



## Thames Conservation Management Plan

*Denis Strauss, creator of 'Chelsea River Views', explains why it matters*



Royal Hospital



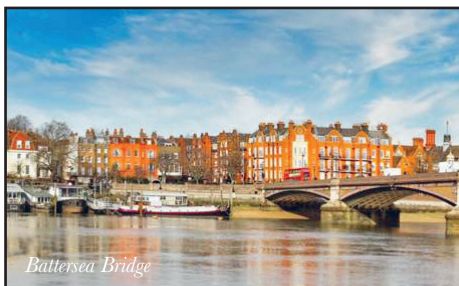
Chelsea Physic Garden



Chelsea Old Church



Cheyne Walk Cadogan Pier - Water Taxi Stop



Battersea Bridge

*Iconic views of the Chelsea Riverside need to be preserved and protected. For more Chelsea river views visit <https://chelseathamesconservation.org>. Photos: Denis Strauss.*

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is presently updating its Thames Conservation Area Management Plan (TCAMP) which provides the strategy for the conservation and protection of the Thames Conservation Area (TCA) in Chelsea. This area is located between Chelsea Bridge in the East to Chelsea Creek in the West and includes the entire length of Chelsea Embankment and Cheyne Walk plus a length of Lots Road.

The consultation is underway with associations and organisations that have an interest in preserving and protecting this area. The Cheyne Walk Trust and its members play a vital role as key stakeholders because the TCAMP is within the CWT's area of representation. Many other resident's associations as well as The Chelsea Society are also participating.

The TCAMP is required to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duty to formulate

a plan for the preservation and enhancement of this historic area. It is designed to provide good guidance for Councillors and Officers of the Royal Borough that are concerned with Planning and Conservation when they make decisions that affect the Thames Conservation Area (TCA).

There are many sections within the TCA that require careful attention in order to arrive at a report that has both sufficient detail and relevance. Here is a brief overview of key areas within the scope of the plan.

Protecting the natural environment is a major concern. The verdant parade of trees that extends along the Northern riverside from Chelsea Bridge to Cremorne Gardens is a point of beauty which keeps the Chelsea Embankment and Cheyne Walk from resembling just another urban motorway. The treeline also plays an important environmental role by alleviating the negative effects of noise and pollution. Green spaces such as Chelsea Embankment Gardens are in great need of reinstatement and thereafter, regular maintenance. Small patches of green spaces at the foot of each of the bridges also need care and attention. I can report that the CWT Committee Member, Anthea Turner, has successfully worked with the Council to reinstate Whistler's Garden for the enjoyment of the many pedestrians and cyclists who stop a while to appreciate the space and views. The Thames Path which follows the riverside is a major amenity enjoyed by thousands of people each year as they admire the views of the river from various points along their way.

The piers in Chelsea are striking features of our riverside. The upstream piers, west of Battersea Bridge provide moorings for houseboats that have 'anchored' the views of this part of the Thames for about a century. These west piers have been designated as 'residential' moorings for houseboats and the RBKC has regulated this usage for decades. For example, the regulations include a minimum 60 yard gap between the two moorings to ensure that there continues to be a point where there is no obstruction of the views across the river. Over the past few years, there have been difficult issues between

the residents of the houseboats (Chelsea Boat Owners Association) and the present owners of the lease on the moorings. The Cheyne Walk Trust is insisting in the TCAMP that the much admired, traditional character of the houseboat community is preserved.

Cadogan Pier situated beneath The Albert Bridge is designated for the use of leisure craft and working boats. The Thames River Taxi is located at this pier and, on occasion, cruise boats use the pier too. Both piers are regulated by the Council to ensure that there is no obstruction of the views of the bridges. The importance of maintaining a complementary design style of the craft that are moored at these piers cannot be overstated as they, together with the iconic bridges, are a dominant feature on the waterfront.

The three bridges, (Chelsea, Albert and Battersea) within this TCA are of the greatest importance in terms of preservation and conservation, and will continue to be maintained at the highest possible level. The bridges are indeed 'shared' by the Royal Borough and Wandsworth Council and there has been very good co-operation of the two to ensure that the bridges remain fit for purpose and remain stunning visual landmarks.

Street furniture and other features

require careful planning and maintenance as they provide important amenities in the TCA. Attractive lighting, bollards, railings, benches and waste bins are presently exceptional features that contribute positively to the area. The Cabmen's Shelter by Albert Bridge will soon be completely renovated, while statues and other prominent features will continue to be protected.

