer Traffic) and have been discussing with Transport for London safety measures at the north end of Battersea Bridge and on the Embankment. We understand that they will begin to implement improvements shortly. We maintain our principle of equity between streets, so that they all share

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

the traffic loads as fairly as possible, while recognising that main streets have always been busier than the side-streets.

Turning to our programme of talks and other events, we have had a particularly successful programme this year, arranged by Gaye Murdoch and Michael Stephen.

In January Charles Moore gave a lecture on "The fall of Margaret Thatcher - A whodunnit!"

In February Paul Davis launched his autobiography "Mr Chelsea - A Life in Rock n' Roll and Architecture from The King's Road to Tokyo"

In early April Michael Stephen gave a lecture on "The First 10 years of the Chelsea Society" drawing on our Annual Reports for the years 1927-1937. It is envisaged that summaries of each of our ten decades will be published as a book for our Centenary in 2017.

Later in April, Lord Trenchard lectured about his grandfather, the first Viscount and Founder of the Royal Air Force.

In May we had a wine tasting with wines from Garzon winery in Uruguay.

On the 3rd June, Kira Charatan, the Archivist of the Cadogan Estate, gave a lecture about Sir Hans Sloane.

Earlier that same day we enjoyed a House of Commons tour arranged by our former MP, Greg Hands, whom we thank for his many years of service to Chelsea.

In June Guy Fairbanks gave us a guided tour of the places associated with the politicians and celebrities of Belgravia.

In early July Martin Vander Weyer, the Spectator columnist, spoke about his experiences of journalism and finance.

Later in July we held our Summer Party in the delightful garden at Auriens in Dovehouse Street.

In early September Prof. Matthias Strohn a Colonel in the German Army, and a lecturer at Sandhurst, spoke to us about "Germany's role in the defence of Europe"

In late September members attended the London Sketch Club for the launch of their 150th anniversary book.

On 30th September the Vice-chairman represented the Society at the Installation of the new Rector of Holy Trinity Sloane Street, and 16th October I represented the Society at the unveiling on Dovehouse Green of the sculpture of the head of Oscar Wilde by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi.

On 21st October Sir Nicholas Lyons spoke to us about the history and privileges of the City of London, and his experiences as Lord Mayor.

On 4th November Robert Hardman spoke about his book on King Charles III and signed copies.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A week ago, on Remembrance Sunday, I laid a wreath on behalf of the Society at the War Memorial in Sloane Square, and many of us attended the service at Holy Trinity church afterwards.

Still to come!

On 20 Nov we will have a private tour of St Luke's Church on Sydney Street, which is sometimes known as the Cathedral of Chelsea, and whose first Rector was the brother of the 1st Duke of Wellington.

On 9 Dec William Boyd will speak about his life as an author.

On 17th December we will hold our Christmas Party at Auriens in Dovehouse Street. The wine and canapés will be delicious, and as numbers are limited I would advise early booking.

In January we will welcome Viscount Slim, to talk to us about his grandfather, the Field Marshal who defeated the Japanese in Burma, and in February we will interview Tamsin Perrett, who has written a definitive history of the Cadogan family.

These and more events are always shown on our website, which is becoming an increasingly useful resource. In addition to news and events you can also find an indexed set of our Annual Reports, and an application form for membership of the Society.

Our well-attended talks make a positive contribution to our reserves, as well as being a very effective way to introduce new members to the Society.

As you will hear from the Treasurer, we are in a good financial position, but please remember the Society in your Wills, and remember to sign a gift-aid form so that the Society can benefit 25% more from your subscription at no cost to yourself.

In addition to the activities I have mentioned, we are working to establish a prize for high quality architecture, which respects the unique character of Chelsea. We echo Frank Lloyd Wright's observation that: "All fine architectural values are human values, else not valuable".

We are also working on other prizes, particularly those which could introduce younger members to the Society.

We now have more than a thousand members (1,115 to be precise). Please invite friends to our events, and encourage them to join us, because the stronger we are the better we will be able to protect the essential character of Chelsea. If your neighbours need help about a planning matter, get them to join the Society and our Planning Committee will help. We have some recruitment leaflets here today, so please take some with you to give to friends or family members. They don't have to live in Chelsea. You may also like to wear the Chelsea Society lapel badge, which you can purchase at the back of the hall.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Despite inflation, our subscriptions remain £30 for individuals, and £40 for couples. As far as I can judge, that is roughly the cost of a round of drinks and a sandwich.

I am grateful to the Vice-Chairman for producing monthly newsletters by e-mail, and the half-yearly Bulletins. The next one will be posted out with the Annual Report early in the New Year. Also for managing the website and our presence on Instagram, where we now have 1,115 "Followers." Do become a Follower if you are not already

Volunteers are always welcome to help the Society in any of our activities, giving as much or as little time as you like.

There is always a risk that we will take Chelsea's rich heritage and its thriving cultural activities for granted, but we must continue to strive to respect the past and to ensure that anything we build, in stone or in community spirit, is of good quality, and able to stand the test of time. Above all, we must maintain a good pace of life and enjoy where we live.

Let me conclude by quoting from Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who said that

"Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space".

and Winston Churchill, who said:

"We shape our buildings; and thereafter they shape us".

Chelsea is unique, and we aim to keep it so. The Society will continue to preserve and improve Chelsea, to be enjoyed by all who live, work and play here. May it delight them all.

Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to present this account of our activities in this the 97th year of our Society.

Dr James Thompson

HOUSEBOATS AT CHELSEA REACH

REPORT to the Annual General Meeting by the Vice-chairman, Michael Stephen



For the past five years we have been fighting to protect the houseboats on Chelsea Reach, which we regard as an important part of Chelsea's character and heritage, and as a key feature of the River Thames Conservation Area. We were joined in this endeavour by the Cheyne Walk Trust, The Lots Road Neighbourhood Forum, the Residents of the Houseboats, the local MPs of both political parties, and many other local people.

Our reasons are set out in the Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement published by RBKC in 1983 as follows: *"The Chelsea Riverside has historical connections from early times, and the riverside has featured prominently in the history of the area over the centuries."*



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

"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."

HOUSEBOATS AT CHELSEA REACH

A "box" shape structure is to be avoided - 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."

In 1978 Planning Permission was granted for the piles and pontoons constituting the moorings, not the boats themselves, and it contains no provisions relating to the boats. There is however an Informative to the 1978 permission *"Your attention is drawn to design policy notes issued by the Council in 1976 regarding alterations to individual houseboats."*

This Informative was referring to the established planning regime at Chelsea Reach, pursuant to which very many planning applications had been made over the years, and determined for individual boats. The existence of this planning regime was confirmed by section 9.5 of the Council's 1983 Statement relating to Chelsea Reach as follows: *"Any new boat or superstructure requires detailed planning permission from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Applications must make the location of the mooring clear, and must be accompanied by scale drawings showing what the new boat will look like."*

This policy had succeeded in preserving the rather quaint, somewhat raffish, and quintessentially Chelsea, character of Chelsea Reach, for very many years.

However, in 2017 or thereabouts, the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company was bought by a property-developer and the Council's officers stopped requiring an application for planning permission for replacement boats. We eventually discovered that the elected Councillors were being told by their officers that they had no legal power to control the size and appearance of the boats, as they were not buildings.

We took the view that the Councillors were not being correctly advised, so the Leader of the Council convened a meeting with a KC instructed by the Council and a KC instructed by The Chelsea Society and other local people. At this meeting in August 2023 the lawyers agreed that the Councillors did have power, and that they could decide, in exercise of their judgment, whether to grant or refuse permission for a replacement boat.

By this time the Chelsea Yacht and Boat company had moved traditional boats and replaced them with three very large box-like floating structures, each containing two flats, and they did this without any application for planning permission. Their position was that provided the vessels were houseboats it did not matter how big they were, or how unsuitable their design. They maintained that these structures were not significantly different to the boats already there, but you have only to go to Chelsea Reach to see that they are enormous, and quite unsuitable to be located there.

At the AGM of the Chelsea Society on 13th November 2023, it was unanimously resolved that:

HOUSEBOATS AT CHELSEA REACH

“The Chelsea Society, being concerned that planning powers were not being exercised to protect the amenity of Chelsea’s Riverside;

1. congratulates the Leader of the Council of RBKC for calling a meeting at which King’s Counsel were able to clarify that the Council has power to prevent intensification at Chelsea Reach and Cadogan Pier.
2. calls upon the Council to take enforcement action without further delay to prevent the replacement of small traditional boats with large box-like structures.”

The Leader of the Council and the Lead-member for planning, having now been properly advised on the law, referred the matter to the elected Councillors on the Planning Applications Committee, and we are very grateful to them for that. We are also grateful to Andrew Prynne, who lives on one of the houseboats and with whom I have worked closely on all the legal issues. Also to David Waddell, who has helped us to establish all the facts.

On 19th December 2023, the Committee unanimously decided that mooring each of the 3 new boats without planning permission was in breach of planning control. However, the Council’s officers then argued that even if there had been a breach of planning control the presence of the boats was not sufficiently harmful to justify taking enforcement action. This issue was brought back to Committee, and the Committee decided, again unanimously, on 27th February, that there was sufficient harm and that an enforcement notice must be served.

CYCB then removed one of the boats, enabling the Council officers to argue that whilst three boats might be sufficiently harmful, two were not. The matter was brought back to Committee for a third time, who again unanimously rejected their officers’ advice and insisted that an Enforcement Notice be served. This was done on 8th May, but still the officers allowed eight months to comply.

It is extraordinary how determined the Council’s officers have been to avoid taking any action against CYBC, and had the elected Councillors not listened to us, nothing would have been done.

CYBC then appealed to the Secretary of State, and the appeal was heard by an Inspector on 8th October.

It turns out that it had been quite clever for the developer to remove one of the boats, because the Inspector at the Appeal could consider only two boats, not the three that were actually there when she made her site visit.

One of the Directors of CYBC, Mr. Andrew Moffatt, submitted a Memorandum to the Inspector which said *“The decision by councillors to act in contradiction to their senior officers advice and in contradiction to their own lawyers’ advice was clearly driven by political pressure and threats to councillors (by boatowners seeking a commercial advantage) and residents associations who have been supplied with false allegations by those boatowners.”*

HOUSEBOATS AT CHELSEA REACH

In fact the councillors were not acting in contradiction to their own lawyers' advice after their leading counsel had clarified the legal position at the meeting in August 2023. Moreover, the Chelsea Society and other representative organisations were not making threats to local councillors and we were not acting on the basis of allegations whether false or otherwise. We were using the evidence of our own eyes, and were acting to protect the essential character of Chelsea Reach. We were exercising our democratic right to communicate our views to our elected councillors.

