



THE CHEYNE WALK TRUST

Newsletter

November 2020 | Issue 55

www.cheynewalktrust.org

Protect Chelsea's Riverside

CWT Chairman Col David Waddell emphasises the urgent need for a more effective Thames Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



Working to preserve the unique character of Chelsea riverside is a priority.

The present planning guidelines for the Thames Conservation Area are arguably somewhat dated (Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement 1983) and in 2017 the six councillors of the Royal Hospital and Chelsea Riverside Wards proposed to the Council of RBK&C, which agreed, that the Council should engage in a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) for Chelsea Riverside.

This proposal was warmly welcomed by the key residents' associations such as the Chelsea Society, Cheyne Walk Trust and KRACR, who engaged in dialogue with Councillors and Council Officers to take this forward commencing in October 2017. A draft Appraisal was duly issued in 2018 for consultation from 31 October 2018 to 12 December 2018 and the Trust made a submission, supported by The Chelsea Society with a complementary submission.

Whilst the new CAA is an excellent descriptive document, it does not in itself provide the specific conservation and planning guidance necessary to advise application

of the CAA and enable appropriate control of conservation and planning activities. As a result, a management plan is necessary to provide such guidance in order to protect the Chelsea Riverside.

Council disruption over Grenfell and recently COVID-19 has delayed progress but we are pleased that our Ward Councillors have maintained support for this important task. A newly appointed RBK&C team lead Conservation Officer recently circulated an Options paper and held a formal initiation meeting. The aim is to complete the initial drafting and consultation (including statutory consultation) and produce the Thames Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMPS) by the end of the present financial year (April 2021).

The key areas of concern raised by consultees are addressed in the Options paper; these include the following topics:

- i) Boundary Review: Chelsea Bridge (east) to Chelsea Creek (west)
- ii) Views: need to note key views both across and along the river

CHEYNE WALK TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020 POSTPONED

Sadly, in the light of current Government COVID-19 directions we have reluctantly cancelled The Cheyne Walk Trust AGM and Autumn Reception for 2020 that was planned take place in November. The formal AGM business of presentation of accounts and the election of Committee members is therefore addressed by means of an abbreviated AGM Report enclosed with this newsletter. The planned guest speaker address by architectural historian and presenter Dan Cruickshank, Hon FRIBA, on his forthcoming book 'Built in Chelsea' will be deferred until early in 2021 together with the Reception for guests and members that was to have followed. As soon as it is practical to confirm a new date for this event, we will advise members.

- iii) Piers and Working Boats: use of river and planning framework
- iv) Houseboats: character and use
- v) Thames Path: integrity, continuation and improvement
- vi) Cremorne Wharf: future use and safeguarding as wharf
- vii) Trees: Conservation and improvement of riverside tree planting
- viii) Cabman's Shelter: restoration and control
- ix) Street Furniture: repair and reinstatement
- x) Advertisements: reduce/control discordant electronic poster boards
- xi) Surfacing Materials: conserve York paving in conservation areas
- xii) Thames Tideway Tunnel: ensure harmonious impact of built elements
- xiii) The Thames: develop heritage character and information
- xiv) Archaeology: survey and record significant aspects

The Cheyne Walk Trust will remain closely involved with this programme and post updates on our website for the benefit of members.

Gotcha!

RBK&C launches hi-tech cameras to catch noisy supercars

Vroom! Vroom!... Chelsea residents know all too well the deafening roar of engines revving as speeding supercars and motorbikes make life miserable with their ear-splitting engines. Wide avenues and Sloane Street, are all popular hotspots. According to the Council, between June and August alone there were 35 official resident complaints of engines racing. Now there's a way to target these dangerous drivers.

As Lead Member for Transport Councillor Johnny Thalassitis explains, Residents have had enough of drivers using our streets as a racetrack. We have had fines in place for a while now, but this new noise camera technology will make sure we are



Let's hope it's the end of the mad, for supercars causing noise and disruption in Chelsea. Image: Nigel Howard.

catching more of the worst offenders.' The camera is triggered by noise exceeding 80 decibels, capturing the offending vehicle on film and making prosecution much simpler.

Cheyne Walk itself does not have a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) designation which makes it more difficult to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for noisy engines. However, if residents rally and make their views known,

the Council will consider granting a PSPO for the area.

If you are disturbed by revving engines call the RBK&C Noise & Nuisance Team day or night on 0207 361 3002 to report it. Or send an email with details such as the type of vehicle, time, frequency, duration and noise level to Julian Trill, the Noise & Nuisance Manager, Julian.Trill@rbkc.gov.uk

Wear masks, save lives.



RBK&C CREST 2 enhances local quality of life

The Customer & Resident-focused Environmental Services Transformation (CREST) 2 project has been reviewing whether the enforcement and engagement functions, such as CCTV, that are being delivered on streets, in estates, neighbourhoods and parks could be brought together into a single team, to create an improved model of delivery. CREST is an established Council initiative to make the Council activities more actively resident focused. This is much to be applauded.

Initiatives such as the potential to fund associated CCTV capability partly from a charge on submission of development Construction Transportation Management Plans is under consideration. However, the eagerly awaited app for mobile phones promised in November 2018 has still to arrive. Once launched, this app will allow residents to use their mobile phones to report to the Council – sending photographs of anything untoward, infringements by contractors, illegal parking, dog fouling, criminal activity even.