*Protecting the natural environment is a major concern.*

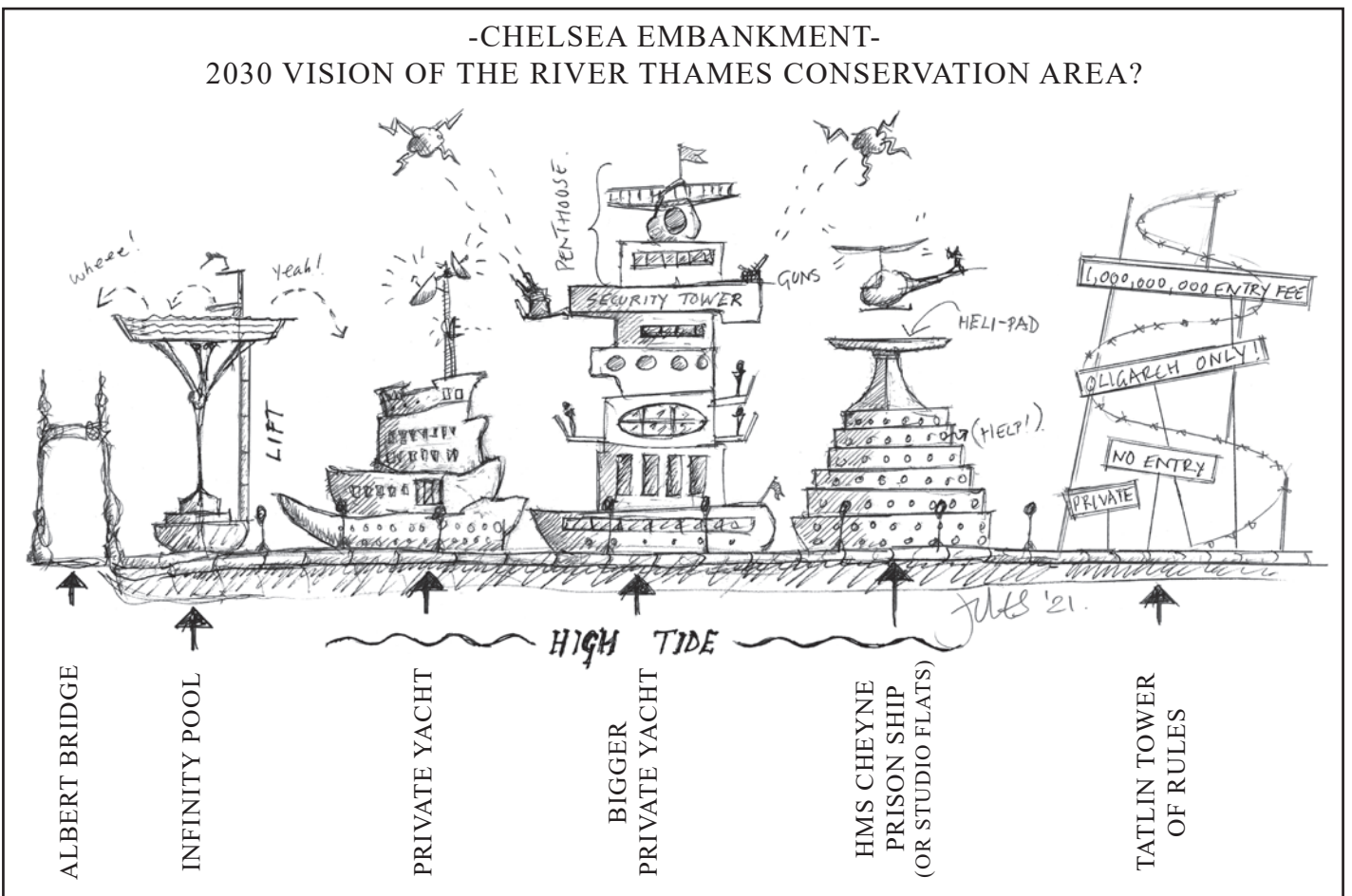
It is important to note that the Thames Conservation Area is not just the 'front window' of the residents. It is in fact visited and viewed by hundreds of thousands as they drive, walk or cycle through each year, as well as many on the waterbus and cruise boats. The TCA also attracts thousands of tourists who visit each year. It is vital that the amenity value of the entire TCA be preserved so that

future generations may enjoy this special part of London.

The Cheyne Walk Trust has photographed the entire Thames Conservation Area in Chelsea from various viewpoints on the bridges as well as from across the river. These pictures can be viewed on the 'Chelsea River Views' test website <https://chelseathamesconservation.org>. The website will be regularly updated with a series of additional views of the treelines as well as the bridges and other interesting features to provide regular comparative snapshots of the TCA over the coming years.

The Council has made great progress in the drafting of the new TCAMP document. We thank Sarah Buckingham for diligently managing this process and also the Ward Councillors and RBKC officers for their outstanding effort and commitment to produce a report that will enable those Councillors and Officers in their decision-making process to ensure that the Thames Conservation Area remains preserved and enhanced for decades to come.

*Below: Without a strong plan for the Chelsea Riverside, the view could change dramatically. Cartoon by Julian Turner.*



# CWT works with TfL and RBK&C to restore Whistler's Garden

*Anthea Turner reports*

Areas of greenery, however small, are vitally important to city dwellers and from where I live on Cheyne Walk, I am grateful every day for Cremorne Gardens, Ropers Garden and especially the small riverside garden surrounding the magnificent bronze statue of Whistler by Nicholas Dimbleby that was commissioned by the Chelsea Arts Club in 2005. However, James Abbott McNeill and I have a bittersweet relationship.

You can't live in a house with a blue



*CWT Committee Member, Anthea Turner*

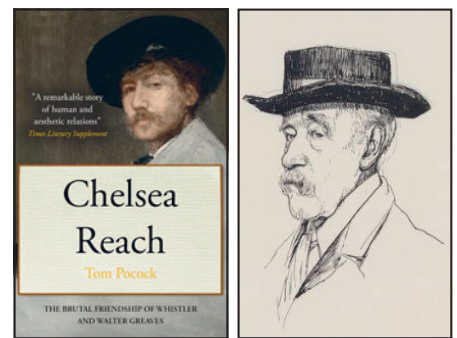
plaque and not be fascinated by its history. I live at 104, where Whistler's pupil Walter Greaves lived with his family until the age of 42. The story goes that after the Greaves family had served their purpose—they did everything from row Whistler on the Thames so he could compose his 'Nocturnes' to helping keep his studio in order and mix his paints-- Whistler moved on to fame and fortune without a backward glance.

Curious about Walter since he once lived in the same house, I read Tom Pocock's book 'Chelsea Reach', which recounts the dramatic relationship between Whistler and his devoted disciple. Its pages took me on a journey to The London Charterhouse, where Walter lived as a pauper for the last years of his life, dying at age 84 from pneumonia and buried in a small grave in Little Hallingbury Essex where until our arrival, the church was unaware of their famous artistic guest in residence.

Seeing Whistler's statue gazing out over the Thames every day, I came to appreciate that his body of work has added greatly to the history and lure of Chelsea--whatever his failings and treatment of Walter Greaves, the garden, sadly neglected, surrounded by



*Number 104 Cheyne Walk was once the home of the Greaves family, who befriended Whistler when he first came to Chelsea, and worked in his studio before being dropped after Whistler ascended the heights of society.*



*Left: 'Chelsea Reach' by Tom Pocock reveals the saga of the friendship between Whistler and Greaves.*

*Right: Walter Greaves by P. Evans, Published 1928. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery. He came from a family of local boatmen (his father rowed the painter JMW Turner) to become a student of Whistler's and an artist in his own right.*

overgrown bushes, litter, broken benches, graffiti, and weeds—did not do him justice.