We were all very disappointed to hear on 1st November 2024 that the appeal had been allowed.

The Planning Inspector accepted that the Council did have planning powers over the boats even though they were not buildings, and that the question whether the introduction of the mega-boats constitutes a change in the fundamental character of Chelsea Reach is a matter of opinion for the decision-maker. However, she has seen fit to substitute her own opinion for the unanimous opinion of fifteen elected Councillors of both political parties, and for that of the Chelsea Society and The Cheyne Walk Trust, The Lots Road Neighbourhood Forum, the residents of the houseboats, and very many other local people who submitted written objections.

It seems to us that there must be something wrong with the system if the government can send someone to Chelsea who may never have lived here at any time, with power to substitute her own opinions for the opinions so strongly held by the local people and their elected representatives. We are considering whether there is any legal remedy. Nevertheless, the decision was made by the Inspector as a matter of fact and degree, on the basis of two boats only, even though the developer had already brought a third boat to Chelsea Reach. If as feared he will bring more of these floating structures to Chelsea, the matter will have to be revisited again at a later date.

After the Appeal decision, the Society received a request from Mr. Moffatt for a meeting with him, and the Council of the Society will of course consider his request.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT



Christopher Lenon

The Treasurer presented to the AGM the Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June 2024, which were approved.

The Accounts and the Trustees' Report are available on the Society's website at <https://chelseasociety.org.uk/about-us/trustees-reports-and-accounts/>

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee monitors developments in planning policy at both the national and local level and makes representations about these when warranted. It also seeks to influence the nature of major developments in Chelsea, comments on individual planning applications when they involve issues of wider importance for the area and responds, where possible, to requests from members for planning advice.

In 2024 the Committee comprised:

Sir Paul Lever
(Chairman)



Marina Murray



Michael Parkes



David Waddell



Jules Turner



PLANNING POLICY

The new Local Plan has now been formally adopted. We were glad to see that the attempt by RBKC planning officers to dilute the Inspector's recommendations in relation to Lots Road were frustrated. But the most significant development during the year was of course the advent of a new government with a declared policy of encouraging infrastructure development and re-introducing housing targets.

Such targets, whatever their merits nationally, pose particular problems for Chelsea, which is already one of the most densely populated parts of London and where any available land is rapidly acquired by commercial developers. The

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

previous government's policy of prioritising local voices in planning decision-making was honoured as much in the breach as in the observance, as we discovered in the cases of South Kensington station and the houseboats. But our concern is that although most of Chelsea is located in Conservation Areas, as a result of the new policy the Council may feel under pressure to agree to taller buildings and denser developments than is justified by their other policies.

BATTERSEA BRIDGE/GLASSMILL



Rockwell, the developer, has submitted a new proposal for the site which they own at the southern end of Battersea Bridge. It is smaller than the previous one, but only marginally so: 28 storeys, rather than 34. It would, if allowed, dominate the bank of the Thames and destroy one of the most iconic views in London. The Chelsea Society has objected vigorously to it, as have all the neighbouring amenity societies south of the river.

FORMER TELEPHONE EXCHANGE MALLORD STREET

The Sloane Stanley Estate has announced that Third Space has signed a lease for a 30,000 sq ft luxury health club / gym at 19 Mallord Street, previously occupied by BT Telephone Exchange. Members of the Planning Committee will be meeting Sloane Stanley to review and comment on these proposals.



LOTS ROAD

Preparatory work for the redevelopment of Lots Road South is still underway. The latest iteration of the plan drawn up by the consultancy firm Mount Anvil is still unsatisfactory. It envisages a development which is too dense, too tall and which pays little more than lip service the area's status as Chelsea's only employment zone. The Chelsea Society is supporting the work of the Lot's Road Forum in trying to persuade RBKC, the owners of the site, to modify their approach.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

PICTURE HOUSE CINEMA, FULHAM ROAD

Proposals are being developed to redevelop/convert this purpose-built cinema, which has recently been listed as a Grade 2 building by Historic England. Although just outside Stanley Ward, members of the Planning Committee are liaising with their counterparts in the Kensington Society to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved.

ROYAL MARSDEN HOSPITAL



More than 60 per cent of existing buildings are over 60 years old, with much of the infrastructure predating the founding of the NHS in 1948. Many of the wards are smaller than modern standards. A first stage of public consultation is underway on proposals to expand and improve the Hospital .

Members of the Planning Committee were invited to review and comment on these proposals which include :-

- A new fully accessible Fulham Road entrance for patients, visitors and staff;
- A development of the underutilised service yard on Fulham Road;
- A new building on the existing staff car park and the site of The Royal Marsden School and Education Centre located at the back of the hospital on Stewart's Grove.

A further developed vision is programmed for Spring 2025. We have indicated that the Chelsea Society supports the Royal Marsden's wish to expand but that we will be concerned to ensure that their proposals are not of such a height as to damage the appearance of the Chelsea skyline and to minimise the environmental impact on surrounding residential properties.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ST WILFRID'S CARE HOME, TITE SREET

London Square, the company which has bought the site, and which is itself owned by Aldar an Abu Dhabi-based property investment group, has presented a further variant of its plans. It shows a readiness to meet some of the concerns which the Chelsea Society and the Tite Street Association have expressed (they no longer intend to concrete over the whole of the existing garden), but the proposed new building is still too bulky, too tall and too monolithic for this iconic street.



SLOANE SQUARE

RBKC are in the process of consulting on proposals to improve the appearance and the attractiveness to pedestrians of Sloane Square. They would involve the widening of some areas of pavement and the replacement of some of the paving. The Chelsea Society has broadly welcomed the proposals, as did, so we understand, most of the respondents to a public survey. But we have emphasised that care must be taken to ensure that there is no impediment to traffic flows. The timing of any works there will also need to be calibrated in relation to the continuing construction activity in Sloane Street.



SUTTON ESTATE



Clarion HA have completed the regeneration of the Estate providing over 300 social rented homes right in the heart of Chelsea. They have sought to conserve original external and internal architectural features. Blocks A – D have been completely gutted and remodelled to provide lifts and 81 new family homes ranging from 1 to 4 bed units and including fully wheelchair accessible units at ground floor. Improved hard and soft landscaping features have been introduced throughout the estate. Also 27x 200m boreholes have been sunk to provide the estate with ground-source heat pumps.

TRANSPORT & STREETS

MAKING BATTERSEA BRIDGE SAFE

The Battersea Bridge/Cheyne Walk junction has been in effect an accident black spot for far too many years; the Cheyne Walk Trust together with the Chelsea Society, other Resident Associations and the Council for RBKC have long sought to make this junction, controlled by Transport for London, safer for all. In 2003, TFL undertook to introduce safety measures in 2005 but failed to carry them through.

After the years of delay and a hugely well supported campaign in 2021 by journalist Rob McGibbon, TFL belatedly completed installation of a light-controlled crossing at the north end of Battersea Bridge in December 2021. Disastrously, a third fatality occurred on 10 August 23 when a 27-year-old lady cyclist was crushed against the bridge pavement balustrade by a large truck.



TFL eventually held a public consultation on the other three unprotected arms of the junction in 2022/23, publishing a report in June 2023.

A joint RBKC, Chelsea Society and Cheyne Walk Trust submitted proposal for a 3-phase Chelsea Option safety scheme based on considered traffic data collection and assessment was disregarded by the TFL consultation report.

TRANSPORT & STREETS

Clearly, it is vital that unforgivably delayed improvements are implemented urgently on the still unsafe remaining 3 arms of the junction, not least since the government committed £1.5m to the project for FY 2022. Equally, it is critical that safety improvement plans are agreed with RBKC that are acceptable to Chelsea residents rather than dominated and distorted by TFL's ambitions to project a cycle superhighway (CS8) along the whole of Chelsea riverside. TFL plans for CS8 have already resulted in the disruptive banning of north and south turns at Chelsea bridge, creating huge congestion west along Chelsea Thames-side; likely to be compounded by TFL plans further to restrict access to and from roads into Chelsea. TFL proposes to ban the present left turn north into Beaufort Street for eastbound traffic. There is no evidence of accidents to pedestrians or cyclists from left turning vehicles at this junction. The recorded accidents and fatalities have taken place at the northern access to or actually on Battersea Bridge. This ban will displace further traffic onto the already overloaded Oakley Street and Tite Street routes. It may also be a precedent for TFL to ban the few remaining turns North into Chelsea from the riverside. Those who live or work in south west Chelsea will effectively lose normal vehicle access to their borough and have to make substantial traffic increasing detours to do so.

After a meeting between RBKC, TFL and some resident associations on 11 March 2024 and subsequent correspondence, TFL undertook to remove proposed traffic increasing new bus lanes on Cheyne Walk/Chelsea Embankment but to make no further changes for 5 years after the notified works to be completed in late 2025.

Consequently, The Cheyne Walk Trust together with the Chelsea Society, the Council for RBKC and the most concerned, affected Resident Associations including for Oakley St., Tite St., Beaufort St., Chelsea Old Church St., and others have formed a Chelsea Alliance for Safer Traffic (CAST) chaired by Dr James Thompson, Chairman The Chelsea Society, to engage with Transport For London in order to obtain up to date traffic counts and to discuss options for better safety for all traffic modes, approaches to and movement on Battersea Bridge with green man controls on the three unimproved junction arms as a priority and to:

- Remove systemic actual and proposed flaws such as the emergency traffic scheme north and south turn bans at Chelsea Bridge/Chelsea Embankment and the arbitrary left turn north vehicle ban into Beaufort Street
- Measure and evaluate present transport and accident data for all modes on the key routes and junctions of Chelsea Embankment and Cheyne Walk
- Evolve an equitable overall traffic management scheme for shared transport modes that avoids unfair constraints or additional traffic displacement and consult on this with stakeholders.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

*The following is a talk given to members by the Vice-chairman,
Michael Stephen, on 10th April 2024*

“The Chelsea Society has a complete set of the Annual Reports published by the Society since its formation 97 years ago this month. I have been reading the Reports for the first ten years, and our Chairman thought it would be a good idea if we shared some of this fascinating archive with you.