Sadly, due to Covid issues diverting the Council in terms of both money and manpower, as well as complex software issues, the app is still under construction. However, there is help at hand for residents. As part of CREST 2, a Community Safety Wardens Team, comprising 12 Wardens and 2 Supervisors has been introduced this year to focus on environmental crime, community safety and anti-social behaviour.

The New Normal?

Roddy Mullin reflects on a Chelsea summer during Covid

As a result of lockdown all sorts of planned events and entertainments were cancelled or postponed. Gazing out upon deserted streets in early summer was a weird experience; seeing numbers of dead plants, in pots and window boxes, showed many had forgotten to instruct anyone to water while they vanished to second homes. Sadly, it seemed every week that more King's Road shops closed their doors. The Chancellor's August restaurant reprieve

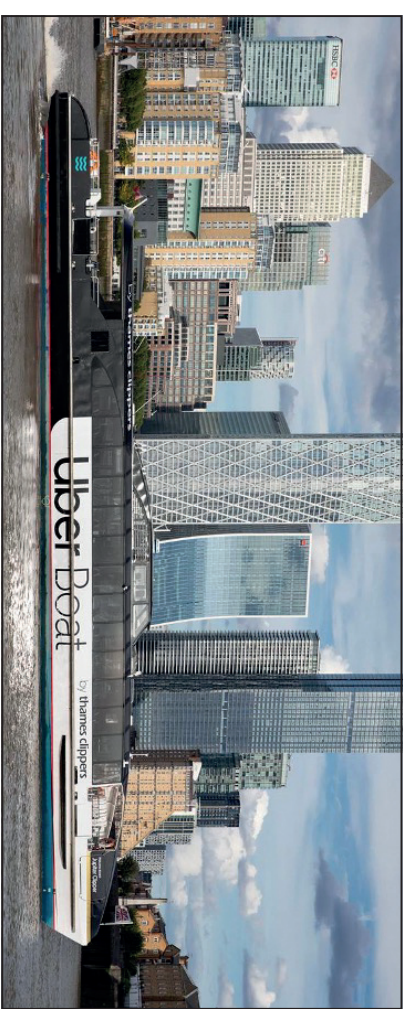
provided a welcome break.

Over the summer, the Thames Path on both sides of the river has been much used by walkers, joggers, runners, cyclists and scooter users. Now traffic levels on Cheyne Walk have returned and seem higher now, probably as a result of the closure of Vauxhall Bridge, ongoing closure of Hammersmith Bridge, and lane restrictions on Wandsworth Bridge. It does seem regrettable that Councils and Transport for London cannot coordinate, and

limit works to one bridge or bridge approach at a time.

When the river buses resumed service on June 15th, it took just four days for their engine jet wash to scour the riverbanks, leaving no sediment (or shrimps) for the geese, who unsurprisingly departed. King Offa's Fish Trap circa 780 AD, which is just exposed at low water, others report, is also suffering from the river bus wash (it is not a protected monument).

Five years ago, the new more powerful type of Thames Clipper boats was introduced. Thanks to the lockdown, when the boat service ceased for several months, their real effect on the river environment is only now fully appreciated. This interval allowed mud



The Uber by Thames Clippers boats, should they be more closely monitored?

and sediment to return to the foreshore. The sediment contains freshwater shrimp much enjoyed by geese and ducks – and several large groups arrived over lockdown, Grey Lags, Gadwall, Egyptian and Barnacle – one pair of Grey Lags produced eight goslings of which seven reached maturity.

Potential solutions could be to travel slowly - we are told there is actually a speed limit, but it is not policed, - or restrict the larger craft to say no further upstream than Battersea Power Station pier. The previous river buses did not scour. Our MP Greg Hands took action contacting Thames Clippers but without remedy. The Environment Agency stated it was not their concern and suggested contacting the RSPB. It's sad.

But the summer allowed residents to sunbathe and bask in the calm of no aircraft and few helicopters, accompanied by heat – one day it reached 39c and with lovely river views and stunning sunsets and sunsets, who could want anything else than a staycation holiday at Chelsea Reach?



Blessfully peaceful summer days were one of the unexpected benefits of Covid restrictions.

Author Dan Cruikshank describes a Chelsea Masterpiece



Number 52 Cadogan Square is one of the most extraordinary houses in London, ablaze with energy and inventive detail, and utterly – and almost unbelievably – romantic in its intentions. The building is a rich feast for the eye and for the imagination. Bridget Cherry calls it ‘a glorious apotheosis of Flemish Renaissance’ revival (Bridget Cherry and Niklaus Rysner, *The Buildings of England, London 3: North West, London: Penguin, 1991* p. 580), and she is right.

The house was built on the portion of the Cadogan-owned Hans Town that from the late 1870s was developed to form the highly prestigious Cadogan Square. It was designed in 1883 by the eminent architect Sir Ernest George and his firm, George & Petro, and completed in 1886 (as a date in the gable proclaims) for Thomas Andros de la Rue, the owner of one of the UK’s most prestigious printing companies. Renowned for its technical and artistic sophistication, the company was famous for its distinctive playing cards. Andros and his socialite wife entertained on a grand scale, and the house was created to be a showcase for their lavish lifestyle. He was made a Baronet in 1898.