After discussing the sorry state of the garden with my colleagues at The Cheyne Walk Trust, we decided to go into action. I worked closely with Andrew Hatch at Transport for London, and our own RBKC councillor Johnny Thalassites, to help return the garden to its former glory. With persistence in the face of bureaucratic red tape and goodwill from the local community we are happy to report that Whistler's Garden has now been beautifully restored. We've had great responses, such as this comment from Martin Riley, Chairman of the Whistler Society: 'The work at Whistler's Corner really has been a revelation. Whistler himself would have been delighted with the huge improvements to his special place on the Thames Riverside. His critical eye will twinkle as he surveys the scene. Huge thanks are due to all who have helped with this project to date and for the work planned for the future.'

The artist is now able to view proudly the area he grew to love, had a deep affection for and called home.



*Cleared of graffiti, litter and weeds, the garden now lives up to its famous statue.*



*Peregrine falcons in the UK were nearly wiped out.*

# The Chelsea Peregrines

*Roddy Mullin reports on a welcome return*

Great excitement at the Lots Road Power Station building site! A pair of peregrines nested there this Spring and four young hatched. These magnificent birds of prey are still something of a rarity. According to the RSPB, “Widespread contamination by persistent toxic agricultural chemicals such as DDT caused the collapse of the peregrine population in the UK in the late 1950s. By 1964, 80 per cent of the UK peregrine population had been lost. After the

banning of these pesticides Peregrine numbers slowly recovered. However, in southeast and east of England the bird has been slow to recover” It is estimated that in Greater London there are roughly 30 Peregrines so we are quite lucky to have our own Chelsea Peregrine Falcons.

The builders were concerned about their safety and worked together to build a platform for them out of scaffolding. Sadly the male seems to have been killed in one of the violent

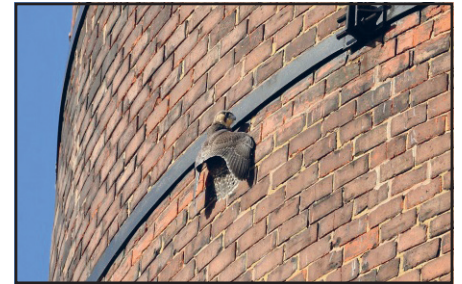
rainstorms this Spring. One young fledgling went missing while the mother carried on feeding the three remaining until they fledged.

One day there was a chaotic scene as a fledgling tried to land on the vertical side of one of the chimneys and fell away but managed to recover.

The mother is still around with her growing brood, and was last seen on 16th July with a fully fledged bird. Take pot luck and see if you can get a glimpse of them. Cross the bridge onto the Chelsea Harbour site and view the power station from across Chelsea Creek. Happy sightings! For regular updates ask to join the Chelsea Peregrines on Facebook.



*A dining space with a bird's eye view.*



*A nimble fledgling manages to hang on after an awkward landing on the chimney.*

## The Cheyne Walk Trust supports plans to save historic Cabmen's Shelter

Thanks to an ongoing effort by the Chelsea Society, the Cabmen's Shelter Fund and RBK&C Councillor Alison Jackson, this derelict Cabmen's Shelter by the Albert Bridge will soon be restored to its former glory. One of the last surviving green shelters (there used to be dozens across London) it has been badly neglected. Last August, Notice to repair was served on the owners under s. 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Now plans are going forward to restore the shelter and give it a future.



*The Cabmen's Shelters were originally created in 1875 to provide a place of rest and refreshment for Hackney Cab drivers.*



# What happened to the Tudor Shrewsbury House?

*Author Dan Cruikshank explores an architectural mystery*

The architectural and social character of Cheyne Walk has long been recognised as extraordinary. In the early 1720s, when Daniel Defoe described Chelsea as a ‘town of palaces’, he had in mind the stretch of river frontage - running west from the Royal Hospital to just north of Chelsea Old Church - that became known as Cheyne Walk. (Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 1724-7). The narrow road along Chelsea’s River frontage was named after Charles Cheyne, who had acquired land and property along the river in the mid 17th century. But the ‘palaces’ dated from long before his time.



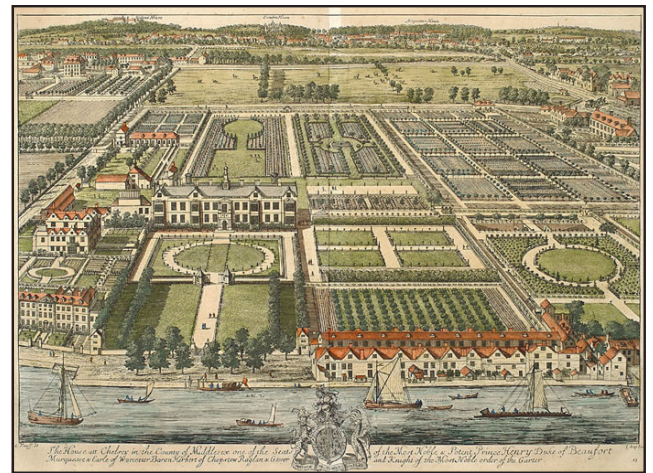
*Winchester House, circa 1810-20, watercolour by Marianne Rush. Image courtesy RBK&C Archives.*

Most of the great houses had been built during the 16th and 17th centuries but a few were earlier, such as the Old Manor House that lay to the north and east of the Old Church. And demolition of the ‘palaces’ started early, indeed the spectacular vernacular Palladian and jewel-like Danvers House, built in the 1620s, was demolished before Defoe wrote about Chelsea, probably on the late 1690s. Sir Thomas More’s house - later enlarged and known as Beaufort House - and the New Manor House - also known as Chelsea Place and built for Henry VIII - were both demolished in the mid 18th century. Beaufort Street now crosses the site of Beaufort House, while the Cheyne Walk frontage of the site of the New Manor House was soon covered with speculatively built houses, now numbered 19 to 26 Cheyne Walk. A wing of the New Manor House became Winchester House in the mid 17th century and the London home of the

Bishop of Winchester and was eventually demolished in 1825. The sole substantial survivor of Defoe’s ‘town of palaces’ is the much-altered late 17th century Lindsey House, towards the west end of Cheyne Walk.