You will perhaps not be surprised to hear that our predecessors had to deal with many of the same problems as are facing us today.

It was in 1927 that some very distinguished people met in Chelsea to create The Chelsea Society, “with the object of preserving and enhancing the amenities of Chelsea for the public benefit.”

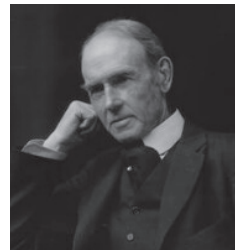
Those people were living in a very different world from ours. They had emerged from the trauma of the First World War; King George V was on the throne, and the Prime Minister was Stanley Baldwin. They had just experienced the General Strike the year before, and they had no idea what awaited their Society in the future.

So who were these people who formed the first Council of the Society?



The idea came from Reginald Blunt, the son of the Rector of St Luke’s Church. He was a pioneer of the conservation movement, and his work in Chelsea in the 1920s and 1930s led to the foundation in 1957 of the Civic Trust, the creation of Conservation Areas under the Civic Amenities Act 1967, and the movement from 1960 onwards to use town planning laws to save Britain’s historic towns and cities from being irretrievably changed by the post-war enthusiasm for modernisation. He lived at 14 Carlyle Mansions and was the first Secretary of the Society.

The first Chairman of the Society was Sir Albert Gray KC. He was a distinguished barrister, and was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Society for Comparative Legislation & International Law. Sadly he died in 1928.



THE FIRST TEN YEARS

The second chairman was Charles St John Hornby. He was called to the bar in 1892, but his friend Freddy Smith offered him a partnership in his family business. He soon became the dominant figure in WH Smith and found himself negotiating the contracts with railway companies for the operation of bookstalls on stations.



One of his sons, Michael became a director of W. H. Smith; and Michael's own son Simon also joined the firm, and became chief executive and then chairman. His other son, Sir Roger Hornby was senior partner at the stockbrokers Cazenove, and his daughter, Dame Rosamund Holland-Martin led the NSPCC for many years and was married to Admiral Sir Deric Holland-Martin.

The other members of the Council were:



Mary Stuart-Wortley, Countess of Lovelace. She was an architect, and friend of Charles Voysey. Her husband Ralph was the son of Ada Byron, the poet's only legitimate child. In 1833, Ada's mentor, the scientist and polymath Mary Somerville, introduced her to Charles Babbage, the Cambridge Professor of Mathematics who had attained celebrity for his visionary plans for gigantic clockwork calculating machines, and Ada is recognised as the very first woman computer-programmer.

Rowland Prothero, 1st Baron Ernle lived at 3 Cheyne Walk. He played first-class cricket for Hampshire and was President of the MCC in 1924/1925. He was an agricultural expert, administrator, journalist, author and Conservative politician, and was editor of the Quarterly Review. He held office under Lloyd George as President of the Board of Agriculture with a seat in the cabinet between 1916 and 1919.



Emslie J. Horniman was an anthropologist, philanthropist and Liberal Party politician, who inherited the Horniman's Tea company founded by his grandfather. In 1898 he was elected to the London County Council to represent Chelsea, and at the 1906 general there was a large swing to the Liberals and he was elected, but he served only one term in the Commons, losing the seat to Sir Samuel Hoare in 1910. He died at his London residence "Garden Corner" on Chelsea Embankment in 1932.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

Aubrey Lawrence KC was a successful barrister and author, the son of Sir Trevor Lawrence, 2nd Baronet. He shared Essex Court Chambers with a young Stafford Cripps (his second cousin). He was appointed King's Counsel in 1927 and was appointed OBE for his legal work. He was Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester in 1924, and a governor of Shrewsbury School.

Graham Petrie represented the Chelsea Arts Club. He was the brother of the watercolour landscape painter Elizabeth Petrie, and was a distinguished artist and exhibitor himself.

Ernest Chapman represented the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce.

Percy Lovell – was the organising Secretary of The London Society

W.H. Maer - Hon. Treasurer, and was Manager of Barclays Bank at 348 King's Road.

The first meeting of the Council was on 4th May 1927 at Sir Albert Gray's House, Catherine Lodge, in the SW corner of Trafalgar Square, (since demolished). The first AGM was at Wentworth House on the Embankment. The Council decided, at their first meeting, to hold an art Exhibition, illustrative of Chelsea past and present, at Chelsea Town Hall, and over 200 paintings, drawings, prints and photographs of Chelsea, representing the work of sixty-four artists, were lent by their owners.

His Majesty the King headed the list of exhibitors, and Queen Mary attended the exhibition.

The Council heard with great satisfaction at its first Meeting that following a Deputation to the War Office (which its Chairman and Secretary had attended), the proposal to erect buildings on the ground of the Duke of York's HQ was not for the present to be proceeded with. - Our first success?

The Society had campaigned since its foundation to save an interesting little row of old houses called Lombard Terrace close to Chelsea Old Church. They raised a petition signed by over 450 people, which was sent by Sir Samuel Hoare, M.P. for Chelsea, to Major Sloane Stanley, the owner. However, he regretted that he could not see his way to save the old houses.

They would have been destroyed anyway by the massive German bomb which destroyed the Old Church on the night of 16th April 1941.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

The Society drew public attention, by letters in *The Times* to the plans for the erection of a very large electric power station on riverside land adjoining the eastern end of Battersea Park. It was pointed out that such a large factory, consuming 15,000 tons or more of coal per week, and in close proximity to Chelsea and Westminster, could hardly fail seriously to pollute the air of the neighbourhood. Chelsea's experience from the 4 Lots Road Power Station chimneys was given as evidence.

TREES

The Works Committee of the Chelsea Borough Council having in November recommended "that the nine trees on the west side of Cheyne Row be removed", the Council of The Chelsea Society immediately printed and issued to their members a protest, headed "A deplorable Proposal." The protest received widespread public support, and resulted in the reprieve of seven out of the nine condemned trees, including all the Trees of Heaven.

MORE DEMOLITION



The Society was informed that the London County Council had referred to the Chelsea Borough Council a scheme for the demolition of 16 and 18, Cheyne Row, and steps were at once taken to support the Borough Council.

The Society pointed out that these Cheyne Row houses (dated 1708) had been commended to The King as especially worthy of preservation, by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The Borough Council strongly opposed the scheme, and the County Council rejected it.

The scheme also entailed the demolition of Nos. 45 to 43 Cheyne Walk, which include Terrey's little old fruit shop, and substantial remains of the western wing of Shrewsbury House, built here in the 16th century, and probably the oldest remaining house in Chelsea.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

SIR ALBERT GRAY (1928 Report)

The Council has to refer with great regret to the loss of their first Chairman, Sir Albert Gray, K.C.B., K.C, who died on February 27th last. Others have borne testimony, to his unfailing interest in Chelsea and its betterment. In spite of increasing illness and exhaustion, his active interest in this little society was sustained to the very end.

SLOANE SQUARE

1928 The authorities having given permanent consent to the roundabout traffic system at Sloane Square, the Mayor of Chelsea invited the Chelsea Society to nominate two members of its Council to join a Committee to consider plans for the layout of the reconstituted Square. Several plans were considered, but the exigencies of traffic, of cost, and of certain site restrictions appear to have made the adoption of any but a very simple and unambitious scheme prohibitive. " It is understood that a composite plan is still under consideration, and it has been suggested by Lord Cranbrook that the Royal Fine Art Commission be consulted before any final decision is reached."

TRAFALGAR SQUARE (now Chelsea Square)

The Council learned with regret that the development scheme for this part of Cadogan Estate included the demolition of Catherine Lodge and the erection of houses at both ends of Trafalgar Square. The latter point was raised before the Royal Commission on the London Squares, but it was explained that this was a private Square and was not scheduled under any Act.

PAULTONS SQUARE

A proposal to form Tennis courts in this Square, which would have entailed the felling of most of its beautiful trees was reported to the Society. Immediate steps were taken to canvass the Square residents, who were almost unanimous in opposition to the scheme, which was dropped after a petition of protest had been forwarded to the owner's agents.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

1929 - LOMBARD TERRACE

The Society's unavailing efforts to avert the destruction of "this most beautiful spot of Old Chelsea," as Sir William Orpen described it in his letter of protest to The Times, were recorded in their last Report. The house at its western end has been demolished, leaving a hideous gap; but the little Terrace houses still cling, limpet-like, to their hold on the ground by the Old Church.

SHREWSBURY HOUSE



"Long threatened, long lasting" seems occasionally to be true of houses as well as weather; and the wing of old Shrewsbury House, with Terrey's quaint little fruit shop still survives, though the housebreaker's pickaxe has been at work next door, and a well-known artist, who has perpetuated much of the charm of Cheyne Walk, has had his room demolished, and been exiled to Hampstead."

THE OLD CHURCH

Serious cracks and settlement having been revealed in the eastern external wall of the Old Church chancel, the stucco facing was removed, exposing an unexpected skin of Tudor brickwork, superimposed on the original 13th century wall of flint and chalk. Members of the Church Committee met in with the Council of the Society, and the plan of repairs was cordially approved. A small grant towards the cost of these repairs was authorised from the Society's Funds.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

FLAXMAN TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

Protests having been received upon the adoption of this name for the new Chelsea Telephone Exchange, a letter asking for some explanation of the selection of the name was addressed by the Society to the telephone authorities. They received the following reply, on 23 January 1929.

"I much regret that members of your Association are not pleased with the name "Flaxman" to be applied to their new Exchange. The reason for the non-adoption of the name Chelsea is a purely technical one. With the new automatic system, no Exchange may have a name beginning with the same three letters as another nor even with three letters having the same numerical equivalent, - and this limits the choice considerably.

Exhaustive tests shewed that the word "Chelsea" was very liable to confusion with "Chancery" the name of an existing exchange, and the use of the two names would have caused great trouble and inconvenience to subscribers on both Exchanges. Several other names of topographical significance were considered, but for one or other of the reasons already given could not be utilized. Flaxman, which is phonetically good was chosen ultimately on account of its artistic associations, although it is recognised that Flaxman had no connection himself with Chelsea."