The house is built of red brick, with biscuit-coloured terracotta moulded detail and decoration combined with some spectacular moulded and rubbed red brick ornament. The composition is asymmetrical with two bays of different heights and forms framing the centre of the façade, which is crowned by an all-embracing two-storey high gable of complex and curvaceous Baroque form.

The decoration on the façade represents a fairytale of bizarre creatures; some delightful, others sinister. The arched entrance porch, set within the southern bay, is made of terracotta and is framed by exquisitely moulded male and female Caryatids, or Herms, grasping volutes above their heads, both in the seventeenth-century Flemish Mannerist style. The female face on the keystone of the arch gasps – open-mouthed and looking down – at all who enter.

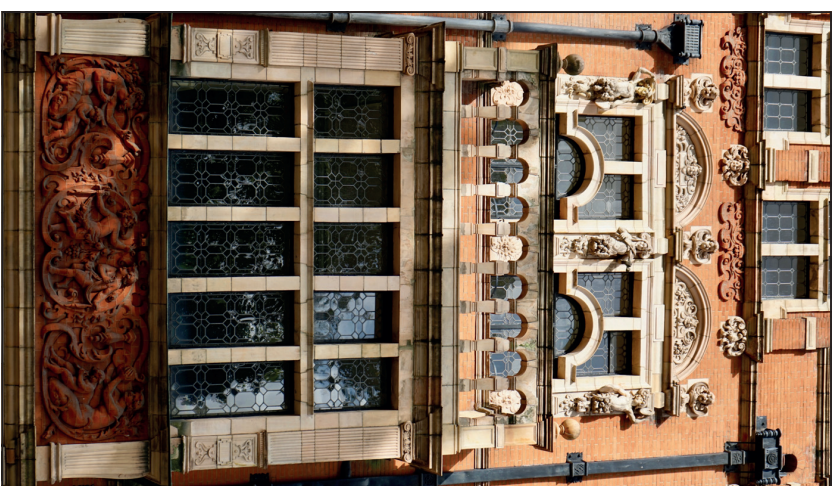
The north bay displays, at ground-floor level – below terracotta mullions and transoms of its tall window – moulded and rubbed red brick panels depicting youths disporting themselves among swags and strapwork, while side panels contain grinning, long-eared demonic imps. At first-floor level there is another large brick panel, this time showing a satyr and satyrress or fauna (observe her down foot) playing instruments, while putti cavort among swags of fruit and vines. The side panels here also show putti playing pipes, suggesting the room behind was used for dining or dancing.

At second-floor level, above the north bay, is a pair of windows with terracotta-made arched mullions – a fashionable motif in the 1880s – that are accompanied by three Caryatids, two male and one female, smiling while they play musical instruments. The female Caryatid is being particularly energetic as she clashes away on symbols. Above and around the Caryatids are grinning masks, and the heads of putti or cherubs that smirk in a maniacal manner, like angelic beings possessed.

What is one to make of all this? At the very least it suggests that the architects and clients who favoured the Flemish Renaissance Revival style were not stratified, or conventional late Victorians when it came to matters architectural and artistic. For much of my life I’ve explored Britain’s 18th century architecture, and although Chelsea



Painting magistrate Baronet Thomas Andros de la Rue (1849–1911) commissioned 52 Cadogan Gardens to be an opulent, exceptional home for his glittering social life and legendary parties.



Above: The gable was the most elaborate of any house on Cadogan Square and features terracotta relief sculptures featuring cavorting putti and satyrs.



Below: Detail of archway.



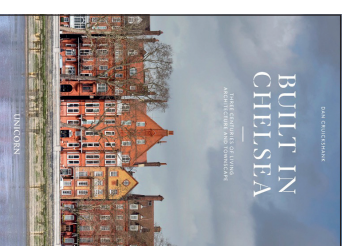
The arched entry porch features carved reliefs designed by Harry Bates, a member of the Royal Academy of Arts known for his Classical subjects.

has many fine examples – especially on Clarendon Walk. I discovered in Hans Town a tremendous treasure trove of late 19th century domestic architecture. Researching and writing about this opened new artistic horizons.

The Georgian urban ideal was to achieve a broad sweep of modest, simple external uniformity of façade design in the creation of a coherent and unified composition. All was reversed by the late 19th century due to the emergence of the Queen Anne Revival Movement, which had its epicentre in Cadogan Square. Each house asserts, in most striking manner, through its exterior architecture, its own individual identity and that of its client. Incredible artistry and invention came into play and nowhere more so than in 52 Cadogan Square. It really is a fairy tale, part playful, part seemingly sinister in brick, mortar and terracotta. Once seen never forgotten. Flemish Renaissance revival architecture was hugely popular in late 19th century London, but there really is nothing quite like this extraordinary house.



Above: Dan Cruikshank is a long time chronicler of London life and architecture. Dan will be the Guest Speaker at the upcoming, Clarendon Walk Trust Reception later in the year.