But until the early 20th century there was another significant survival and the struggle to save it became one of Chelsea’s earliest coordinated conservation battles.

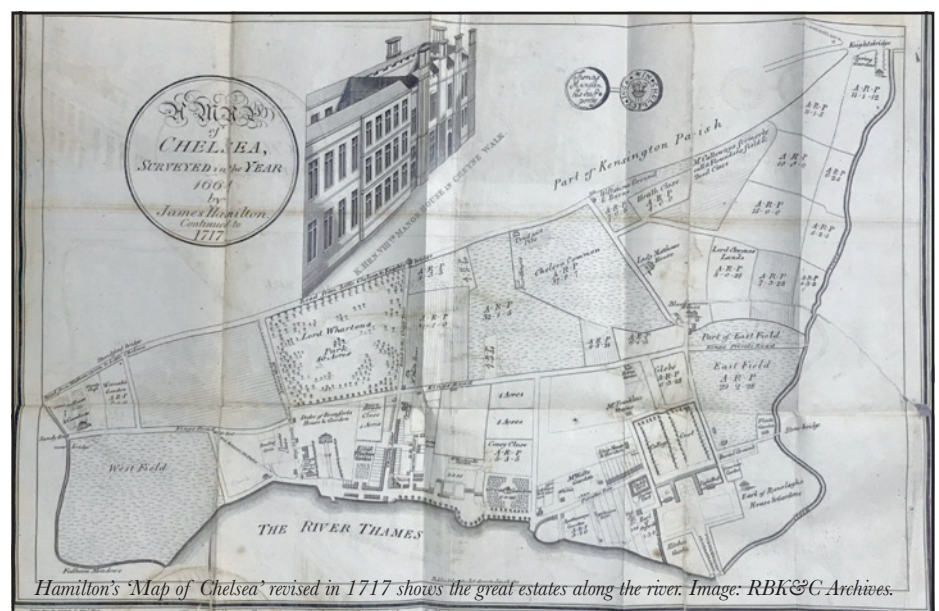
Shrewsbury House, sited just to the east of what became Cheyne Row, was one of the earliest of Chelsea’s great riverside mansions and according to Daniel Lysons’ *Environs of London* of 1795 had been built in the late fourteenth century by Thomas Beauchamp, the 12th Earl of Warwick – the nemesis of Richard II – and was later occupied by ‘George Earl of Shrewsbury, an eminent military character in the reign of Henry VIII’ who appears to have been residing in Chelsea as early as 1519 (*Survey of London: Volume 2, Chelsea, Part 1*, LCC, 1909, pp. 76-81). The house was also occupied by his grandson, the 6th Earl and also named George, who inherited the title and house in 1560 and who in 1568 was appointed by Elizabeth I as the ‘keeper’ – in effect gaoler – of Mary,



*The famous Kip view of 1700-1707. It shows Beaufort House centre right with, to its east – on the river – Lindsey House and to its north Gorges House. Danvers House stood on the east edge of the view, in front of the round garden. This is an image of Chelsea, with palatial houses set in extensive gardens, that prompted Defoe to call it a ‘town of palaces’. Image courtesy of RBK&C Archives.*

Queen of Scots. The previous year the Earl became the fourth husband of Elizabeth Hardwick, better known to history as ‘Bess of Hardwick’, who was a prodigious and inspired builder and later the client for the miraculous Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. Bess and Mary spent much time together during the years Mary was in the Earl’s charge. There is no record of her being in the house in Chelsea, but it is possible, and it is tempting to imagine that Bess beautified the old house but, if so, this is now an utterly lost work.

Bess outlived the Earl by seventeen years, having inherited the house at his death in 1590. She bequeathed it to her son by her second marriage, who was later created the Earl of Devonshire. His widow lived in the house until her death in 1643, when it was purchased by Joseph Alston, seemingly a Royalist because he was created a baronet



*Hamilton’s ‘Map of Chelsea’ revised in 1717 shows the great estates along the river. Image: RBK&C Archives.*



Bess of Hardwick, Countess Shrewsbury (1527-1608). Image: Wikipedia.

after the Restoration of 1660. The house gradually descended the social scale, owned by far less eminent families and occupied by tenants. In the early eighteenth-century Shrewsbury House was, according to Thomas Faulkner's *Historical and Topographical Account of Chelsea* of 1829, acquired by a Robert Butler and then went 'into the possession of Mr. Tate and was occupied as a stained paper manufactory.' During the eighteenth century the mansion continued to dwindle in importance and in 1795, according to Lysons, still housed a paper manufactory (*Environs of London*, pp. 78-9). Faulkner states, that what remained of the mansion was demolished in 1813 (*Chelsea, and its Environs*, 1829 edition, p. 282).

The exact location and probable appearance of this seminal Chelsea mansion is pondered at length, in most poetic manner, in the 1909 edition of the *Survey of London* dealing with this portion of Chelsea: 'The visitor to Chelsea will find no one to direct him if he asks for Shrewsbury House, the very memory of the old mansion of the Earls of Shrewsbury seems to have departed, and even those who are versed in the local history have disagreed regarding its exact site.' But, with an excitement that is still palpable, the author of the *Survey* assures his readers that the house's 'position can be identified' and that 'some actual remains of the original house are still to be seen' (*Survey of London: Volume 2, Chelsea Part I*, ed. Walter H. Godfrey, LCC, London, pp. 76-81). The compelling evidence is a lease of 1711 for 46, 47 and 48 Cheyne Walk, which 'stand just east of Cheyne Row' and that describes the houses as 'adjoining Shrewsbury House upon the east' with, in 1909, the east wall of number 46 attached to 'a group of buildings that possess clear proof of having been on their present site long before the destruction of Shrewsbury House in 1813'. In the *Survey's* opinion, 'These buildings may

fairly claim, therefore, to be either part of the original house, or to have been incorporated with it at some early period,' partly because they contain 'casement windows of the same appearance as those in the early views of Shrewsbury House.'

