



A new look for Chelsea Embankment Gardens

BoonBrown Landscape Architects appointed by RBK&C council, Hallie Swanson reports



BoonBrown's visualisation of the western side of Chelsea Embankment Gardens

The Cheyne Walk Trust is delighted to report that after many months of consultations, the council for RBKC is moving forward with plans to restore these gardens to their former glory as a place of beauty and an enjoyable amenity for residents and visitors alike. The council have now appointed BoonBrown Landscape architects to proceed with the project. According to Oliver Clark, BoonBrown's Landscape Director, 'We connect people to nature, designing biodiverse, sustainable landscapes for the benefit of all. We are committed to enhancing the environment, creating resilient, beautiful places and spaces.'

Elizabeth Malone, Senior Landscaping Architect, is heading the team responsible for the project. She describes the inspiration behind the plan: 'The collective vision for the gardens is to visually unite the spaces through the repetition of naturalistic, drought-tolerant planting – creating a consistent design language between the spaces. Swaths of bulbs and informal blocks of planting, alongside multi-stemmed ornamental trees will serve to provide visual screening, whilst

creating seasonal interest and colour to enliven the spaces.

'The existing statues within the garden will be framed by formal yew hedging as a reference to historic Tudor parterres, whilst solar-powered up-lighting will enhance their setting. As an homage to Elizabeth I, a black mulberry tree will be planted within the gardens, as an historical link to the mulberry trees said to have been planted by Queen Elizabeth I at King Henry VIII's Manor House (now occupied by No.s 19-26 Cheyne Walk).

'Planting beds are to undergo arboricultural works to enhance the health and longevity of existing tree stock, whilst infill woodland planting will break up the current gaps in planting, injecting colour, structure, and seasonal interest within the existing beds. Our team of Chartered Landscape Architects have chosen plant species for their ornamental qualities, drought-tolerance and biodiversity value with input and guidance from Chelsea Physic Garden.

'BoonBrown Landscape Architects are extremely excited to be working on this project and we look forward to bringing the design ideas to fruition, reinvigorating the gardens, and injecting much needed colour and life back into the gardens.'

Sue Medway, Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, has kindly lent her great expertise to the consultation, bringing a local perspective on what plants will work best. Describing the project, she states: 'It has been stimulating to work alongside the group who are focussed on improving the visual and amenity value of Chelsea Embankment Gardens. Selecting BoonBrown as the landscape architects to support this project, which is being funded by RBK&C, has really helped to focus our thoughts on what we want these gardens to look like, how to ensure they have a positive impact without substantial maintenance and be a pleasurable space for people as they move through Chelsea. We were keen to ensure there is an inter-connectedness between these strips of green space and others along the Embankment including the Chelsea Physic Garden and Chelsea Old Church, particularly for beneficial wildlife. Boon Brown have responded positively to our feedback, and we are hopeful that once complete the refurbished gardens will benefit many.'

The new planting should commence later this Autumn and continue for a few months as trees, shrubs and flowers are added. The pathways will also be refurbished as well as the bins and benches. The Cheyne Walk Trust has enjoyed working the last 18 months with our local RBK&C councillors; Sarah Brion of the RBK&C Parks and Leisure Team; the Chelsea Embankment Gardens Steering Committee; BoonBrown, and the Chelsea Physic Garden to bring about what promises to be an eagerly-awaited improvement to these historic gardens.



A view of the eastern gardens, with spring bulbs, as envisioned by BoonBrown

Battersea Bridge Safety Improvements

CWT Chairman David Waddell explains the latest developments



The notorious Battersea Bridge crossing. Photo courtesy Rob McGibbon, change.org

Following two fatalities and numerous accidents, much public pressure, including Rob McGibbon's effective petition, has secured an initial safety improvement. After many years of delay, TFL has completed in late 2021 a Phase 1 task of installing a light controlled pedestrian crossing at the Cheyne Walk junction with the northern end Battersea Bridge. In July this year TFL notified pre consultation survey plans for Phase 2 safety enhancements for the remaining three arms of the Chelsea/Battersea Bridge junction that remain unsafe without improvement.

Together with the Council for RBKC, the Chelsea Society and many other amenity societies, we welcome this initial work and the intention to introduce further essential enhancements in 2023 after formal consultation, advised by TFL as scheduled for the autumn this year.