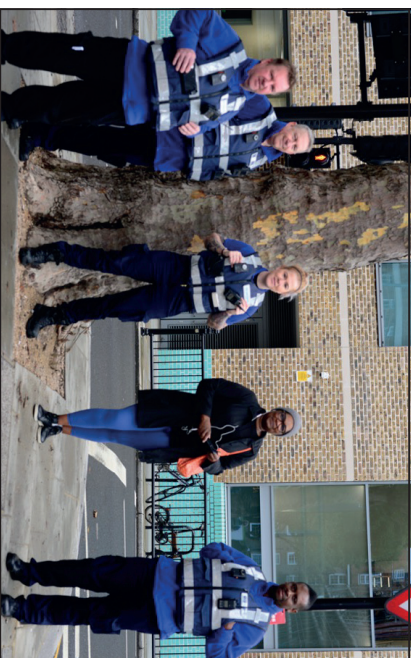


Left: Built in Chelsea: Three Centuries of Living Architecture and Townscape by Dan Cruikshank, offers a personal portrait of Chelsea’s architectural evolution. Available in bookstores from early 2021.

Local Heroes

Community Safety Wardens patrol the streets with head and heart

Hallie Swanson reports



The newly launched Community Safety Wardens on patrol. (left to right) Mindugas Kizyankansky, Tony Blackburn, Maddy Mittala, and Keelin Piper, with Brompton Ward Councillor, Nolan Ivis.

Rescuing lost dogs, foiling criminals, protecting residents—it's all in a day's work for the newly formed crew of Community Safety Wardens. According to the RBK&C Council, since their launch just a few months ago, the Wardens have logged nearly 900 incidents, resulting in a number of arrests. Councillor Emma Will, Lead Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety reveals that, 'The number of incidents our Wardens have dealt with shows that they have hit the ground running in tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime in our borough'. To find out what it's all about, I recently joined a team on their rounds in Chelsea.

With her confident stride, blonde hair swept up in a ponytail and a colourful tartan on her arm, Maddy could be any of the trendy young women you see on the King's Road. But instead of window shopping she's patrolling a beat that takes 8 hours in a single shift and covers roughly 1.6 miles around the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. As I join them, she and her fellow Wardens, Tony Keelin and Mindugas, are on a mission to make the local streets a pleasant place for residents.

to build trust and let the beggars or homeless know we aren't just here to move them on, but to help them find better alternatives.'

When a Warden reports an incident, it is logged into special iPads that are connected directly to the various departments in the council. This makes it much simpler and swifter to get action. For instance, when Tony discovered illegal street trading on Kensington High Street, he alerted the Police and the business was shut down. Or when a suspicious car was reported, the Wardens were able to confirm it was being used for drug deals. The iPad uses an app being developed by the council to connect complaints to the right department in record time. For instance, Maddy can see immediately on the iPad which areas are having problems in real time and can allocate resources accordingly, explaining 'We work closely with the relevant departments to achieve results.' Once fully developed, the Council hopes to expand the app for the wider community to use.

This combined use of hi-tech hardware and human interaction is much welcomed as a reassuring presence, especially with the decline of the traditional 'Bobby' on the beat. The Community Safety Wardens are proud to be winning hearts and minds as they bravely go about their rounds, making life a little better for us all. The Cheyne Walk Trust applauds this positive new initiative by the Council.

And while they are empowered to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, Community Protection Notices and Public Space Protection Orders, their approach is more about compassion than confrontation. We aren't here to replace the Police' explains Maddy. Her team focusses on changing antisocial behaviour such as aggressive begging, dog fouling, noisy builders, drunken revellers, unruly urinals, litterers and those failing to observe Covid restrictions. In short, taking care of issues that erode the quality of life in the community. To achieve this, they apply the 'Four E's': Explain, educate, encourage and enforce. As Keelin explains, 'It's about how you approach people, learning to stop and listen. I like to help people out. Every day is a new challenge to make a positive impact.'

As we stroll along, a young man in a baseball cap with a terrier by his side greets Mindugas and they have an animated chat in Lithuanian (one of several languages he speaks). Mindugas explains that he had found the man begging a few months ago and connected him to social services to get help. Now he is off the street, getting his life back. It's the chance to make a difference that attracts these Wardens. As Tony puts it, 'We try



Maddy Mittala, RBK&C Community Warden Supervisor explains the role of the team in safeguarding the local community.

Save South Ken Station

A mega-redevelopment of South Kensington threatens to destroy local heritage, says Sophie Andreae, Chair of the Brompton Association

This November the planning and listed building consent applications for a controversial re-development of this landmark local area are due to be considered by RBK&C. Please join such respected local groups as the Chelsea Society and Cheyne Walk Trust and support the campaign to save South Kensington tube station from a redevelopment that will transform this unique local enclave into another Fulham Broadway.

Background and betrayal

Having defeated TfL's various attempts to foist unwanted development schemes on the South Kensington community, TfL announced in 2014 it wanted to work with local groups to prepare a Development Brief that all could support. The result was the 2016 plan which upgraded the station and provided step free access and a refurbishment of the area that was entirely compatible with local opinion and the architectural heritage of South Kensington.