In addition, the *Survey* discovered that the 'boundary wall between the garden of no. 46 and the land at the rear ... is a fine specimen of undoubted Tudor brickwork' and 'parallel with this wall at a distance of something over 100 feet to the east is another Tudor wall of the same long and narrow red bricks bonded in the old English manner'. These extensive and venerable walls, durable and of mellow beauty, had been observed by Thomas Carlyle, who lived at 24 Cheyne Row from 1834 to 1881, and who in August 1867 ruminated upon them in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine* entitled 'Shooting Niagara and after'.

The more easterly of the walls probably divided Shrewsbury House from Winchester House. These walls led the *Survey* to conclude that 'the Earls of Shrewsbury seem to have possessed a slip of land about 40 yards in width, having a frontage on Cheyne Walk and extending at least as far back as Little Cheyne Row where the stables were situated'.

As to the appearance of the building there is little evidence beyond a wash drawing of its courtyard, that appears 'in the extra illustrated edition of Lyson's [sic] *Environs* at the Guildhall Library (*Survey of London: Volume 2, Chelsea Part I*, ed. Walter H. Godfrey, LCC, London, pp. 76-81) and a poor quality engraving in the 1829 edition of Faulkner's *Chelsea, and its Environs*, which shows part of a courtyard framed by two-storey buildings asymmetrical in plan and form, and with gables of different dimensions. As was usual from the late fourteenth century to the late sixteenth century, the mansion appears – as Faulkner implies – to have been organised around a large central courtyard, and while the illustrations do not confirm the exact location of the mansion, the engraving does offer some evidence. As the *Survey* points out in Lysons 'engraving ... on the left-hand [i.e., the west] side are shown some buildings, apparently of the 18th century, which bear a marked resemblance to part of the existing ... Nos. 43 and 44 [Cheyne

Walk]' that 'still contains the relics of a fine staircase, some good panelling, and a carved chimney-piece on the second floor'. Number 45, which broke south towards the river, was, speculated the *Survey*, essentially the west wing



The courtyard of Shrewsbury House, a late 14th c masterpiece of Tudor architecture. Image: RBK&C Archives.

of Shrewsbury House. Faulkner evidently remembered Shrewsbury House when it still stood and recalled that it occupied three sides of a quadrangle but argues the *Survey*, 'there are many reasons for supposing that there was originally a fourth side which would have fronted [the river], and from which the wings may have projected forward to form gables.

Faulkner also gives a brief description of the building's interior. 'The principal room was 120 feet in length and was originally wainscotted [sic] with carved oak. One of the rooms was painted in imitation of marble and appeared to have been originally an oratory. Certain curious portraits on panel which had ornamented the large rooms were destroyed some few years since.' Additional information about the size of the mansion is given by hearth tax returns of 1662. Until 1689 – when the hearth tax was repealed in England – the size of a house, and thus the tax liability of its occupants, was determined by the number of hearths the house contained. Shrewsbury House contained fifty hearths, as against thirty-one in the nearby manor house. So clearly Shrewsbury House was a relatively large structure.



Views, looking west, of 42-49 Cheyne Walk in the 1890s by W. W. Burgess - the argument put forward in the *Survey of London* in 1909 is that the gabled structure was a portion of Shrewsbury House that survived the 1813 demolition. Image: RBK&C Archives.



*View of Cheyne Walk by Walter and Henry Greaves, 1861, looking east from what is now the restaurant Fifty Cheyne Walk. Image courtesy RBK&C Archives.*

The author of the *Survey of London: Volume 2* seems to have been persuaded that 'the discovery on the ground floor of the later buildings' (43 and 44 Cheyne Walk) with 'two sides of a room apparently *in situ*, with panelling and two doorways of the 17th century' was further evidence of the survival of part of Shrewsbury House. In 1909, however, this fascinating evidence seemed not long for this world: 'The whole block of buildings [forming 43-45 Cheyne Walk] is in a very poor condition. In most parts the brickwork is sound; but the woodwork, unless cared for, will soon perish: the 17th century panelling is falling to pieces' (*Survey of London: Volume 2*). On the other hand, 46-48 Cheyne Walk – originally three houses but by 1909 two separate houses with 47 joined to 46 – 'seem to be in good condition' noted the *Survey* (*Survey of London: Volume 2*, pp. 82-3) The houses appear to have been built soon after the building lease of 1711 and were somewhat altered.



*42-45 Cheyne Walk in the 1920's prior to their demolition.*

This picturesque group of ancient and decaying buildings attracted topographical artists, including W.W. Burgess who in the 1890s made a fine view of 42-49 Cheyne Walk looking west towards the Old Church. The view extends past the turning into Cheyne Row as far as the east end of Chelsea Old Church. The watercolour shows numbers 43 and 44 breaking forward of 47 and 48, indeed to the extent that 46 is masked. The houses are shown as two storeys in height, modest in

scale, rendered, and the house adjoining number 46 to the east - number 45 - was furnished with a tall gable. A view by Walter and Henry Greaves, dated 1861 and looking east from the corner of Cheyne Row, also shows 45 Cheyne Row, breaking forward and gabled. Undoubtedly this building looks pre-eighteenth century.

Despite their long-term, and often-observed, air of abandonment - and despite their obvious historic interest - numbers 42 to 45 Cheyne Walk still stood in the late 1920s. They had not been repaired and saved but neither had they been demolished, as the *Survey of London* had predicted was imminent in 1909. But in 1927 it seemed that this small group's defiance in the face of 'progress' and change in Cheyne Walk was about to come an end. The Chelsea Society was launched in 1927 to protect the historic fabric of Chelsea and its special brand of beauty and to foster its amenities - and one of its immediate and urgent battles was - as its annual Report for 1927 states - to fight for '43-45 Cheyne Walk and Terrey's little old fruit shop'. The Society's Report states unequivocally that these buildings represent the 'substantial remains of the western wing of Shrewsbury House, built here in the 16th century and probably the oldest remaining houses in Chelsea'. Inside, the Report noted, as had the *Survey of London* nearly two decades earlier, there was still surviving 'interesting panelling, doorways and a staircase'. The Society grabbed at straws: 'it would be fortunate for the lovers of old Chelsea if these could be incorporated in some way into the building destined to occupy the site'. They were not. The group was soon demolished for a new building and all memories and mementoes swept away, including 'Terrey's quaint little shop' (Report, 1927 p. 13).