We do have significant concerns both on consultation and potential problems that may arise from the pre-consultation plans if these are not modified before formal consultation commences. The initial TFL plans appear to be an extrapolation of older plans essentially based on the introduction of Cycle Superhighway 8 (CS8) along the north bank of the Thames from Westminster to Hammersmith. Hence, rather than simply

addressing urgently required and vital safety improvements at the Chelsea/Battersea Bridge junction, the scheme proposes measures that will adversely impact access and movement for many Chelsea residents, as well as significant congestion through central Chelsea and its main local access roads. It also suggests that completion of the still urgent safety improvements at the Battersea Bridge junction will be subject to TFL securing agreement with the Government for a much wider and more costly CS8 programme.

Briefly: there has been no pre-consultation survey advice in south east Chelsea; the plan proposes to ban left turns for eastbound traffic north into Beaufort St, increasing overloading of already constricted north bound traffic in Oakley Street as well as on The King's Road; also new traffic constricting bus lanes are proposed near the junction. At the same time Chelsea riverside including Battersea Bridge is under fresh traffic pressure following the closure of northbound and southbound junctions to east/west traffic at Chelsea Bridge. Significantly, the scheme fails to consider the Battersea Bridge junction in the context of the whole Chelsea Embankment/Cheyne Walk route and the impact on Chelsea's main roads and access.

Councillor Cem Kemahli for RBKC in submission to TFL significantly has noted:

"... banning of turns for notional bus journey time savings, banning of turns across bridges and now potentially banning a further turn have all been part of an undeclared but clear desire to install a form of segregation along the embankment. A desire TFL had openly articulated in the summer of 2020 but now state to not be the case or rationale for these proposals.

With regards RBKCs involvement in these proposals, RBKC had been up to this point entirely unaware of plans for a bus lane and (we) had believed no banned turn onto Beaufort street were necessary. Conversations had been had about how best to ensure safe 4-way crossing, either through staggered crossings, phased lighting or timing of signals.

Upon sight of the designs, RBKC objected to the banned left turn and questioned the need for a bus lane for a bus which runs once every 10 minutes and why it was being included into this proposal at all. RBKC was told quite categorically that the banned turn was necessary to avoid long tailbacks west of the junction and that the bus lane offers security to cyclists as well. TFL had in fact not even planned to include the 2nd diagram for the bus lane east of Beaufort Street until we objected.

TFL are keen to stress that this is a survey not a consultation. RBKC also understand there is no financial plan in place to implement until at least next April. Their modelling was being completed over July and August and we await this information."

In Summary, The Cheyne Walk Trust :

- Welcomes plans to introduce light controlled pedestrian crossings on the remaining 3 arms of the junction
- Considers that banning the left turn north into Beaufort St for traffic travelling east will be impractical and hugely disruptive for residents in SW Chelsea (Cremorne Rd, Blantyre St, Cheyne Walk, Cremorne Estate, Beaufort St etc.) who will not be able access their homes without totally impractical and traffic generating detours west of Beaufort St via Oakley St (already subject to massive tailbacks), Flood Steet or Royal Hospital Rd and The King's Rd
- Objects to the introduction of new, unrequired and traffic disrupting dedicated bus lanes on the east arm of the junction
- Believes it vital to consider improvements/changes at Battersea Bridge as part of the wider traffic patterns and problems at all three riverside bridge junctions on Chelsea riverside, namely Chelsea Bridge, Albert Bridge and Battersea Bridge
- Considers the wider view must also include and/or assess the impact on all access roads to and from RBKC, including Chelsea Bridge Rd, Tite St & Royal Hospital Rd, Oakley Street, Beaufort St and Cremorne Rd and consequent traffic flows along The Kings Rd and north and south across Chelsea
- Urges that proposals should be accompanied by full data/counts on traffic flows for pedestrians, cyclists, motorcycles, HGVs and buses and coaches north, south, east and west at all main junctions on Chelsea Riverside and related routes set against theoretical capacities.
- Considers that the proposals should include a summary of all present and planned changes that will deny access from and to Chelsea access roads directly from Chelsea Embankment/Cheyne Walk by all modes moving east or west.
- Considers for the reasons stated above that initial TFL proposals must be advised and circulated to residents and key stakeholders in South East Chelsea who so far have not been included in circulation of the TFL proposals.