That was in 2016. By 2018 TfL had teamed up with developers Native Land who in turn brought in architects Rogers Sirk Harbour and Partners. Out went the carefully considered Development Brief

and its principles – replaced by an oversize, inappropriate and destructive scheme completely at odds with what had been agreed before. The station itself was listed in 2006, and the entire site lies within a Conservation Area, surrounded by other listed buildings including the Grade II* terraces in Pelham Place, which will be overshadowed by an outsized new building.

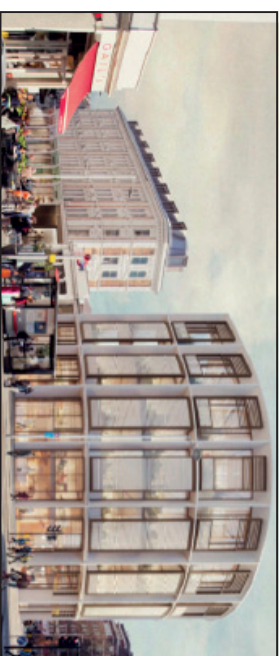
Unless RBK&C turns this wholly unsustainable scheme down in November, the attractive low scale, open and airy period character of South Kensington will be replaced by a soulless mega-development while the station remains as congested as ever, and still without 'step free access' for passengers as Transport for London has paused funding for this due to Covid issues impacting on its finances.

What you can do

Time is running out. Register your objection to the planning application via www.savesouthkensington.com. For further details about the proposed redevelopment, Google SAVE Britain's Heritage South Kensington, and it will take you to the campaign page.



The 2016 development plan upgrades the station and surroundings, while preserving its essential scale and historic character. Drawing: Chris Dwyer



The 2020 plan goes Native Land thoughts earlier community consultation and proposes a radical re-development with structures like a multi-storey replacement for the traditional 'Gannon' 'tallhouse'. Drawing: Chris Dwyer

Chelsea History Festival 2020 a resounding success



Exploring what life was like for a WWI soldier, one of the many events at the Chelsea History Festival

Challenging the assumption that events can't go forward in the time of COVID, the festival's co-founders – the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Chelsea and Chelsea Physic Garden – hosted a diverse programme of online as well as socially-distanced, in-person talks from world-class speakers, authors, thinkers and historians. The event attracted hundreds of applicants for tickets, and many of the more popular speakers, such as author William Dalrymple, sold out.

The CWT is delighted to appoint Dave Walker

The distinguished RBK&C Local Studies and Archives Manager, historian and author of the 'Library Time Machine', as an Honorary Committee Member in gratitude for his generous expertise and local knowledge over the years. His wisdom will be a great asset.

Day in the Life' Photography Competition Winners

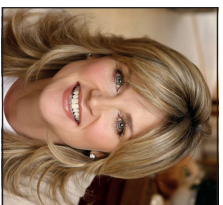
Alison Jackson, Councillor for the RBK&C Riverside Ward and multi-award-winning artist, joined with BAPFA to recognise budding talent and aspiring photographers within The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The winners were honoured at a ceremony held in the Chelsea Physic Garden. The Chelsea Theatre will exhibit the works from 5th October to 5th November.



The Isabel Page won first prize for 'Chelsea Houseboats'
Middle: Patrick Williamson won 2nd Prize for 'Children play in Royal Avenue'

Bonnie Third prize was awarded to John Sheen for 'Dons House Green'

Alison Jackson, founder of the competition and Cllr for Riverside ward and Dr James Thompson Chairman of the Chelsea Society



Anthea Turner joins CWT Committee

The CWT is delighted to announce that the celebrated author and television personality will be bringing her media expertise to the committee. Anthea was a host of Blue Peter from 1992 until 1994, and of GMTV from 1994 until 1996. Since then she has appeared in numerous Radio and TV programs. As a Chelsea resident she is committed to preserving the unique heritage of the riverside and we welcome her support.

Donate books to help local charities

Proceeds go to benefit Mary's Meals, where just £15 feeds a child at school for an entire year (www.marysmeals.org.uk) and Glass Door, (www.glassdoor.org.uk) our local homeless charity. The sales are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month at the Moravian Church gardens at on Milmans Street, just off the King's Road. If you're interested in donating, please contact Pam Mullin: pjmullin@yahoo.com

Stay informed! Send us your email address

Enable the Chyne Walk Trust to alert you to important issues and matters of significant local interest and, if appropriate seek your views. Email the Membership Secretary: david.n.swansons@gmail.com with 'CWTMember'. Address in the subject line. You will receive an acknowledgement in response. In accordance with the latest privacy laws, membership email addresses will be kept confidential and not be released to any commercial concerns.

The Chelsea Physic Garden Hothouse Challenge

The glasshouses are in urgent need of restoration. Donate before 31 March and it will be matched by the John Browne Charitable Trust. For further details or to donate visit: cghothouses.co.uk

Up the Junction

The CWT and the RBK&C are working to resolve traffic safety issues, reports David Waddell

The Problem

The safety of pedestrian facilities at the Beaufort St/King's Rd, Battersea Bridge/Chyne Walk, Beaufort St/Fulham Road junctions have been a matter of local concern for many years. The problem is aggravated by the control exercised by Transport for London, including part funding, especially where these junctions are elements of Strategic Routes and hence the Council for RBK&C cannot make unilateral plans to address the problems that we are all conscious of.