[John Flaxman was a distinguished artist and engraver, who was a contemporary of Reynolds. He lived in Soho, and died in 1826]

THE OLD RIVER WALL



THE OLD SWAN, CHELSEA

1929 Report- "It will be remembered that in the great Thames Flood of January 8th, 1928 a number of houses and basements at the western end of Cheyne Walk were inundated, and the question of raising the height of the old river wall at this point has since been under consideration. It is hoped that this typical little remaining piece of the old

riverside with posts and rails, may remain as it is until some comprehensive embankment scheme comes into being.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

A NEW STATUE (1929)

The Chelsea Arts Club hopes to contribute a thing of beauty to Chelsea this summer, when the 'Atlanta' in bronze by the late Francis Derwent Wood R.A., is to be placed on the embankment as a memorial to the sculptor.

"The site chosen for the erection of the statue is in the little garden immediately to the west of the Albert Bridge. In this quiet but much-frequented corner it will have an appropriate setting with trees for a background."



THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1929 reported that "CHELSEA, like the rest of London, is undergoing rapid and more or less inevitable changes. Old landmarks, good, bad and indifferent, such as Lombard Terrace, World's End Passage, Trafalgar Square and Whitehead's Grove are disappearing, and being replaced by new buildings, bad, good and indifferent. Catherine Lodge has been destroyed, and some pleasant old houses in Whitehead's Grove have vanished; but happily, otherwise, the housebreaker's pickaxe has not so far descended on too much of historic value or architectural interest."

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

SLOANE SQUARE

The Borough Council, after failing to agree upon any of the various plans submitted for their consideration, appointed Sir Reginald Blomfield to draw up a scheme for the layout of Sloane Square. This, however, was also rejected on the ground of its prohibitive cost, and there was a somewhat heated controversy as to whether the War Memorial Cross should be moved from its present position to one nearer the centre of the Square. The Chelsea Society proposed that advice be sought from the Royal Fine Arts Commission."

SHREWSBURY HOUSE

A number of schemes for the development of this long vacant site have been put forward and abandoned for a variety of reasons.

"During the last month your Council has heard with much satisfaction that a private house, of which Sir Edwin Lutyens is the architect, is to be built at once on this site, set well back from the Cheyne Walk frontage."

SIR THOMAS MORE

An interesting exhibition of paintings, drawings, prints, books and relics of Sir Thomas More was held at the Convent of Adoration Reparatrice in Beaufort Street, on the actual site of his Chelsea home. The Exhibition was well attended, and the lectures given daily during its continuance on various aspects of More's life and character have since been issued in book form.

The Society's Summer Event of the year under review took for form of a commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Chelsea's greatest inhabitant, Sir Thomas More.

The celebration was held on July 6th – the actual date of More's execution – first at the Moravian Close, where Lord Russell of Killowen delivered an admiral address on the great Lord Chancellor, and subsequently at the Old Church, where a memorial wreath was laid upon More's Tomb by a direct descendent of the martyr. The party proceeded thence to Crosby Hall, once the residence of More in Bishopsgate, and now rebuilt on the site of his Chelsea garden, where tea was served and some delightful madrigals and motets of the Tudor period were rendered.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

CHELSEA LONG AGO



HOLMAN HUNT'S HOUSE AT THE CORNER OF LAWRENCE STREET
from a drawing by Walter Groves.

The rare opportunity occurred to acquire and preserve for Chelsea a most interesting and unique collection of fifty water colour drawings of local houses and views, painted by Chelsea artists about 1610-1820. The Society arranged for the exhibition of the Collection in Chelsea Town Hall. The paintings included the World's End Tea garden, the Cricketers pub, the Adam & Eve pub, and Holman Hunt's House.

The Hon. Secretary mentioned with regret that the Society had lost another old member, Mrs. Holman Hunt. She did not live in Chelsea but

for old acquaintance sake she had begged to be allowed to become a member. Many people did not know that Holman Hunt's great picture "The Light of the World" had been painted in Cheyne Walk, where the Cheyne Hospital now stood.



THE WORLD'S END TEA GARDENS (South View)

*One of the Fifty Watercolour Drawings of Chelsea (1800-1820)
presented by the Chelsea Society last year to the Public Library.*

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

TRAFFIC NOISE (1930)

It was long ago obvious that the making of the Chelsea Embankment, with its broad highway and shortened access to London from the south-west, would go far to destroy "the quiet seclusion of Cheyne Walk and riverside Chelsea - and the advent of heavy motor traffic has more than justified the fears of half a century ago. From counts taken on behalf of the Society it was found that between 500 and 600 heavy motor vehicles per hour use the Chelsea Embankment throughout the day, and that much of the noise (apart from speed) was due to defective gears, tyres, load adjustment, exhausts, etc.

The Society thought that "Much of the noise caused by these vehicles could be greatly reduced if the police would enforce the "Motor Cars (Excessive Noise) Regulations 1929" issued by the Ministry of Transport.

1931 AGM

"The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Lady Lovelace for her kindness in lending her rooms for the meeting. She was a Member of the Council of the Society and brought a note of feminine refinement to a committee of mere men. The vote was seconded by General Banon and carried unanimously."

CHELSEA BRIDGE



THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE AT CHELSEA.
AS IN 1825. BY PERMISSION OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARCHITECTS.
ROYAL MILITARY HOSPITAL.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

“Members will not be sorry to hear that the scheme for removing the Chelsea Suspension Bridge and erecting a new bridge a little higher up the river, has been indefinitely postponed by the London County Council. The necessity for this heavy expenditure was not at all obvious; the new Site was out of alignment with the existing approach roads; and the plans entailed the destruction of more than an acre of the eastern corner of Ranelagh Gardens, against which the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital entered a firm and formal protest.”

The estimated cost of the new bridge was over half a million pounds. The preliminary survey and drawings have already cost over £13,000. [as we know, the new bridge was later constructed]

1933

The Governor of the Royal Hospital, General Sir Walter Braithwaite welcomed the members of the Society to the Hospital, and give a short talk, with special reference to the Lists of Battle Honours of the British Army recently inscribed upon the panelled walls of the Hall.

N.B.-“A fine midsummer day has been arranged, and ladies may find sunshades acceptable.”

A portrait of Nell Gwynne, a beautifully executed copy of the picture by Lely in the National Gallery, has been placed in position in the centre panel on the dais in the Great Hall. This was presented by Major-general G. J. Farmer, a former Lieutenant-Governor of the Royal Hospital. So, at last, pretty, witty Nell is pictorially established in a place of honour in the building which tradition has, for 250 years consistently assigned her an honourable part in establishing.

All the Flags in the Vestibule have been re-hung and grouped according to Campaigns. There is now a list, which is kept inside the Great Hall, showing what the Flags are and where they were captured.

The Society also recorded with great pleasure that the inscriptions on the tombs and gravestones in the cemetery have, wherever legible or elsewhere recorded, been re-cut in the original lettering, adding much to the historic interest of this unique burial ground.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

TOMB OF SIR HANS SLOANE

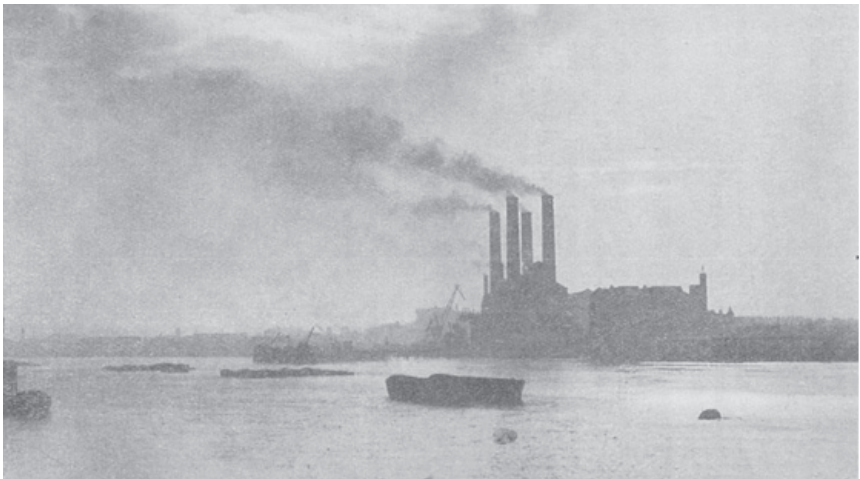
Attention having been drawn to the decaying condition of the stonework forming the base of the Sloane Monument in the churchyard, this has now been refaced and repaired. The new slab, with the original lettering, has now been fixed on the south face of the tomb, and harmonises well with the old stonework.

[On Monday 3rd June 2024 the archivist of the Cadogan Estate gave the Chelsea Society a talk on the life and times of Sir Hans Sloane.]



BATTERSEA POWER STATION

The first section of the huge electric power station just below Chelsea Bridge is now practically completed, with its two towering chimneys. It is not unsightly; and was, indeed, cited by a young architect as one of the three finest specimens of the architecture of to-day in the metropolis. However, the smoke emitted from the chimneys is more difficult to sustain. They are fitted with an automatic smoke density meter, which by means of a photo-electric cell, rings a bell audible to the stoker whenever the output of smoke is of such density as to cause appreciable atmospheric pollution.



THE FIRST TEN YEARS

SHREWSBURY HOUSE



"The front entrance is distinguished by its fine proportions, great illumination and excellent architectural design and the roof covered with alternating bricks with red and white tiles."

The house designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for the large plot of land behind and east of Terrey's shop has now been completed, and a fully illustrated description of it appeared in *Country Life* January 14th and 21st, 1933. It was described as "a small country house in London by the last of the great humanist architects." Sadly it was

demolished in 1936 and replaced with a block of flats with more than 6 storeys.

TELEPHONE BOXES

Attention was drawn to the installation of several Telephone Call Boxes, painted a bright red and fixed at intervals against the river wall of the Chelsea Embankment, and a protest was made in *The Times*. Their glaring colour mars the cool charm of the Embankment vista, and it is very questionable whether these boxes, in their present inconvenient position, will ever return the considerable cost of their installation.