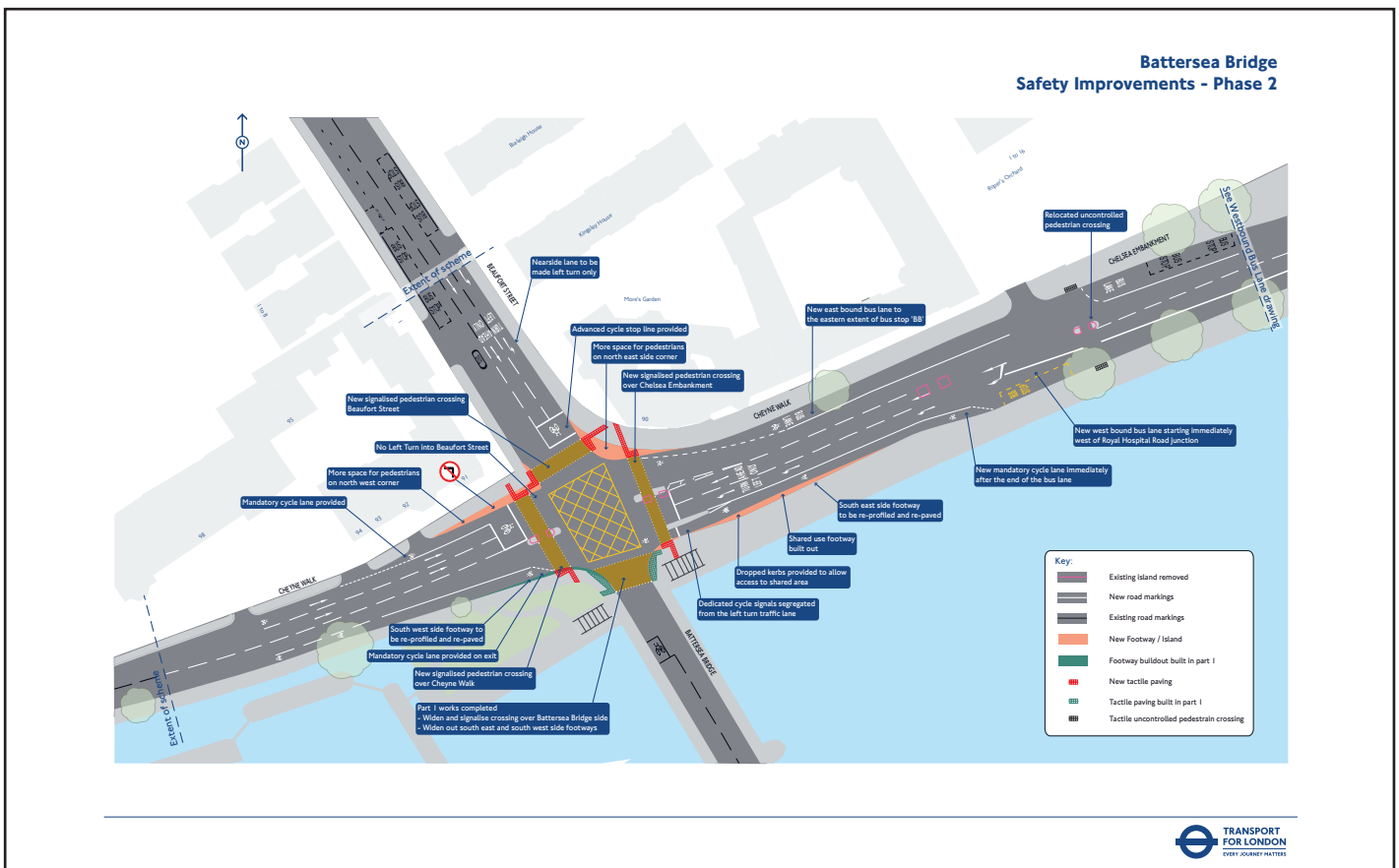


Illustration: Battersea Bridge Safety Improvements – Phase 2

Ralph Vaughan Williams and Cheyne Walk

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of England's greatest modern composers. A reflection by Peter J Bull



*Ralph Vaughan Williams, by Sir Gerald Kelly, oil on canvas, 1958-1961.
Image: National Portrait Gallery*

Not many residents of Chelsea know that Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), one of Britain's greatest music composers, had his home in what was then No.13 Cheyne Walk from 1905 until 1929 (although he was away serving in the Army for most of 1914-18). No. 13 and the then-No. 14 have since been pulled down and rebuilt as one house, albeit in a similar style.

He had his studio on the fourth floor overlooking the trees of Chelsea Embankment Gardens and across the river to Battersea Park and the old warehouses and factories that then stood on the other side of the river in Battersea (not then obscured by the plane trees). His second symphony, the *London Symphony*, has atmospheric moments that may have been inspired by the outlook from his studio. And it was during those years that he composed his masterpiece, *The Lark Ascending*, that for twelve years has been voted top of Classic FM's annual classic music Hall of Fame, out of more than three hundred compositions by the world's great composers.

