



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity 27626

Summer Bulletin 2026

Editor: Michael Stephen



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

The Society now has 1,129 members. This is fantastic, but please encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Society, by visiting our website and clicking on **“Join Us.”** They do not have to be resident in Chelsea.

FUTURE EVENTS

Unless otherwise specified all events will start promptly at 6pm. Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes before.
For more information including booking and payment details, see the Society's website.



The Chelsea Society's Garden Party

Thursday 25th June 2026

The Chelsea Society's 2026 Garden Party will be held at Auriens, 2 Dovehouse Street, at 6-8pm

Tickets £40.

Members may also bring guests.

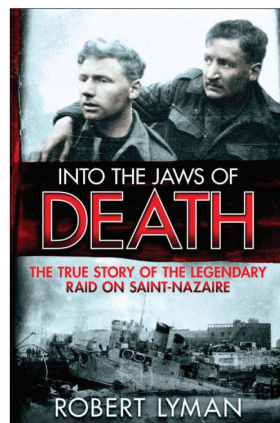
Royal Hospital tour

Friday 24th July 2026 at 14.30

A small number of places are available to discover the history and stories of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

The tour begins at the Grade II listed Soane Stable Yard and will include College Court, the original site for the Chelsea Theological College built by King James I. Also the Heritage Berth designed by Sir Christopher Wren where in-pensioners were first accommodated.

Tickets £25.



St Nazaire

Monday 27th July 2026

The distinguished historian and author, Robert Lyman, will tell The Chelsea Society the true story of how the decisive courage of a small group of men changed the course of the Second World War.

It is the night of 28 March 1942. The Royal Navy and marine commandos are poised to assault the German-held port of Saint-Nazaire in what will be one of the most audacious and daring raids of the War. The plan is simple: to drive an old destroyer, packed with explosives, at full speed into the outer gate of the Normandie dock.

Tickets £25.

Dr. David Starkey

Monday 7th September 2026

The historian, author, and television commentator and presenter, Dr. David Starkey, has agreed to meet with The Chelsea Society at 6pm at Chelsea Old Town Hall.

He will comment on how the British constitution has changed over the past 35 years. David Starkey wrote and presented the 1984 Channel 4 documentary series 'This Land of England', and has written and presented several history documentaries for BBC television, beginning with the Award-winning Henry VIII (1998). He achieved notoriety as a panellist on the BBC debate programme 'The Moral Maze', debating the moral issues of the day.

Tickets £25.



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Germany's role in the defence of Europe

Monday 5th October 2026



Prof. Matthias Strohn M.St. (Oxon), DPhil (Oxon), FRHistS is a Colonel in the German Army reserve, and is attached to the German Military Delegation in the UK.

He spoke to The Chelsea Society on 2nd September 2024, when we asked him to explain how thinking in Germany about defence had changed from 1945 when nobody wanted a German army, to the present day when Germans and their allies realise that Germany has a vital role to play in the defence of Europe against Russia. This time we are asking him for an update on whether Germany is yet able to provide a strong military force and an effective deterrent.

Tickets £25.



2026 AGM

The AGM of The Chelsea Society will be held in the Great Hall at Chelsea Old Town Hall on Monday 16th November 2026 at 6pm.

PAST EVENTS



2025 AGM

The AGM of The Chelsea Society was held in the Great Hall at Chelsea Old Town Hall on Monday 17th November 2025 at 6pm.

Carols at Chelsea Green

The 38th Carol Service on Chelsea Green began at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 9th December. This is a wonderful event with the road being closed for the safety of around 200-300 visitors.

The choir was accompanied by a Brass Band. There was a raffle in aid of GlassDoor for prizes donated by shopkeepers and other supporters around Chelsea Green. This was sponsored and organized by John D. Wood and Clarion Housing Group, who matched all donations made during the evening.



Christmas Party | Event date: Thursday 18th December

The Society's 2025 Christmas party was held at Auriens, 2 Dovehouse Street where The Society welcomed many members and guests.

PAST EVENTS

Anglo-Russian relations | Event date: Monday 12th January

Relations between Russia and Britain are now at their lowest point since the Cold War. Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has put the Anglo-Russian relationship under enormous strain. Putin sees himself as the inheritor and protector of a Russian imperial tradition which stretches back to Peter the Great, the first Tsar to visit Britain in 1698.

Stephan Roman's talk explored the complex historical relationship between Imperial Russia and Britain during three hundred years of Romanov rule and demonstrated that the events of the past continue to echo today in powerful and disturbing ways.