The replacement building itself has an extraordinary story that is told through the annals of The Chelsea Society. In its Sixth Annual report of 1933 the Society stated that the replacement building was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and described by *Country Life* as 'a small county house in London'. (Chelsea Society Sixth Annual Report 1933, p. 19 and *Country Life* 14th and 21st January 1933). The house was built, set well back from Cheyne Walk and designed in the early Georgian brick-built style that Lutyens favoured at the time for domestic architecture. Three years later the Society announced, in its 9th Annual Report for 1936, that 'Chelsea heard with some astonishment last January that the large house built by Sir Edwin Lutyens ... for the late Lord Revelstoke .... was to be pulled down and replaced by yet another block of flats (Annual Report p. 19). The following year, 1937, the Society reported that the demolition of the Lutyens house had indeed taken place, and that 'the gaunt steel skeleton of yet another block of flats which is to replace it already towers above the neighbouring houses. (Annual Report, 1937, p. 14). The new apartment block was, rather shamelessly, named Shrewsbury House.

The building of this apartment block has left the party wall of 46 Cheyne Walk painfully exposed, but it has also opened up a view of the long east garden wall, described in the *Survey of London*. Much of the wall is indeed composed of Tudor brickwork, and it is very impressive. Other remnants of the buildings and boundaries of Tudor Chelsea can be seen in garden walls behind the 1830s houses on the east side of Paultons Square and in what Thea Holme described in the early 1970s as a builder's yard on the east side of Danvers Street (Thea Holme *Chelsea*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1972, p. 51). All are presumably remnants of structures on Sir Thomas More's estate and so, in such evocative fragments and despite the sad loss of 45 Cheyne Walk, the shades of Chelsea's ancient 'town of palaces' linger still.



*The site of the original Shrewsbury House as it looks today.*



# The importance of protecting Chelsea Embankment Gardens

*Hallie Swanson reports on the upcoming RBK&C consultation*

For more than a century this delightful garden along Cheyne Walk has been strolled along by such local luminaries as Oscar Wilde, the painter Whistler, the poet T.S. Eliot, the suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst, and many others. The gardens came to life as a green buffer zone when the Chelsea Embankment was created in 1874 by the Metropolitan Board of Works. The garden is in two parts, separated by the intersection at Oakley Street, but unified by design. The original garden had decorative wrought iron railings (sadly removed in WW2 to provide scrap metal), winding walkways, ornamental flower beds, lime and plane trees to give shade, and borders of flowering shrubs.

The garden is also home to a series of sculptures, some serving as memorials and others commemorating celebrated residents such as the Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel

Rossetti, the writer and historian Thomas Carlyle, and the composer Vaughn Williams. Today, Chelsea Embankment Garden is the sight that welcomes visitors and residents alike who cross the river to Chelsea. However, the gradual deterioration of one of the few public riverside gardens in Chelsea has been a growing concern for residents.

The garden is part of the Thames Conservation Area, but sadly not listed on the National Heritage List for Parks and Gardens, nor protected under the London Squares Preservation Act, or even covered by a tree preservation order. Over the last few years this lack of protection has left the garden vulnerable to such events as the removal, without notice or consultation, of the traditional circular flower beds, the cutting of trees and shrubs, and lack of maintenance. Happily, the state of the gardens is now being addressed by the

RBK&C in a major consultation. The Cheyne Walk Trust is working closely with Royal Hospital Ward Councillor Emma Will and Parks Team Manager Monica Castelino to promote a general refurbishment and prevent further ill-judged changes to this much loved, vital green space. CWT members may email their suggestions directly to

[parks@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:parks@rbkc.gov.uk)

As part of the consultation process, The Cheyne Walk Trust sent out a letter to the membership asking for what they would like to see happen with the garden going forward. The CWT then compiled a paper listing key issues and recommendations, which was then submitted to the RBK&C for consideration. The suggested improvements include adding more benches and repairing and re-painting the older ones, replacing the worn-out bins, planting more flowering shrubs in the borders, planting more lime and plane trees to replace those that have gone, and organising better maintenance. The CWT is looking forward to working with the RBK&C to create a revitalised, attractive, and sustainable Chelsea Embankment Gardens. We are also pursuing the possibility of getting the gardens listed, in the hope this will ensure they remain an asset for the community for years to come.



*The gardens at Chelsea Embankment, 1889, by Paul Maitland. Image courtesy of Tate Britain.*



*Embankment Under Construction, 1873. Photo: James Hedderley. Image courtesy RBK&C Archives.*



*According to the Council, the ornamental flower beds were removed due to maintenance costs. The CWT is asking the Council to plant sustainable flowering shrubs to help make up for the loss.*

## The Chelsea Physic Garden gets its much-needed historic Glasshouse Restoration

After a century of constant use, the Glasshouses at Chelsea Physic Garden were in desperate need of restoration. Ahead of their 350th anniversary in 2023, the Garden embarked on 'The Hothouse Challenge', a major fundraising project to repair them. According to Lord John Browne, Chairman of the John Browne Charitable Trust, "The Hothouse Challenge was the catalyst for securing the remaining £1m of funding needed for the Glasshouses restoration. Following a six-month campaign, it raised £500,000 from over 600 donors, matched by the same amount from the John Browne Charitable Trust. Needless to say, we are thrilled about its success. It is an important milestone for the Chelsea Physic Garden in securing the future of its Glasshouses."



*Over the last century thousands of plants have been cultivated in these period Glasshouses that are a hallmark of the Chelsea Physic Garden. Image courtesy of Horticulture Weekly*

# The King's Road Post Pandemic

*Roddy Mullin sees a bright future ahead*



*The King's Road in the Swinging Sixties. Image courtesy RBK&C Archive.*

Yes, the '60s and '70s, nostalgia about the unique quirks and individuality of the Kings Road is a pleasant memory. But we need to move on. Chelsea needs to be a current attraction. So, what can be done and how can it be done so we are all happy?