TRAFFIC

A car travelling at fifty miles an hour—a speed frequently exceeded on this Embankment—covers a hundred yards in four seconds, or less time than it takes to cross the roadway. In reply to a House of Commons question, Sir John Gilmour, the Home Secretary admitted that 198 accidents on Chelsea Embankment had been reported by the police for the year ending February 1934 whilst 25 cases of dangerous and careless driving, and 329 cases of heavy vehicles exceeding the speed limit had also been recorded; but when asked if he would instruct the police to take further steps against this increasing danger, Sir John remained discreetly silent.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

REGINALD BLUNT

1934 Members of the Society will have seen with much pleasure that the name of our Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. Reginald Blunt, was included in the List of New Year's Honours, when he received a C.B.E., an honour which all will feel to have been richly earned by life-long and unselfish work for Chelsea and all that Chelsea means to those who have the good fortune to dwell in it.

THOMAS CARLYLE

Tuesday June 12th 1934 This being the Centenary year of the coming of Thomas and Jane Carlyle to the little house in Cheyne Row Chelsea, in which the remainder of their lives was spent, it seemed specially appropriate that a visit to that historic home should form part of the Society's Summer meeting this year.



THE FIRST TEN YEARS

KINGS ROAD

1934 - The north side of the King's Road is being gradually rebuilt, but has nothing remarkable so far to show; the south side has changed very little, save that the deserted "Whitelands" has passed from the occupation of Ruskin's white-robed May maidens to that of Sir Oswald Mosley's "Blackshirts."

TERREY's SHOP in Cheyne Walk, which incorporated some remains of the west wing of Shrewsbury House, and the later Alston House, was finally demolished last summer, and with it has disappeared probably the last surviving remnant of Elizabethan Chelsea.

SMOG

The burning question of atmospheric pollution is of special interest to Chelsea, a residential quarter surrounded by factories, power stations and large industrial units.

At a meeting of the Smoke Abatement Society in July 1933, Sir Frank Baines estimated "the excess cost of making good the results of atmospheric impurity to our buildings for the whole country at a minimum figure of £55 to £60 million pounds during the last quarter of a century."

Public opinion in the enlistment and awakening of which the Chelsea Society was amongst the first to take its part-has been able to enforce, at the Battersea Power station, the installation of apparatus to arrest the emission of noxious fumes, and we quote with pleasure a recent statement that- "as a result of four years of intensive research and an expenditure of £250,000, the company now claims that Battersea possesses an apparatus unique in the world. When fully working, the chimneys emit one and a half [million] cubic feet of Flue gas a minute. By means of the complicated washing apparatus installed, 90 to 95 per cent of these fumes are never allowed to reach the outside air.

1936

The outstanding feature of the past year in Chelsea, as indeed for the past few years, has been the continued erection of vast blocks of flats. Our local population is being replaced by a less permanent class of lodgers, who contribute little or nothing to the corporate life of Chelsea.

However deplorable in some respects this development may be, it would seem to have become inevitable, though it may be hoped that saturation point has almost been reached. - ????

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

ARGYLL HOUSE

The plans for extensive structural alternations at Argyll House and No 213, Kings road, having been submitted to the London County Council by the Architects employed were passed by that body without reference to the Chelsea Borough Council. Exception to this procedure was taken both by our Borough Council and by this Society, on the grounds that these houses had been specially scheduled for protection as buildings of architectural or historic interest. [The Chelsea Society was consulted on restoration of the building in 2022 by the current owner, The Marquess of Normanby]

PETER JONES

It is, in effect, a glass cage, rounding into the Square on a double curve, the ground floor affording an uninterrupted display, under cover, against a cyclorama background. This building designed by Messrs. Slater & Moberly, with Professor C. H. Reilly as associated architect, vindicates a principle of construction in a way that can only be called revolutionary.

TROLLEY BUSES IN CHELSEA

1936 "Consequent upon the forthcoming replacement of tram-cars by trolley buses throughout London, powers were sought to extend the present tramway route in Beaufort Street across the King's Road to the Fulham Road, returning thence by Callow Street, Elm Park Road and Chelsea Park Gardens to the King's Road.

The proposal-made primarily to allow these vehicles to turn round for the reverse journey-was strongly opposed by residents on the proposed route north of the King's Road, who protested against it on the grounds of its deterioration of this quiet residential area, noise, destruction of privacy, owing to the height of over-looking vehicles. and the disfigurement of a double set of overhead wire equipment.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS. (April, 1927. to April, 1937).

"At the completion of this the tenth year of its existence, it has been thought well to append a short summary of some of the Society's activities during that period. Work such as that which it was founded to carry on can never be spectacular; its scope is limited by the extent of its membership and its resources: most of its aims are put forward in correspondence and personal negotiation; often it must meet failure, disappointment and defeat.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

Nevertheless, and allowing for all these limitations, it may in all modesty be claimed that its existence is worthwhile, because it gives concrete form and expression to a feeling which grows stronger and more insistent every year-the conviction that our local inheritances of beauty, of historic interest and of amenity are increasingly imperilled, and need fostering, vigilance and protection. [The officers and Council of the Society are of the same opinion 97 years later]

[Today the Society is a registered charity with more than 1,000 members. We have copies of the Annual reports for all of those 97 years, (except 1946 when no report was published). We have had them scanned and indexed and they are all on our website. We will publish extracts from each ten-year period from time to time, and we will publish a digest of the whole 100 years as a book to celebrate our centenary in 2027].

CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

One of our members, Simon de Maré, has an amazing collection of postcards showing Chelsea as it was at the end of the 19th century and before.

With his permission The Chelsea Society is sharing them with its members.

King's Road Chelsea - 1827



View of the King's Road Watercolour, British Library



CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

Sloane Square, looking west



CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

Sloane Street and Holy Trinity Church



CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

King's Road with Peter Jones towards Sloane Square



1905

Mrs Fentance - 20 Albany Road, Chiselhurst, Kent

Dear Maggie

How do you enjoy this weather.

Nell

CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

**King's Road from Sloane Square,
looking west with Peter Jones on right**



CHELSEA THEN AND NOW

St. Leonards Terrace



THE LIFE & TIMES OF SIR HANS SLOANE (1660 – 1753)

*Address to the Society by Kira Charatan, Archivist,
Cadogan Estate on 3rd June 2024*

Sir Hans Sloane and his family are deeply embedded in the history of Chelsea and fundamental to the creation of its two Great Estates – Cadogan and Sloane Stanley. Sloane himself served as the physician to three British monarchs – Queen Anne, George I, and George II. He also held prestigious positions as President of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal Society, and was regarded as the foremost antiquary of his era and founder of the British Museum, among numerous other achievements.



Sir Hans Sloane (1660 – 1753)

Sloane was not only a physician, but also a botanist, explorer, adventurer, collector, and entrepreneur with keen business acumen. A sociable man and master networker, he epitomised the Enlightenment, standing at the heart of the scientific world. He was a key figure in London's establishment at a time when the city, as the capital of the expanding British Empire was in the ascendency.

THE LIFE & TIMES OF SIR HANS SLOANE (1660 – 1753)

As Professor Thomson remarked in 1938 of this time, *“It is doubtful if any country or any age can show such a galaxy of talent as the band of scientific workers then in England – Ray in botany, Boyle in chemistry, Newton in mathematics, Sydenham in medicine, Wren in architecture and Locke in philosophy.”* And Sloane could count all of them as his friends and many more influential international men of science and culture too, including diarist Samuel Pepys and composer Handel, who was famously admonished by Sloane for resting a buttered muffin on one of his precious books.

Sloane was the first English physician to be made a Baronet and the first scientist to record ocean currents. He stood at the pinnacle of the Republic of Letters—the intellectual community of scholars and scientists in the 17th and 18th centuries, whose purpose was the communication and exchange of knowledge, transcending geographic, political, and religious boundaries.

How did a man of such renown fade into relative obscurity in later years? Perhaps this is due to his accomplishments spanning such a wide range of disciplines, making it difficult for history to categorize him as clearly as contemporaries like Newton or Boyle, who were more specialised, or possibly it was Sloane’s temperament, described by Arthur MacGregor, Director of the Society of Antiquities: *“...[Sloane was] not a brash, towering, all-conquering kind of hero but a modest, almost diffident individual, hugely industrious and generous with it – an improbable figure, you might think, to occupy a key position at the centre of London’s scientific community... ..Whereas the forceful Banks stamped his authority in peremptory manner on every field in which he became involved, Sloane was prepared to shoulder the responsibilities that came his way and to carry them far beyond what was expected of him, but without feeling the need to brand them with his own personality. Indeed, so adept did he become at this mode of operating that he almost succeeded in writing himself out of historical consciousness.”*

Sir Hans Sloane was born in Northern Ireland, in the small coastal town of Killyleagh, just southeast of Belfast in 1660, when Charles II was invited back from exile to be King of England. Sloane’s father, Alexander was an agent of James Hamilton, a nobleman who had helped secure James VI of Scotland’s succession to the English throne. Alexander married Sarah Hicks, a friend of the Hamilton family and they had seven children, though only three—James, William, and Hans—survived infancy.

The mid-1660s saw London ravaged by the Great Plague and the Great Fire. Tragedy struck the Sloane family too when in 1666 Alexander Sloane passed away leaving behind a modest estate at best. However, despite a lack of inherited wealth, the Sloane brothers thrived through education, valuable connections, and

THE LIFE & TIMES OF SIR HANS SLOANE (1660 – 1753)

the support of their Hamilton benefactors. James, the eldest, became a successful barrister and served in both the Irish and English Parliaments and William (1658-1728), a wealthy merchant, was honored as a Freeman of Belfast and acquired properties in Ireland and Chelsea.

Young Hans was, by all accounts, a solitary and inquisitive child, often found combing the beaches for shells and seaweed or immersing himself in the library at Killyleagh Castle. At sixteen, he fell gravely ill—likely with tuberculosis—a condition that took three years to overcome and left him prone to relapses throughout his life.

The late 17th century was a period of peril and opportunity. Religious strife fuelled wars across Europe as empires clashed for dominance, while memories of civil war lingered at home. Life was marked by uncertainty, yet for those with ambition and talent, it was a unique moment to rise and thrive.

Aged nineteen, the odds were perhaps stacked against Hans Sloane succeeding as a gentleman in society - he was of modest appearance with 'chestnut hair and a pockmarked face', from a marginalized group and had no money. However, Sloane's sheer talent and determination propelled him forward. Bright and driven, he moved to London to study medicine, lodging with chemist Nicholas Staphorst, who introduced him to the renowned scientist Robert Boyle, sparking a lifelong friendship.