The Mountbattens | Event date: Monday 9th February

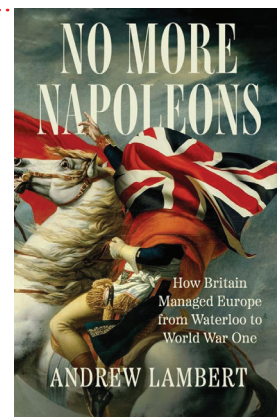
Andrew Lownie spoke to the Society about his book on the Mountbattens

No more Napoleons! | Event date: Monday 2nd March

Andrew Lambert is the author of "NO MORE NAPOLEONS: HOW BRITAIN MANAGED EUROPE FROM WATERLOO TO WORLD WAR ONE"

He explained how, for just under a century, Britain ensured it would not face another Napoleon – manipulating European powers while building a global maritime empire. This is the remarkable story of how Britain kept a whole continent in check – until the collapse of this delicately-balanced order in 1914.

Andrew Lambert is Laughton Professor of Naval History at King's College London, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is the author of many books including Nelson, Seapower States and The British Way of War.



Nigel West on China

Event date: Monday 13th April

Nigel West is an author who has concentrated on security and intelligence issues.

He has been a frequent speaker at intelligence seminars and has

lectured at both the KGB headquarters in Dzerzhinsky Square, Moscow; and at the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. He continues to lecture to members of the intelligence community at the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies in Washington, D.C

Nigel West met with The Chelsea Society at Chelsea Old Town Hall on Monday 13th April 2026, and his subject was "The Chinese Ministry of State Security".

Chelsea at War

Event date: Thursday 30th April

At 6.30 on 30th April, Michael Stephen, Editor of the Annual Report of the Chelsea Society spoke at the National Army Museum about Chelsea in WWII – as seen by The Chelsea Society.



PAST EVENTS

Concert at St. Luke's | Event date: Thursday 14th May

Chelsea Society members were invited by the Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity to an evening celebrating their pioneering arts programme.

In Rhythm celebrated their specialist music programme – a high quality, bespoke initiative of performance and participation. Members saw this work transformed from wards and bedsides to the magnificent setting of St. Luke's Church, offering a rare opportunity to witness the profound impact of music in healthcare.



A Room with a View - a talk by Sarah Quill

Event date: Monday 18th May

A Room with a View: Filming in Florence with Merchant Ivory

Sarah Quill worked as the set photographer during filming, and described some of the experiences of the cast and crew in Italy and England. Illustrated with her photographs, her talk looked at the background to the film and the lasting appeal of Forster's novel.

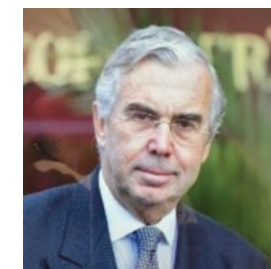
NEWS

Paul Knapman

It is with great regret that The Chelsea Society records the death on 5th April 2026 of a long-standing and distinguished member, Dr. Paul Knapman. We send our condolences to his widow, Penny, and her family.

After Epsom college, he studied medicine at St George's Hospital, qualifying as a doctor before deciding to pursue a career in forensic medicine and the law.

He was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn, and in 1980 succeeded Gavin Thurston as HM Coroner for Westminster. He served until his retirement in 2011, having presided over many thousands of inquests into deaths arising from natural causes, accidents, and self-harm, but also from terrorism, and disaster.



Margaret Thompson

It is with great regret that The Chelsea Society records the death of Dr. Margaret Thompson on 28th January 2026.

Margaret was a distinguished psychologist. She was the wife of the Society's Chairman Dr. James Thompson, and had lived in Paradise Walk, Chelsea, since 1982. She successfully led a campaign to oppose major development in Paradise Walk in 1983, and in 2006 she led the "Save Sloane Square" campaign, which was successful in preserving the Square. She became Secretary of the King's Road Association of Chelsea Residents, and Membership Secretary of the Chelsea Society.



NEWS

Re-development of the former St Wilfrid's Care Home

The Society has been involved, along with Tite Street residents and the Cheyne Walk Trust, in a series of consultation meetings with London Square, a Middle East owned development company, about their proposals for the demolition and re-development of the former St Wilfrid's Care Home. The planning application has been withdrawn and we wait to see what if anything the developer wishes to do now.