The Cheyne Walk Trust is delighted to report that here are local initiatives going forward to raise the status of Chelsea as a global destination. The goal is to improve the turnover of shops, cafes, restaurants, and places of entertainment—an urgent priority given the devastation wreaked by Covid. According to the latest research, the most important needs of consumers post pandemic, are socialising, entertainment, and the opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of retail therapy.

Making space for all the restaurants and cafes to extend onto pavements will require some effort, but this is essential should future pandemics occur - to allow socialising outdoors whatever happens. Our best bet for the Kings Road is probably to reject a proliferation of national chains in favour of clusters of individual and specialist shops. In addition to fashion and its accoutrements there should be areas for gifts, households, both ultra-modern and traditional, specialist foods and other niche items like bicycles, vinyl records, cameras, hobbies, crafts, arts, haberdashery, you name it. Music and entertainment venues need to be expanded. Landlords can encourage the right mix and the right placings. Splitting larger shops into many smaller ones inside (remember

Antiquarius?) and with the Council planning to sponsor daily varying stalls in all the Old Town Hall rooms (like the pop-up shops of Covent Garden) would increase the present outlets from the 415 shops now. The Worlds End Piazza should have a market – like the North End Road.

Landlords and the council are resisting attempts by developers to encroach with more flats, taller buildings, and out of character construction. RBKC Councillors are to be commended on their initiatives but need to hold their nerve and receive our support. They are also committed to retaining the unique aspect of the Chelsea section of the Thames River Conservation Area. Our elected representatives do have a really tough time. They make decisions and then get slapped with legal challenges from deep pocket developers which Council budgets can ill afford to fight. The upcoming redevelopment of M&S and Chelsea Reach are sobering examples. Perhaps to end here is John Betjeman's cautionary poem about a developer:

*I do some mild developing. The sort of place I need  
Is a quiet country town that's rather gone to seed?  
A luncheon and a drink or two, a little savoir faire –  
I fix the Planning Officer, the Town Clerk, and the Mayor*

*And if some preservationist attempts to interfere  
A 'dangerous structure' notice from the Borough Engineer  
Will settle any buildings that are standing in our way –  
The modern style, sir, with respect, has really come to stay.*



*Creating attractive dining and retail spaces like The Ivy Chelsea Garden will help put the King's Road back on the map.*



*The Duke of York Square Food Market has more than 40 stands and is now a popular Saturday destination, bringing visitors to the King's Road.*

## Council launches Chelsea PSPO consultation to combat noisy nuisance driving

As many of you are all too aware, over recent months disturbances along Cheyne Walk and Chelsea Embankment by nuisance drivers of noisy adapted cars and motorcycles has been on the increase especially at night and on weekends. This may have been aggravated by action by the Council to curb such activity in the Sloane St and Knightsbridge area with consequent displacement to south Chelsea.

Last year, RBKC piloted acoustic cameras in Knightsbridge to tackle the problem of nuisance drivers to good effect. They fined more than a hundred drivers and there were zero repeat offenders. However, this relied on having a Public Space Protection Order

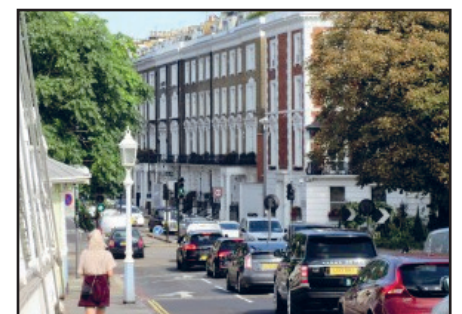
(PSPO) in place.

To combat the issue of noisy cars and motorbikes in the borough, the Council hopes to install acoustic cameras across Chelsea, including in Royal Hospital and Chelsea Riverside Wards, where there are many reports of noisy vehicles. As part of the process, the RBKC is currently carrying out a public consultation on the expansion of the Nuisance Vehicles PSPO. For further details visit <https://consult.rbkc.gov.uk/communities/nuisance-vehicles/>.

The Cheyne Walk Trust and Chelsea Society support this proposal and we hope that RBKC will introduce a borough-wide PSPO this year and install more acoustic cameras to tackle this problem. As part of this consultation the Council are inviting residents to email an 'Impact Statement' on how this form of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) affects their quality of

life and enjoyment of the environment.

To respond please give your details and describe how nuisance vehicle noise impacts your quality of life. Include where, when, and how often it occurs and anything else you feel is relevant. Make your voice heard and send your comments to the dedicated RBKC PSPO email address: [PSPO@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:PSPO@rbkc.gov.uk)



*A PSPO allows acoustic cameras to monitor traffic noise and target offenders.*

# Hope for Chelsea Houseboats

*RBK&C council plans may help the houseboat community*



*Chelsea Houseboats 2021, by Juan del Pozo. Image: Signet Contemporary Art*

The Cheyne Walk Trust is delighted to announce that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea council has served 'notice to quit' on Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company (CYBC), operator of the iconic houseboat moorings between Battersea Bridge and Lots Road, potentially signalling an end to CYBC's long running dispute with the boatowners.

RBKC owns Old Ferry Wharf at 106 Cheyne Walk which provides access to the moorings and hosts essential services for all 61 houseboats. The Council now intends to develop the site as part of its exciting Lots Road redevelopment plan. RBKC has issued a notice under section 25 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 confirming it will not be renewing CYBC's lease when it expires on 24 March 2022.

CYBC operates the mooring under a River Works Licence (RWL) from the Port of London Authority (PLA) which is unusual as most residential moorings on the Thames are run by the boatowners themselves who have a direct relationship with the PLA. The PLA has previously noted that having an intermediate landlord can create unnecessary difficulties for no benefit and this is exactly what has happened at Chelsea Reach.

Boatowners have been in dispute with CYBC since 2016 when

it was bought by local property developers Charlotte and Andrew Moffat. The Moffats have tried to increase mooring fees by over 300%, although when the PLA reviewed the cost of residential mooring fees in 2011, it established that boatowners at CYBC already pay considerably more than the market rate at any other residential mooring on the tidal Thames. Since the Moffats took over, the maintenance charge has doubled and in 2018 CYBC terminated the licences of a number of boats.