Sloane quickly embraced botany, a key science of the time, studying at the Chelsea Physic Garden under the mentorship of leading botanist John Ray. Encouraged by both Ray and Boyle, Sloane became passionate about collecting plants and natural curiosities.

In 1683, Sloane traveled to Paris, then the cultural and scientific heart of Europe, to further his studies. He was taught at the Jardin Royale des Plantes and the Hopital de la Charité, learning from experts like the botanist Tournefort and anatomist du Verney. After a year in Paris, Sloane earned his medical degree from the University of Orange. Returning to London in 1684, Sloane reconnected with Boyle and Ray, sharing the latest developments in chemistry and studying rare botanical specimens. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1685 and, in 1687, became a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, confirming his place among the medical elite.

Despite his growing reputation, Sloane continued to struggle financially. His fortunes began to change when Boyle introduced him to Thomas Sydenham, the "father of modern medicine." Though initially sceptical of Sloane's focus on anatomy and botany, Sydenham mentored him, emphasising the importance of

THE LIFE & TIMES OF SIR HANS SLOANE (1660 – 1753)

bedside observation in understanding disease. This empirical approach to medicine resonated with Sloane and shaped his scientific career.

In addition, Sloane's adventurous spirit led him to an irresistible opportunity: to serve as personal physician to the Duke of Albemarle, Governor of Jamaica. Despite Sydenham's warnings about the dangers—pirates, earthquakes, and the treacherous Atlantic crossing—Sloane embraced the chance to explore new lands. He saw it as both a personal and professional calling, writing, *"I was young and could not be easy if I had not the pleasure to see what I had heard so much of. This voyage seemed likewise promised to be of use to me as a physician. Many of the ancient and best physicians having travelled to the places that their drugs were brought."*

Sloane secured an impressive salary for a young doctor and invested nearly all of it in Peruvian bark (quinine) which later yielded a significant profit. Sailing from Portsmouth in September 1687 they arrived in Kingston, Jamaica in December. Sloane's main task was keeping the ailing Duke alive, but he took every chance to explore the island, observing the weather, topography, and, most importantly, the flora. He spoke with plantation owners, slaves, and maroons, gathering knowledge of the island's medicinal plants. The Duke's death abruptly ended Sloane's expedition, and after embalming the body, he returned to England in May 1689, with over 800 botanical specimens, many unknown to science, as well as valuable accounts of his findings, later published in two volumes. Sloane's Jamaican adventure brought him both fame and fortune. Beyond his quinine profits, he also introduced a recipe for drinking-chocolate, initially prescribed as a remedy, which became popular and was acquired by Cadbury's.

Sir Hans Sloane's medical career gained momentum after serving as the Duchess of Albemarle's personal physician for four years, solidifying his place in high society. In 1694, he established his own medical practice at 3 Bloomsbury Place, a fashionable address that attracted a wealthy clientele. Alongside this profitable practice, Sloane was appointed Physician-in-Charge at Christ's Hospital, where he used his modest salary to support the education of orphaned boys, stating: *"I shall never have it said of me that I enriched myself by giving health to the poor."* He was involved in the establishment of the Foundling Hospital and was a governor, as well as financial donor, to several others. Sloane's mornings were spent offering free medical care to the poor, from his Bloomsbury home.

In 1695, Sloane married Elizabeth Langley-Rose and together they had four children, with two daughters surviving to adulthood. Elizabeth was a wealthy widow with plantation interests in Jamaica, bringing them a sizable additional income until her death in 1724.

Sloane became Secretary of the Royal Society in 1703, taking charge of its *Philosophical Transactions* and extensive correspondence during Newton's

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presidency. He broadened the appeal of the publication, though not without conflict—most notably with John Woodward, who felt it strayed from Newtonian principles. In 1727, Sloane succeeded Newton as president and deftly restored the Society's financial stability.

Sloane's passion for collecting continued throughout his life. He carefully catalogued and labelled specimens, expanding his collection by purchasing other notable collections, such as those of Charlton and Petiver. His home in Bloomsbury, overflowing with artifacts, became a hub for intellectual gatherings, dinner parties, and museum tours for visitors eager to marvel at the natural world on display.

Sloane also played a pivotal role in public health and the royal succession. He attended Queen Anne during her final illness and treated the children of the future George II and Queen Caroline. His advocacy of variolation, an early form of smallpox inoculation, helped introduce the practice in Britain and after successful trials, he inoculated his own grandchild and the royal children.

Sloane's connection to Chelsea began in his youth when he studied with the Apothecaries. However, it wasn't until 1712 that he purchased the Manor of Chelsea for £17,800, (about £3.1 million in today's money) a sum that bought him eleven houses, 90 acres of land, and significant prestige. It is said that Sloane's motivation was to display his great collections at the old Chelsea Manor House. As London was expanding westward at this time, Chelsea was an ideal investment with its clean air and proximity to the city. Sloane saw the potential and began by building 1-17 Cheyne Walk - by 1718 elegant townhouses that attracted prominent residents, as they do today.

No. 18 Cheyne Walk was established as Don Saltero's Coffee House and Museum, a quirky attraction owned by James Salter, Sloane's former servant. This establishment drew London's literati, eager to sip coffee, view curiosities, and hear Salter play the fiddle.

Near the new Cheyne Walk houses lay the Chelsea Physic Garden, which Sloane gifted to the Apothecaries 'in perpetuity' on condition that they present 50 dried plants to the Royal Society each year until they reached 2,000, and agreed to pay a rent of £5, which is still collected by his Estate today.

Sloane's younger daughter Elizabeth married Charles, Baron Cadogan, while his elder daughter Sarah wed George Stanley. In his will, Sloane stipulated that the Chelsea estate should remain intact, with capital divided between the sisters and their heirs. If one branch of the family died out, then it would accrue to the surviving branch, which is what happened in 1821 when the Estate was united under the Cadogan name.

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The Sloane Stanley Estate, meanwhile, originated from land acquired by Sloane's elder brother William in western Chelsea, later inherited by Hans Stanley, a distant cousin who adopted the Sloane name.

In 1737, Sloane expanded his Chelsea holdings by purchasing Beaufort House and 10 acres. The house was demolished two years later, but the grand Inigo Jones gate survives at Chiswick House.

Further Sloane contributions to Chelsea that deserve mention are that he petitioned (unsuccessfully) in 1719 to make the King's Private Road more accessible and that he gifted land for a burial ground (now Dovehouse Green) and a workhouse.

Sir Hans Sloane retired to Chelsea Manor House in 1742 aged 82, after suffering a stroke and becoming slightly deaf. Though physically frail and using a wheeled chair, his mind remained sharp. The Manor House was by all accounts an impressive Tudor building some 100 feet square enclosing an H-shaped courtyard, decorated chimney stacks, a grand carriageway approach and a whale's skull in the garden.

The house is brought to life in a vivid description by Dr. Mortimer in *Gentleman's Magazine* of the visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1748. He describes rooms filled with rare gems, dazzling jewels, and fascinating curiosities from around the world. Sloane's vast collections included ancient artifacts, natural specimens, and precious manuscripts, all meticulously displayed. The Prince admired the collection, calling it a great asset and commenting "*how much it must conduce to the benefit of learning, and how great an honour will redound to Britain to have it established for publick use to the latest posterity*".

By the time of his death in 1753, Sloane had collected over 80,000 objects, valued at £80,000–£100,000. His will gave the collection to the nation, stipulating that it remain intact for the public benefit. This act led to the creation of the British Museum - Europe's first national museum. Later, the natural history collections were moved, to establish the Natural History Museum.

Today, Sloane's legacy lives on in Chelsea, in the street names, the Cadogan estate, and the Physic Garden - which is still the only botanical garden focused entirely on medicinal, herbal and useful plants.

SIR HENRY RUSHBURY KCVO CBE RA



Elizabeth II, Queen of Great Britain with Sir Albert Richardson P.R.A. and Sir Henry Rushbury R.A., 1955

The Chelsea Society has proposed to English Heritage a Blue Plaque for Sir Henry Rushbury at 8 Netherton Grove, Chelsea, where he lived and worked from 1927 to 1951.

He came to London in 1912, to join Gerald Brockhurst at the Royal Academy Schools. Frances Dodd offered to teach him etching, and his drypoint etchings were so successful, that one collector offered to buy all his plates over 12 months

He met and married the Chelsea born artist Florence Layzell in 1914, and became a war artist. Thirty of his works are in the Imperial War Museum.

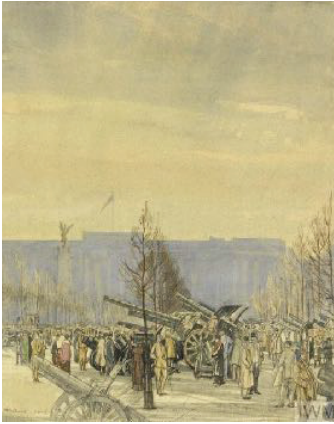


Sir Henry Rushbury R.A. talking to students in the Royal Academy Schools March 1953

Rushbury developed an individual style in watercolours, moved in the hallowed artistic circle of the time of Frances Dodd, Muirhead Bone, Ethelbert and Betty White, Charles Cundell and Alan Gwynne-Jones.

After the war he exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, Colnaghi's, The Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Painter Etchers. The Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, Cambell Dodgson found his work masterful.

SIR HENRY RUSHBURY KCVO CBE RA



*Captured German guns in the
Mall 1918*

In 1927 he bought 8 Netherton Grove, and built his studio in the garden. He had been elected as an Associate Academician, and in 1936, was promoted to full membership of the Royal Academy. In 1938, he became Chairman of the Chelsea Arts Club.

In WW2 Rushbury was again a war artist and documented industrial centres in the North of England and Scotland. He stayed at 8 Netherton Grove during the war.

In 1949 he was elected Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools, and was knighted in 1964.

There is a catalogue of his prints at the Royal Academy.

This application was requested by Kate Lovegrove, who is one of our members and is married to Sir Henry's grandson. It is supported by The Chelsea Arts Club, The London Sketch Club, Sir Charles Saumarez-Smith, Sir Christopher Frayling and the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. The owner of 8 Netherton Grove, Mr. Anthony Oppenheimer, has consented.