He had been a student at the Royal College of Music, south from the Royal Albert Hall, for many years and was visited at his Cheyne Walk home by many other distinguished composers, including his friend Gustav Holst. On October 12th, 1922 Holst conducted a choir in Chelsea Embankment Gardens outside No. 13 in a performance of a specially-written part song to celebrate Vaughn Williams' 50th birthday that day.

Maurice Ravel was another friend who came to visit. Perhaps when Ravel stayed with Vaughn Williams they walked together along the Embankment, discussing music on one of the benches across from the house.

It is also interesting to speculate whether Vaughn Williams may have met Scott of the Antarctic, who for some time lived around the corner in Oakley Street. Vaughn Williams was commissioned to write the score for the film about Scott, the music of which was later turned into the *Antarctica Symphony*.

Many years ago, when I was studying sculpture at the City and Guilds Art School, I did consider making a head of Vaughn Williams. At his invitation, I visited him when he lived near Dorking. I took a number of photographs of him. Unfortunately, my other work at that time prevented my completing the project, but there remains nevertheless a tenuous direct link with the composer.

These thoughts encouraged me to get the Council's permission to erect a bust of Vaughn Williams on a plinth in the gardens across from where he lived, in recognition of Vaughan Williams' long association with Chelsea, and in particular Cheyne Walk. The original maquette by sculptor Marcus Cornish was for a much larger statue in the middle of the Gardens but the Council's Art Advisory Committee turned down that proposal, and the present green column plinth with the head of Vaughn Williams in fired clay is a compromise approved by the then Deputy Leader of the Council, Lord Moylan.

At its base is an engraved stone plaque recording the fact that the composer's first three symphonies, the *Tallis Fantasia* and several other major works, which may have been at least partly inspired and conveyed to manuscript in his Chelsea home.

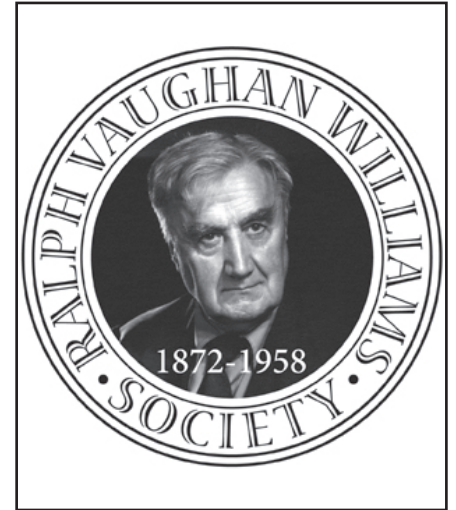
The statue was unveiled in 2012 by the Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society, Mr John Gilhooly, who is also head of Wigmore Hall, in the presence of more than 100 distinguished musicians and members of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney, where his father was vicar. His mother was a daughter of Josiah Wedgwood 3rd, a grandson of the founder and owner of Wedgwood pottery business, whose wife was a relative of Charles Darwin, so that Vaughn Williams' blood had contributions from several great families.

In the early years of the twentieth century, he spent hours in Essex noting down more than 800 folk songs from elderly villagers that otherwise might have been lost to posterity, and there is no doubt that the influence of folk song and the English landscape is apparent in several of his major works. But he is one of the twentieth century's great symphonists and his nine symphonies have been recorded in disc sets about a dozen times around the world.



The memorial of Ralph Vaugh Williams by sculptor Marcus Corning, in Chelsea Embankment Gardens across from his former home at 13 Cheyne Walk.



Peter J Bull is a member of the Cheyne Walk Trust and Ralph Vaughn Williams Society. For further information on the life and music of Ralph Vaughn Williams visit www.rvwsociety.com

A Unique Gathering in Chelsea: Constance Wilde's Autograph Book, 1886-1896

Author Devon Cox reveals the true brilliance of Oscar Wilde's wife

For just over ten years from 1885 to 1895, the famed 'House Beautiful' at No. 16 (now 34) Tite Street had served as the family home for Constance Wilde (née Lloyd), her husband Oscar, and their two children, Cyril and Vyvyan. It was here that Constance entertained the crème de la crème of late-Victorian society during her monthly 'At Homes' and it was here that Oscar wrote his controversial classic *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). But this all came to an abrupt end with the collapse of Oscar's ill-fated action for libel against the Marquess of Queensberry, and his subsequent arrest on charges of 'gross indecency' on 5 April 1895.