One of the houseboats that left was New College Barge, a privately owned heritage boat which CYBC has replaced with a much larger purpose-built vessel, causing considerable concern to residents. CYBC has advertised this new vessel to rent as two separate residential units for almost £9,000pcm.

Suzanne Spiro, who lived on one of the boats for many years, said; "the Council's decision is a welcome development. The boatowners have had a terrible time over recent years. This has potential to bring that to a close and let people get on with their lives."

With the expiry of CYBC's lease now imminent, boatowners are seeking to agree a new arrangement with the Council that would allow them to operate the mooring themselves. The boatowners' plan depends on support from the PLA which, as a public body, ought to welcome the opportunity to contract directly with boatowners as that has the potential to increase revenue. It would also bring Chelsea Reach into line with most other residential moorings controlled by the PLA. Having an intermediate landlord serves no purpose and its removal would certainly bring an end to a five-year battle that has cast a long shadow over the mooring.

There are 60 boats at Chelsea Reach which the current boatowners have collectively owned for 1,000 years. Nineteen boats have been in the same ownership for over 20 years, and the longest standing resident has lived on her boat since 1967. All boatowners pay council tax and for many boatowners their boats are their only homes and a way of life. The boats are a popular part of the local community and an online petition to protect the houseboats has attracted over 10,000 signatures. Visit [www.chelseaboats.org](http://www.chelseaboats.org) to find out more and to sign the petition.

## 'A Day In Your Life' Photography Contest Returns for 2021

*Founded by RBK&C Councillor, BAFTA, and award-winning artist Alison Jackson, for aspiring photographers of all backgrounds and abilities*

Jackson's aim is to celebrate, inspire and nurture new talent within the community. The competition is open to anyone interested in photography, using a phone or camera, from any skill level and any age from 9 years+.

The photographs should sum up a day in your life. There are exceptional prizes being offered and previous winners had their work exhibited at Saatchi Gallery, Saatchi Art, Photo London, The Chelsea Theatre, and The Duke of York Square. Deadline is October 1st. For more details and how to enter visit: [www.dayinyourlife.co.uk](http://www.dayinyourlife.co.uk)



*"Everyone can have a chance to shine. The reason I started this photography competition was for anyone to have the same fantastic opportunities I have had within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea"-Cllr Alison Jackson.*

## Join the CWT Book Club

The Cheyne Walk Trust Book Club explores the culture and history of Chelsea through the lives of its most creative, notorious, brilliant and bohemian residents. We meet every six weeks or so over wine and nibbles to discuss the books, which are usually biographies. We also have guest lecturers and related events. In the last two years we have covered such diverse and diverting personalities as Thomas More, Hans Sloane, JMW Turner, Whistler, Augustus John, and Oscar Wilde. For further information email Hallie Swanson: [halliecreative@aol.com](mailto:halliecreative@aol.com)

# Spies of SW3: A reader responds

*This letter from a reader with first-hand experience of the real drama was received with pleasure:*

... 'I was interested in your article on "Spies of SW3". Part of my interest, I will admit, being in the fact that I was in Hungary when Greville Wynne was arrested in Budapest, a matter that was reported to me by a Hungarian with inside knowledge. My new friend came to see me to report on a 'sensitive' matter which he had just witnessed – the sight of Soviet officers taking photographs of military equipment at their HQ. "Why are you telling me?"

I asked. "Because I was told that they were planting the camera and film, as evidence against a British spy, Mr Greville Wynne."



*The story of Cold War Chelsea spy Greville Wynne is now a major new film starring Benedict Cumberbatch.*

## Save the date: The Cheyne Walk Trust Annual AGM & Reception October 5th

You're invited to the 2021 CWT AGM and Champagne Reception on Tuesday October 5th at 6.30PM at Petyt Hall of Chelsea Old Church at 64 Cheyne Walk. The event is free for Members; if bringing a guest the donation is £10. at the door.

We are delighted to announce our guest speaker this year will be the distinguished architectural historian, author and broadcaster Dan Cruickshank, Hon FRIBA. Dan has kindly agreed to share highlights from his new book *Built in Chelsea*, coming out January 2022.



*Chelsea's unique architectural heritage is chronicled by Dan Cruickshank.*



*Dan Cruickshank, BBC television presenter, author, art and architecture historian.*

I duly reported this two days later to the British legation in Budapest, followed by another in Vienna. The officials denied Greville Wynne was a spy and that the only reason the Soviets had arrested him was because they wished to swap him for a 'real' Russian spy. I thought that would be the end of the matter.

When I returned to the UK and started work at a law firm in the City, I received a telephone call from someone "in the Foreign Office". He knew where I was! "Can you call in on the way home this evening? It's to do with Greville Wynne." When I got there, the official told me that as a matter of courtesy, they thought they should tell me that Greville Wynne would shortly be released as part of a spy swap. Although he was not a spy, they feared for his life and the Soviet spies in the UK had been in detention for a number of years and any information they held would now be out of date. Sure enough, the swap duly took place a couple of weeks later.' *David Morgan, TD MBE*

## The Cheyne Walk Trust Committee

**Chairman:** Col David Waddell: 020 7352 9353/  
email: [chmn@cheynewalktrust.org](mailto:chmn@cheynewalktrust.org)

**Secretary:** Dr May Maguire: 020 7352 0030

**Membership Secretary:** David Swanson:  
[david.n.swanson@gmail.com](mailto:david.n.swanson@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor/Book Club Chair:**  
Hallie Swanson: [halliecreative@aol.com](mailto:halliecreative@aol.com)

Hon. Treasurer: John Kozak

Roddy Mullin

Charles Mayes

George Nicholson

Denis Strauss

Anthea Turner

Honorary Member: Dave Walker, RBK&C Archivist

The Cheyne Walk Trust represents the interests of 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](mailto:chmn@cheynewalktrust.org).

The Cheyne Walk Newsletter is issued to Cheyne Walk Trust members **Website: [www.cheynewalktrust.org](http://www.cheynewalktrust.org)**



*The Chelsea Riverside along Cheyne Walk, watercolour by Johnny Addiss.*