Sir Henry's daughter, Julia, is still alive and we would like her to unveil the plaque. However, she is 95 so we have asked that this application be expedited.



*Nurse Cavell at Westminster Abbey:
After the Armistice her body was brought in state
at Westminster Abbey, 15th May 1919*

MARTIN VANDER WEYER

Business Editor of *The Spectator*

*Spoke to The Chelsea Society on 1 July 2024
about "A Spectator Columnist's Life."*



Though my home these days is in Covent Garden, my family home for many years was in Old Church Street, Chelsea, and my first flat was in Ifield Road.

I thank you for the invitation to talk about *The Spectator*, which you may know is the oldest continuously published newspaper in the English language, having been published every week since 6 July 1828: *The Times* is older but was interrupted by a one-year strike in 1979-80. Our founder, Robert Rintoul, was a publisher from Dundee who had the

good sense to revive the name of *The Spectator* from the provocative but short-lived early 18th Century publication of that name created by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

Rintoul originally described his *Spectator* as a 'family' paper, meaning that it was open to a range of opinions — but it soon began to take a harder line, particularly in criticism of the Duke of Wellington as prime minister, and to establish the high Tory voice that remains audible in some of its columns to this day.

There were many celebrated writers in its pages in earlier decades — John Buchan, the future prime minister Asquith, Anthony Blunt, Graham Greene and others. But its modern heyday began in the 1950s when proprietorship passed from Sir Evelyn Wrench (our owner for 50 years) to Sir Ian Gilmour, a young barrister and later a Conservative cabinet minister. Gilmour brought in the likes of Bernard Levin, Iain McLeod and Nigel Lawson, the latter two both going on to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Gilmour sold (through the intermediation of Jim Slater) to an industrialist, Harry Crichton, whose tenure was a disaster – circulation falling to somewhere below 12,000 a week. But Crichton sold to the Jardine Matheson taipan Henry Keswick, who appointed a brilliant editor in Alexander Chancellor, who happened to be a family friend, and Chancellor created *The Spectator* as we now know it, including the High Life (Taki, though currently sinbinned) and original Low Life (Jeff Bernard) columns. Charles Moore, Dominic Lawson and subsequent editors, including Boris Johnson, down to Fraser Nelson today, have maintained elements of the Chancellor model.

MARTIN VANDER WEYER

As for me, I conceived an ambition to write for the magazine as a teenager, reading it in the era of Nigel Lawson's editorship in the school library and at home, where my father was a subscriber. In an interview for Worcester College, Oxford, in December 1972, when I was still 17, I declared that ambition when asked what I wanted to do as a career.

Instead I went into banking, like my father, after I graduated in 1976. But the urge was still there and I wrote to Alexander Chancellor in 1979 asking for a job: the answer was there were no jobs, but if you can write, send us something and we'll take a look. But on the very same day I was told I was being posted to work for my bank in Brussels — and I did another 12 years in the financial world, including three postings in the Far East, before I finally broke out and fulfilled my ambition at the age of 36.

How did it happen? In short, I got fired. Business was bad, I fell out with my boss — and when a jobs cull took place in January 1992, my name was on the list. I immediately told friends I thought I might change career to journalism and one friend passed that message to Christopher Fildes — the doyen of City columnists who is in the hall this evening — and he sent me a postcard (of a London tram) offering to help.

The upshot was my first appearance in *The Spectator*, in the election week of April 1992, with an essay on the follies of the 1980s banking boom — plus an introduction to the Daily Telegraph, for which I have subsequently written 1,200 obituaries and much else besides.

I'm proud to say that since that unexpected and very lucky flying start I have never had a day without a journalistic commission on my desk and am now in my 33rd year at *The Spectator* — though still a relative new boy compared to the cartoonist Michael Heath, who has been there since 1958, and the senior columnist Charles Moore, resident on and off since the early 1980s.

Is it still the same eccentric literary institution that I joined in 1992? Yes, very much so, though our old house in Doughty Street, Bloomsbury, was more bohemian and a lot scruffier than our current home in Old Queen Street Westminster. The paper still has the same sense of fun and mischief combined with fine writing and political clout — our politics team are all over the broadcast media these days too — and it's a joy for me to work with such a talented young team.

My own column, "Any Other Business," covers the City and a wide range of business-related topics and comment from wherever I happen to be — with occasional deliberate echoes of Christopher Fildes' wonderful "City & Suburban"

MARTIN VANDER WEYER

column that preceded it. Christopher and I, and his predecessor, the champagne socialist and self-styled 'City radical' Nicholas Davenport, have spanned more than 70 years in the paper between the three of us, with one short interval in the early 1980s.

I'm very proud of that claim and think I can say that my only innovation in tone has been to lighten the business content with occasional restaurant tips — which many readers prefer over the serious stuff about markets, bids and deals. I suppose I have acquired a reputation as a critic of greed and risk-taking folly in the modern City but I also like to think I communicate an admiration for good business and wise business leaders, and a real enthusiasm for entrepreneurship — the latter especially through *The Spectator's* Economic Innovator of the Year Awards, which I founded and continue to run in their seventh year.

Overall, it has been a joy and a privilege to be part of the life of *The Spectator* all these years. How very lucky I am to have fulfilled my teenage dream.

J.M.W. TURNER'S CHELSEA

*By Selby Whittingham**

As is well known, Turner was born in 1775, and died in Chelsea. But there is more to his association with Chelsea than the oft-repeated anecdotes relate. To do justice to all of them I had to divide Chelsea into two in my series of walks round Turner's London. Though Chelsea is now more associated with Whistler than Turner, the latter has not been forgotten. The late Albert Irvin RA, who drew inspiration from Turner and annually commemorated his birthday with other artists, was a member of the Chelsea Arts Club, where Sandra Pepys founded The Society of Landscape Painters. In 1975, his 200th anniversary, I founded the old Turner Society with Allan Pearce and with support from the Byron Society, which that remarkable re-incarnation of the Romantic age, Elma Dangerfield, directed from her Chelsea home.



To return to Turner himself, he lived as the lodger of Mrs Booth, 1846-51, at what is now the increasingly modified 119 Cheyne Walk, marked in 1899 by the fine plaque designed by Walter Crane. At about the same time Mrs Booth rented another house, 15 Beach Street, at Deal, right on the sea, where Turner painted wild pictures of wave and wind. Mrs Booth was described as

having a Scotch accent, but her parents' families were poor German immigrants. She had the characteristics of a hausfrau, keeping both the Chelsea cottage and Turner scrupulously clean - a transformation from his preceding state.

The only portrait of Turner published in his lifetime was taken from a dummy-like drawing made by Charles Martin, son of the fantastic painter John, whose works were latterly collected by the uncle and aunt of the diarist Ann Frank, and are now in Tate Britain. A friend of my mother lived in the flat below the Franks in Roland Gardens. The drawing by Charles was dated 1844 and published in the Illustrated London News in 1845. As the Martins and Turner became neighbours on Cheyne Walk in 1849-51, Charles had a new opportunity of observing Turner closely.



J.M.W. Turner by Charles Martin, 1849, - at Deal?

J.M.W.TURNER'S CHELSEA

Turner had kept his house and gallery in Marylebone, intending that his pictures should continue to be exhibited there if the National Gallery failed to meet the conditions which he attached to his bequest of them. The legendary house was demolished in 1882 despite the passionate protest of the artist John Brett. Turner's long-serving housekeeper, Hannah Danby, was a niece of the composer John Danby, with whose widow Turner had two daughters.

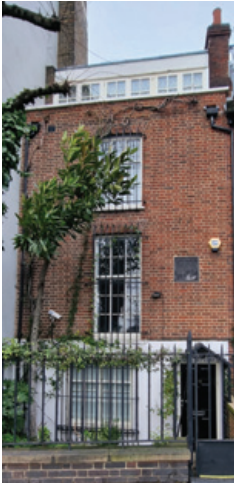
John had a brother Charles, also a musician as well as a stonemason, who ended his life at a house facing Chelsea's Royal Hospital, 8 Green's Row. He and brother Tomas married members of the Betts family of Chelsea, to whose relations there are wall monuments in St Luke's church beside that of the Revd Charles Kingsley. A son of Thomas Danby was Eustace, who obtained positions at Chelsea Royal Hospital as organist and administrator. He did not get on with his sister, who married a wealthy Chelsea brewer, John Anderson, after whom, possibly, Anderson Street is named.

Another family which Turner knew well was the Cobb family. Various members were butchers in the King's Road, and their business flourished under the next generation, eventually becoming Cobb of Knightsbridge, butchers to the late Queen. Hewett Cobb, of whom a portrait is preserved, became the main owner of the Theatre Royal at Brighton. There he became enamoured of the sister of a mistress of Lord Egremont and George IV. He shared chambers with the popular comic actor Joseph Munden, who commissioned watercolours from Turner. Hewett acted as Turner's solicitor until his death, when he was succeeded by his nephew, George, who drew up Turner's will after they had agonised over whether its provision for an alms-house for decayed artists would be valid.

When George retired to Brighton, he was succeeded by Henry Harpur, who was Turner's first cousin once removed. They had known each other since 1800. Harpur's father, also a solicitor, inherited the Westminster chambers of Sir John I'Anson Bt. Henry Harpur the younger with his first wife accompanied Turner on part of a continental journey in 1840, but their letter to Turner from Rome has now disappeared. After she died he remarried in 1848 and the next year he retired.

In 1844 Harpur drew up an indenture giving land for the alms-house and several codicils providing for the posthumous continuance of Turner's Gallery. The drafts for those, which I was the first to publish, considered alternatives for how his two housekeepers, Miss Danby and Mrs. Booth, might or might not be joint custodians of the gallery.

J.M.W.TURNER'S CHELSEA



Harpur visited Turner at his Cheyne Walk hideout, and on his death made the arrangements for his grand funeral at St Paul's Cathedral, where he was the chief mourner. With other executors he was involved in Turner's legacy for years, in his own Will bequeathing money left over from paying for Turner's monument at St Paul's to Turner's grandchildren. After other bequests his main heir was Henry Drake, who inherited two Turner marines which the National Gallery had refused, as a condition of acceptance was that it hung them, while the gallery was desperate to unload what it regarded as its surplus Turners. One now belongs to the Frick Collection in New York.