Improvements can only be taken forward as joint and agreed projects with Transport for London. This is very much the case for these junctions on strategic routes that have preferential flow patterns designed to ensure the passage of buses and other traffic in one direction only, thus posing particular hazards to pedestrians where no dedicated light facilities are provided to enhance their safety. Both the Battersea Bridge/Chyne Walk and Beaufort Street/King's Road junctions are examples of this.

Progress

The good news is that RBK&C Councillors have responded to persistent lobbying by the Chyne Walk Trust and other concerned groups on these matters. They have now successfully convinced TfL to take forward a scheme at these critical junctions, -as well as at two other nearby junctions, where local people want safety improvements: Beaufort St/Fulham Road and Old Brompton Road/Drayton Gardens/Bina Gardens.

Councillor Johnny Thalassitis has commented on the financial challenges: ordinarily, these schemes (which combined would cost more than £300,000) would be funded by TfL, through RBK&C's 'Local Implementation Funding' (LIF). It is a frustration to RBK&C that during the lockdown TfL cancelled LIF funding, and is now only funding a small number of project types – which excludes these schemes.

This means that RBK&C may consult on safety improvements to the junction(s), but then have to wait some time for TfL funding to implement. The proposal therefore for

trying to manage this financially would be to build the schemes in phases (For example, build the Beaufort St/Kings Road scheme first).

Specifically, the Council has advised that consultation is now to be programmed and after local discussion has noted our preferences, in the light of funding and programming factors this means we can now anticipate:

- The consultation process will begin this Autumn. Given the financial situation, provision required will be enhanced by a phased work plan, this appears the best option.
- Adopt a phased delivery option (starting with Beaufort St/King's Rd junction) that is likely to ensure prompter and more consistent delivery
- Ensure a coherent programme embracing all 5 projects and giving as much priority as practical to the Chyne Walk/Beaufort St-Battersea Bridge Junction.



Cllr Johnny Thalassitis, Lead Member for Transport and Cllr Cam Kenah, Lead Member for Environment, are consulting with the CWT on crucial local traffic safety measures. Image courtesy of MjLondon.



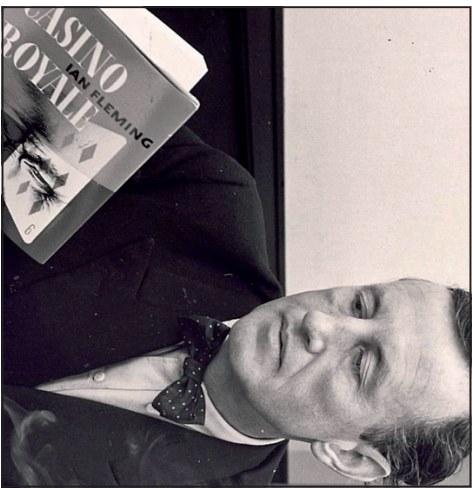
The scene of the fatal 2017 crash at the junction of Battersea Bridge with Chyne Walk. No changes here yet been made to safeguard pedestrians. Image Evening Standard

Spies of SW3

Hallie Swanson reveals the cloak and dagger denizens who called Chelsea home

In his 1935 thriller 'Moonraker', Ian Fleming describes his legendary spy James Bond as living in 'a comfortable flat in a plane tree'd square off the King's Road'. Bond expert and author, William Boyd, deduced the location was 25 Wellington Square as it fits the description and was the home of a fellow Old Etonian friend of Fleming's, Desmond MacCarthy.

Why would the famously sylvan spy choose Chelsea? Badly bombed during the Blitz, in the 1930s Chelsea was hardly the haven of wealth and chic it is now. Back then it was much more raffish, bohemian, and affordable, attracting intellectuals, artists, writers, non-conformists of all kinds - and surprisingly a number of spies. Over the years SW3 has been home to some of the most celebrated and infamous characters, both real and fictional, in the world of espionage.



Fleming wrote the first Bond novel, 'Casino Royale', while living at 54 Cheyne Walk.

Fleming himself was recruited into the Secret Service by MI5 spy-master Maxwell Knight (considered the inspiration behind 'M') who lived in Sloane Street. Knight was a brilliant operator, responsible for infiltrating the UK Communist and Fascist parties and providing critical information to the government, who feared extremists would support a Nazi invasion.

Fleming spent his adolescence and early twenties at 119 Cheyne Walk, where his mother entertained such local luminaries as the artist Augustus John. Fleming always loved Chelsea, and after the war he moved back to Cheyne Walk, to 54 Carlyle Mansions, living there from 1950-1953. It was here that he wrote 'Casino Royale', the first of the James Bond books, based on his daring exploits working in naval intelligence during WW2.