Our concerns have focussed on both the use and the design of the new building. Below is a computer-generated image of what the proposed building would look like, together with the existing buildings.



Marks & Spencer

The Chelsea Society understands that the redevelopment of the Marks & Spencer building has been postponed/abandoned, and that M&S have signed a new lease. We do not yet know for how many years.



1746 Map of Chelsea



This is John Rocque's 1746 map of Chelsea, coloured by Matt Brown and reproduced here with his permission.

Historic places are vital

"Historic places are vital for mental health, providing the permanence people need to feel secure in their surroundings and the stability to function and thrive in everyday life, according to a new report published by Historic England and the University of Glasgow."

This is a principal reason why The Chelsea Society has been working to protect Chelsea for nearly 100 years.

The report builds on Historic England research published in 2024 which found that the presence of nearby everyday historic places – rather than rare, exceptional sites – increases residents' life satisfaction.



The Moravians

There will be a series of lectures this year about the Moravians and their church at Fetter Lane, which moved to Moravian corner (near World's End) in Chelsea in WWII. The buildings became the home and studio of sculptors Ernest and Mary Gillick.

For details and free tickets see the Society's website.



NEWS

The Gaumont

The Gaumont is an impressive development by Cadogan. It is currently being fitted out and is expected to be opened in Q4 this year by Curzon cinemas.

The main spaces at Curzon Chelsea will include:

- The Main Stage – a 300-seat auditorium with Dolby Atmos sound and 4K projection, designed for premieres, screenings and large-scale events.
- The Atrium – a central, flexible space for gatherings, receptions and live programming, with capacity for up to 300 guests.
- Studio A – a highly adaptable studio supporting podcasts, writers' rooms, workshops and experimental screenings.
- Studio B – a flexible screening and event space for up to 60 guests.
- The Pod – a dedicated, fully equipped audio and video recording studio.



Ernest & Mary Gillick

The Chelsea Society was represented by its Vice-chairman at the unveiling at Moravian corner of a commemorative plaque for those famous Chelsea sculptors on 26th March 2026.

Mary is best known as the designer and sculptor of the first coin to bear the image of Queen Elizabeth II. Ernest is best known for the Cenotaph in Glasgow.

The plaque and the unveiling were arranged by Ian Foster.



Obstruction by bikes

The Society has written to RBKC as follows:

Hired electric bikes are still being parked on pavements and in other places where they cause obstructions, and hazards to pedestrians. They are also encroaching upon spaces reserved for residents' and visitors' parking.

RBKC has authorised places where these bikes can and should be parked, but they are not always being respected.

Royal Brompton Hospital

The Royal Brompton Hospital has always been at the forefront of heart and lung care — from the UK's first hole-in-the-heart operation in 1956 to Europe's first Cystic Fibrosis (CF) clinic 1965.

Today, it's recognised as one of the world's top ten cardiology hospitals — and it's right on our doorstep. Expert surgeons perform highly specialised, life-saving procedures every day. They're already pioneering minimally invasive techniques, but now they can further revolutionise complex surgery – treating more patients and saving more lives.

With our help Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity want the Royal Brompton to be the first in the UK to have a Robot Assisted Cardiac Surgery Programme with the ground-breaking da Vinci 5 system.





THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Are you interested in protecting the interests of all who live and work here as well as helping to shape the future of Chelsea? You don't have to live in Chelsea.

If so, then join us today at www.chelseasociety.org.uk/join-us/

For nearly 100 years the Society has taken a keen interest in what happens in Chelsea – from preserving and conserving the historic architecture to informing and influencing the infrastructure that will serve the community in the twenty-first century. By joining today you will become part of a group that explores and respects the past while influencing the future.

As a member you receive:

- Regular newsletters and website articles, informing you of what is happening in Chelsea
- Lectures with interesting speakers and topics
- Visits to buildings and sites of interest inside and outside Chelsea
- A Summer Party and a Christmas Party in a local venue of interest
- Support and assistance on issues relating to planning or historical research
- Annual Report, featuring specially written articles on subjects of interest
- A summer Bulletin

Cost of membership:

The subscription is only £30 per year for an individual member and £40 for two joint members at the same address. These funds support our involvement in planning issues and organising lectures and events. We also give an annual art prize and another for photography. We have recently introduced Corporate Membership to encourage local businesses, large and small, to benefit from the Society.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please encourage your friends to join the Society by visiting “Join Us” on the website,.

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

Our postal address is: 5 Brook Street, Bampton EX16 9LU

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