Drake named his eldest son Bernard Harpur Drake, whose heirs were his wife's Meinertzhagen relations; Sir Ernest Meinertzhagen, a Chelsea councillor, lived at 4 Cheyne Walk. Henry Drake's Devonian father Francis succeeded Harpur as Turner's solicitor and then acted for his executors and trustees. Effie Ruskin related that Turner's solicitor (Harpur or Drake?) took some of Turner's watercolours from his studio after the artist died. Some faded ones were sold by Nicholas's mother along with Turner's silver tea caddy. One, with the inscription "Joseph Mallard Turner 1785", turned up some years ago in the antiques trade.

Another controversy arose when Mrs Haweis, the daughter of an artist, and wife of the Revd. Hugh Haweis, Turner and music enthusiast, "Author, Artist, Critic and Myriad-Minded Speaker", in 1895 proposed that Mrs. Booth's old cottage should be made into a Turner museum. The Haweis lived in the Queen's House at the more select end of Cheyne Walk. This prompted many to write to The Times at length over the summer months, for and against - people who had known Turner, and some with Chelsea connections. This produced more anecdotes about the long-dead artist.

Mrs. Booth had moved to Buckinghamshire after joining in the litigation over Turner's will. She claimed that he had not paid her for expenses as he had promised, but her claim was substantially reduced by the Chancery court. Maybe because of this she hung on to a batch of Turner's unfinished paintings, probably kept in the first instance at the Deal house and then by her son, D.J.Pound, an artist for whose training in Germany Turner had helped to pay. Pound later sold them, some now in public museums at Cardiff and Liverpool. This led to another debate: were they all painted by Turner? That culminated in an episode of the

J.M.W.TURNER'S CHELSEA

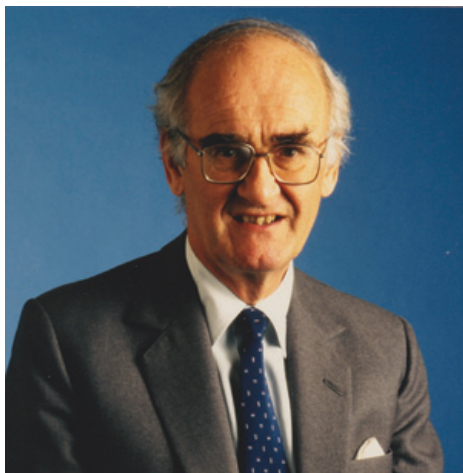
"Fake or Fortune" BBC tv series a few years ago. Some had argued that Mrs. Booth was the sort of low person who could give no guarantee of authenticity, in the words of one of Turner's executors, "exactly like a fat cook & not a well educated woman: Muster Turner, instead of Mr. Turner, when speaking to me."

Turner used to be rowed across the river to St Mary's Battersea church, now adorned with windows commemorating him and Blake. In 2025 it is planned to hold an event there commemorating Tom Taylor, dramatist, actor, art critic and editor of Punch, and his musician wife. A plaque was erected in Clapham to their memory in 2024. He was the brother-in-law of a great Turner enthusiast, polymath and centenarian, the Revd. William Towler Kingsley, who was long engaged to a daughter of William Wilkins, architect of the National Gallery. When they married at long last they had their honeymoon in Chelsea where after a couple of weeks she died. In 1980 I met someone who remembered Kingsley and had a table around which, he said, Kingsley, Turner and Ruskin had sat.

The memory of "Uncle William" is kept alive by Dr Peter Helps, now in his 104th year, and the pointillist painter William P. Wilkins CBE. An unpublished letter has emerged by Turner, written from Chelsea on his last birthday to Tom Taylor, thanking the latter for sending him a copy of *The Stones of Venice* by Ruskin. A few years later Taylor wrote in *The Times* that Turner's art bequest was a matter of National import, something to ponder in the 250th year of Turner's birth. While Turner viewed the sunset from the vestry of St. Mary's Battersea, more often he would get up to see the sun rise from his rooftop in Cheyne Walk, looking upstream to what he called his English view and downstream to his Dutch one, each focusing on his true element, water and sky, epitomised best, as had been observed by Ruskin, by lines by Shelley in his *Alastor and Prometheus Unbound*.

**Dr. Selby Whittingham is an art expert in London who has specialized in the work of J. M. W. Turner. He is a retired consultant to museums and institutions, and is the secretary and founder of The Independent Turner Society. He is also the author of a number of articles about art and museums, and is writing a book about Turner.*

Obituary
SIR JOHN NOTT
(1932-2024)



One of the Society's most distinguished members, Sir John William Frederic Nott KCB, died on 6th November 2024. He was Secretary of State for Defence from 1981 to 1983, during the Falklands War.

He was born in Bromley, south-east London, and in 1952 he was commissioned into the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, serving in the Malayan Emergency. After a period of service with the Royal Scots, he left the army in 1956 to study law and economics at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was President of the Cambridge Union Society.

He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1959, and in 1966 he was elected Conservative MP for the Cornwall constituency of St Ives.

He served in the government of Edward Heath as Minister of State at the Treasury, after a brief spell working as a City of London consultant and focusing on managing his Cornish estate, where he grew flowers commercially.

He joined the Shadow Cabinet in 1976.

He became Secretary of State for Trade after Margaret Thatcher won the 1979 general election and became a Privy Councillor. The Department of Trade was responsible for shipping and aviation and the privatisation of British Airways, the first privatisation of the Thatcher government. Nott was also responsible for repealing the prices and incomes policy and played a leading role in the abolition of exchange control.

OBITUARY - SIR JOHN NOTT

In January 1981 he became Secretary of State for Defence. At the time, short-term commitment to cost savings meant that defence decisions were made based on affordability. Prior to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982, the government had been unwilling to consider that as a strategic risk.

Nott was criticised by the Royal Navy for the decision to cut back on naval expenditure during the severe economic recession of the early 1980s. The reductions originally included the scrapping of the Antarctic patrol ship HMS Endurance and the reduction of the surface fleet to 50 frigates and from three to two aircraft-carriers. He switched the resultant savings to nuclear submarines, naval weapon systems, and air defence.

In his White Paper Cmnd. 8758 "The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons", Nott announced a major rebuilding programme costing around £1 billion to replace all the ships, Harrier aircraft and helicopters lost during the Falklands War, including the building of five new Type 22 frigates. He also closed Chatham Dockyard and ended the mid-life modernisation of old frigates. He steered through Parliament the upgrading of the nuclear deterrent to the Trident system

He offered his resignation to Mrs. Thatcher following the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands in 1982. Unlike the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, his resignation was not accepted. Nott remained as Defence Secretary throughout the four-month conflict, and was eventually replaced in January 1983 by Michael Heseltine after he decided not to stand at the 1983 general election. On retirement he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB).

From 1985 to 1989 Sir John Nott was chairman and chief executive of Lazard Brothers. This coincided with the cabinet crisis on the future of Westland Helicopters, which severely rocked the Thatcher government. Lazard Brothers acted for Westland against Michael Heseltine's proposal for a European consortium. Among the other well-publicised events while Nott was at Lazards was the takeover of Guinness.

He also served as chairman of Hilldown Holdings, a multinational food company, and of the Canadian firm Maple Leaf Foods, and was deputy chairman of Royal Insurance. In addition, he was an adviser to APAX Partners and Freshfields, Solicitors.

Nott published his autobiography, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" in 2002. Other works included:

Mr Wonderful Takes a Cruise (1988)

Haven't We Been Here Before (2007)

OBITUARY - SIR JOHN NOTT

Trewinnard – A Cornish History – Introduction (2012)

Mr Wonderful Seeks Immortality (2014)

Memorable Encounters (2018)

In 1959 Nott married Miloska Sekol (b. 1935), whom he met at Cambridge. They had two sons (including the film composer Julian Nott) and a daughter, Sasha, who married Hugo Swire.

He was a supporter of Brexit. In 2016 he criticised the “poisoned EU debate” in the Conservative Party and suspended his party membership until there was a change of leadership.

Sir John spent much of his retirement restoring his 200-acre farm in Cornwall.



List of Members 2024

*As at 31st December 2024 the Society had 1,132 members
An asterisk denotes a life member. Should any amendments be necessary,
please advise secretary@chelseasociety.org.uk*

MISS A ABELES	MR STEPHEN BARRY
MS LISE ABRAHAM	MRS STEPHEN BARRY
MISS MARILYN ACONS	DR CAROLYN BARSHALL
MISS VANESSA ADAMSON	MRS CHRISTINE BARTER
MR TIM AHERN	DR NICOLAS BARTER
MR ANTONY ALBERTI	MR STEPHEN BARTLEY
MRS ANTONY ALBERTI	MR JOHN BASSETT
MR RICHARD ALEXANDER	MRS JEAN BASSETT
MRS RICHARD ALEXANDER	MR DAVID BATCHELOR
MRS JUDY ALEXANDER	MR GEOFFREY BATTMAN
MRS ROSEMARY ALEXANDER	MRS MARGARET BATTMAN
HRH PRINCESS RAIYAH BINT AL-HUSSEIN	MR PATRICK BATY
MR KHALED ALJASEM	SIR PETER BAXENDELL
MR CC ANDREAE	LADY BAXENDELL
THE MARQUESS OF ANGLESEY*	MRS SARAH BAXTER
MR JOHN ARMITAGE	MR STEPHEN BAXTER
MRS CATHERINE ARMITAGE	MRS ROBERT BEALE
MR MARK ARMOUR	MS SHARON BEATTY
MRS KATRINA ASHE	MISS ANGELA BEDDALL
MISS CAROLINE ASHETON	MR TERENCE BENDIXSON*
MS ROMA ASHWORTH BRIGGS	MISS ANDREA BENNETT
MR GREGORY ASIKAINEN	MR ROBIN BERKELEY
MR ROBERT ATKINSON	MRS ROBIN BERKELEY OBE
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MRS AUSTIN WOODS
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MR DAVID YOHANNAN
MR GORDON YOUNG
MRS GORDON YOUNG
MR BASIL ZIRINIS
MRS BASIL ZIRINIS
CLLR. SONIA ZVEDENIUUK

A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark green athletic top and leggings, is sitting in a meditative pose on a black yoga mat. She is positioned in the center of a large, modern apartment with a light-colored wooden floor. Behind her is a large window with a view of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the background, a tall brick building with many windows is visible. The overall atmosphere is serene and luxurious.

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