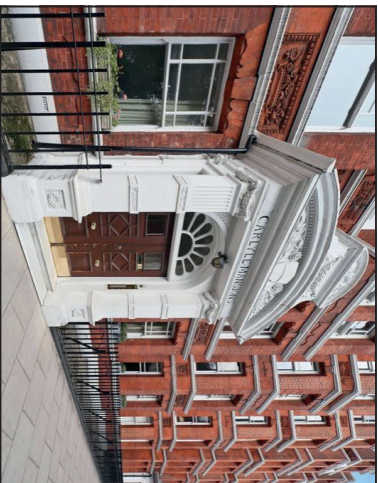
Licensed to thrill: Both Ian Fleming and his fictional spy, James Bond, lived in Chelsea.

One wonders if Fleming was inspired by the writer Somerset Maugham, who years earlier also lived in Carlyle Mansions. In 1916 he was recruited into the British Secret Intelligence Service. His adventures abroad in espionage became the basis of his hugely influential book, 'Ashenden: Or, The British Agent' (1928), considered the forerunner of the spy thriller genre.

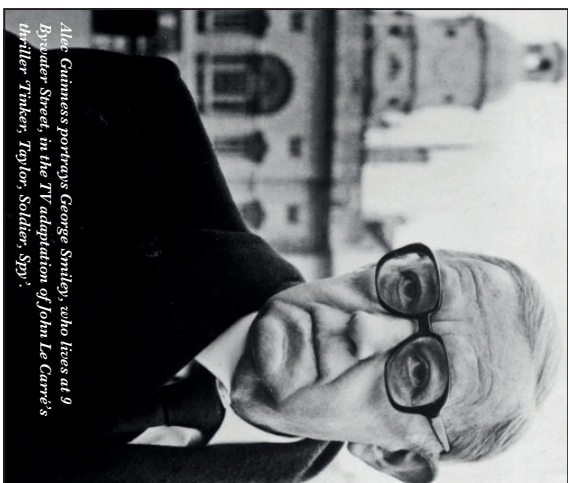
And then there was Erskine Childers (1870-1922), who lived at 10 Carlyle Mansions. Although known as a writer, he served in naval intelligence. His most famous novel 'The Riddle of the Sands', about German plans for a nautical invasion of Britain. It's quite extraordinary that three actual spies who then created fictional spy stories all lived not only on Cheyne Walk, but in the same block of flats.



The 1928 first edition of the Ashenden spy stories, based on Maugham's own exploits.



Carlyle Mansions, at 54 Cheyne Walk, was home to both spies and spy thriller writers.



Alice Guinness portrays George Sintonley, who lives at 9 Bywater Street, in the TV adaptation of John Le Carré's thriller 'Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy'.

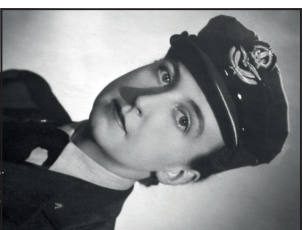
Nearly, one of fiction's most famous spies, George Sintonley, lived at 9 Bywater Street, (coincidentally just across the King's Road from Bond's fictional home in Wellington Square). His creator, John Le Carré (who, like his character, also worked in MI6), often came to Chelsea to see his literary agent and was inspired to locate the enigmatic ringmaster of 'the Circus' here.

One of the great intelligence agencies of WW2 was the Special Operations Executive (SOE), formed to 'set Europe ablaze' as Churchill put it. Its unorthodox methods focused on sending agents specially trained in skills such as espionage, sabotage, radio operation, recruitment, and desertion, to gather crucial information about enemy movements.

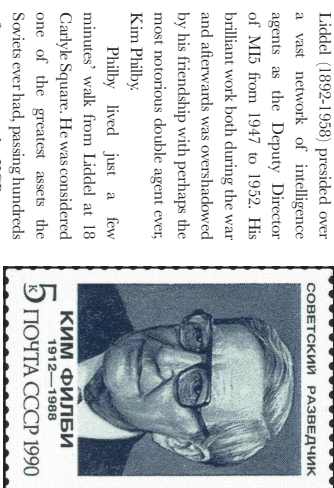
Maurice Buckmaster, OBE (1902 - 1992) was the renowned head of SOE's 'F' (France) Section. He would ride his bicycle from his home in Chelsea to the top secret SOE headquarters in Baker Street, where he would often work all night. His PA was the indomitable Vera Atkins, who was considered the inspiration for Miss Moneypenny in the Bond series. By the time D-Day arrived, 480 active agents were employed by the French section of SOE.

Buckmaster dampened the use of female operatives, a radical concept at the time. He recruited many of the top female spies of the war, like 'Pearl' Whiteington, who led a small army of 3,000 clandestine French resistance fighters with great success against the Nazis. Under her command, roughly 1,000 German soldiers were killed and 18,000 more surrendered after the D-Day invasions.

The Cold War, with its threat of Communism, brought a new level of urgency to clandestine operations. Chelsea once again became a hotbed of intrigue. At 42 Cheyne Walk, spy-master Guy



'Pearl' Whiteington was one of Maurice Buckmaster's most successful SOE spies. He would often take his recruits to dine in restaurants along the King's Road.



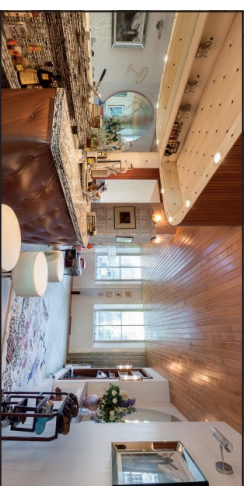
A 1990 Russian stamp commemorating the British traitor Kim Philby.

Liddell (1892-1958) presided over a vast network of intelligence agents as the Deputy Director of MI6 from 1947 to 1952. His brilliant work both during the war and afterwards was overshadowed by his friendship with perhaps the most notorious double agent ever, Kim Philby.

Philby, lived just a few minutes' walk from Liddell at 18 Carlyle Square. He was considered one of the greatest assets the Soviets ever had, passing hundreds of state secrets to the KGB over a career spanning more than fifty years. He was the linchpin of the infamous Cambridge spy ring of Philby, Burgess, Blunt and Maclean. His immersion as a mole in the top echelons of British intelligence was remarkable. He fooled everyone, and even managed to be appointed to head up an MI6 section set up to combat Communism. He betrayed cost the lives of many agents in Eastern Europe. Philby's supreme moment as a super spy surely came when he was congratulated by the then Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan who told the House of Commons, 'I have no reason to believe that Mr Philby has at any time betrayed the interests of his country'. A year later, with the net closing in, Philby escaped on a Russian traveller to Odessa and on to Moscow, where he lived until his death in 1988. Such was his contribution to KGB intelligence that he was commemorated in a 1990 stamp.

During the height of the Cold War, an extraordinary spy plot involving a Russian and British agent took place in Chelsea. In an episode that would seem outlandish even in fiction this true story made headlines in 2015, when it was reported that 19 Upper Cheyne Row served as the meeting place for Oleg Penkovsky, considered the most valuable Soviet double agent of the Cold War, and his MI6 handler, Greville Wynne. As if that weren't story enough, on the pretext that flowing alcohol would lead to further revelations, the man convinced each of their spy agencies to pay for the same bar installed at 19 Upper Cheyne Row. It must have been a great success because Wynne was given a £50,000 payout from the US government for his game-changing information, gleaned from Penkovsky, detailing Russian military sites in Cuba which helped Kennedy win the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Russians retaliated by tracking down and executing Penkovsky, then arresting Wynne in Budapest, springing him off to jail in Russia. In 1964 he was rescued in a spy exchange worthy of a John Le Carré thriller. Back in Chelsea, Wynne wrote two books about his life as a secret agent, 'The Man From Moscow', in 1967 and 'The Man From Odessa', in 1981. He died in 1990, one of the last of Chelsea's great Cold Warriors.



The original bar at 19 Uppier Cheyne Row, paid for by both the KGB and MI6. Conversations were drinks led to a few of the Cold War's greatest intelligence coups.

Chelsea Houseboat Owners Under Threat of Eviction

An Update by the Chelsea Reach Boatowners Association

Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company Limited (CYBC) has recently written to several boatowners asserting that their vessels will need to be removed from the mooring when their licence expires. Fourteen boatowners whose licences were due to expire in September have been granted a short extension, but there is no certainty as to what will happen when the extension ends in March, at which point over half of the 60 boats' licences will have expired (including the 14 already served with termination notices).

CYBC asserts most of these boat owners have no right to renew their licence, despite the company having previously assured boatowners that renewals would be straightforward. Many of those facing eviction are elderly, with at least one octogenarian having lived on her boat for over 50 years. The boatowners' campaign to protect their homes has been on-going for four and a half years, but Covid-19 has delayed progression of the boatowners' application to the Court of Appeal. For further information on the houseboat issue visit the website www.chelseaboats.org/info



The continued assault on the rights of houseboat owners endangers this historic Chelsea community.

In Memoriam: Hugh Krall (1924-2020)



Hugh Krall was inspired by the beauty of Chelsea's riverscapes. Image courtesy of Heatherleys.

The much-admired local architect, artist, CWT member and Chelsea Society Council member Hugh Krall sadly passed away in April at the ripe old age of 96. He will be much missed. Hugh was a stalwart supporter of the Society as well as the Cheyne Walk Trust and Heatherleys. He was the driving force for the Chelsea Society Exhibitions for many years, always dedicating himself to the challenging task of mounting the shows.

Hugh was a generous supporter of local causes, donating artworks for charity auctions and also creating a series of lyrical river landscapes used as fundraising greeting cards by the Chelsea Society. A long-time Chelsea resident, Hugh initially lived on a houseboat but later designed and built his own house near Cheyne Walk. He held a number of prestigious exhibitions of his beloved riverscapes.



A view of Cheyne Walk with Chelsea Old Church, by Hugh Krall.

The Cheyne Walk Trust Committee

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The Cheyne Walk Trust represents the interests of Chelsea Riverside residents in maintaining and enhancing the historic area in which they live. We welcome wider member representation on the CWT Committee, in particular if you are interested in planning issues and/or involvement with our newsletter and website. We meet informally every two months or so. If you are interested, please contact David Waddell on 0207 352 9353 or by email to chmn@cheynewalktrust.org.

The Cheyne Walk Newsletter is issued to Cheyne Walk Trust members.

Website: www.cheynewalktrust.org



View from Chelsea Reach, looking towards Battersea, by Walter Greaves, 1870. Image courtesy of the Tate Gallery.