Bailiffs were quick to take possession of the Wildes' home and a sheriff's auction was held on 24 April 1895 to satisfy the demands of Oscar's creditors. The family home was ransacked. Books, paintings, furniture and children's toys were hastily auctioned off at a fraction of their value, and, according to one eyewitness: 'a great many things were stolen'. In the space of a single afternoon, the trappings of the Wildes' colourful, decade-long tenure in Tite Street were scattered, leaving behind only a few rare items to document the illustrious lives and myriad connections that had been fostered there.



*Constance with her son Cyril in 1889.
Image: Wikipedia*



A cartoon showing the auction of Wilde's personal property. Image courtesy of Devon Cox

While Oscar was in Holloway Prison awaiting trial, Constance was left to fend for herself and her two sons. She quickly left Tite Street, and soon afterwards left the country to spend her few remaining years in continental exile. At some point during those chaotic weeks of April 1895, she returned to Tite Street to gathering a few last possessions, but in her hurry, she was forced to leave behind many treasured personal items including her photographs of her children and their toys. However, it seems that, as she rushed around the house, Constance managed to collect one last prized possession—an autograph book—

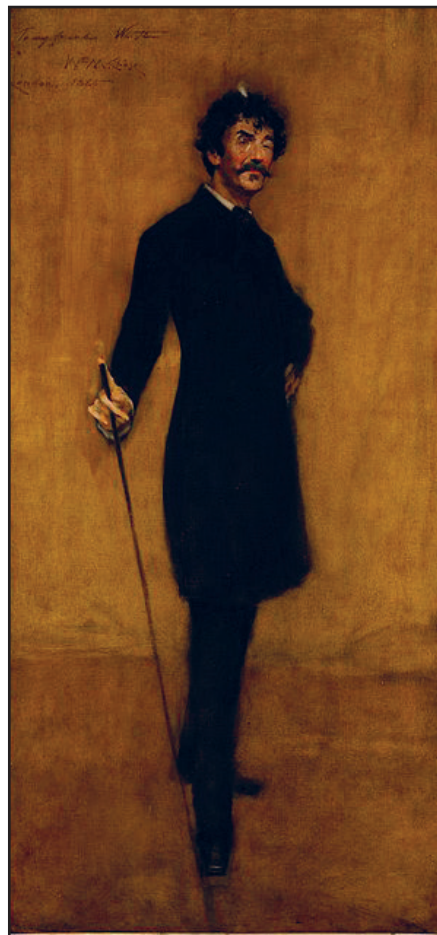


Wilde's home in Tite Street, the epicentre of Chelsea's creative set

now held at the British Library—reveals that, over a span of ten years from 1886 to 1896, Constance Wilde had carefully selected sixty-four individual contributors for her autograph book including, as an earlier observer had noted, 'specimens of the writings of almost every living famous English author, artist, statesman, actor, and actress' not to mention some of the most

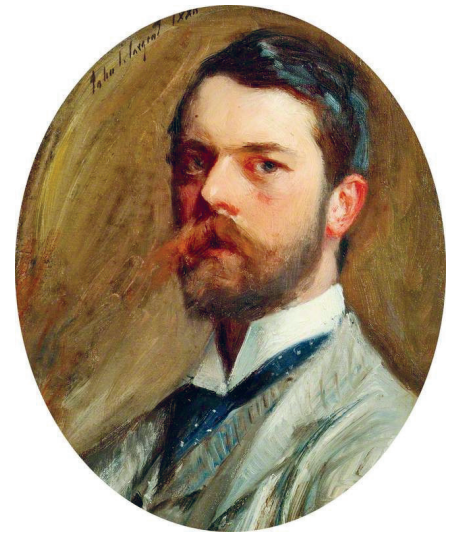
celebrated singers and composers, social activists, suffragettes and spiritualists of the age. Across more than fifty pages the book features poems, some published, others improvised, handwritten in English, French, ancient Greek, and Ottoman Turkish, alongside political statements and biblical quotations, accompanied by sketches, drawings and watercolours by local Chelsea artists as well as bars of music by some of the leading musicians of the day including George Grossmith, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, Pablo de Sarasate and Johannes Wolff.

Given her location at the House Beautiful in Tite Street, it may come as no great surprise that many of those featured in the book were prominent Chelsea-based artists, authors,



Portrait of the painter Whistler, 1885, by William Merrit Chase

poets and musicians. Foremost among these names are Constance's immediate neighbours in Tite Street including the American artist James McNeill Whistler who penned his famous butterfly signature and John Singer Sargent who signed in 1894 on the same page as his compatriot Mark Twain, who later lived in Tedworth Square.

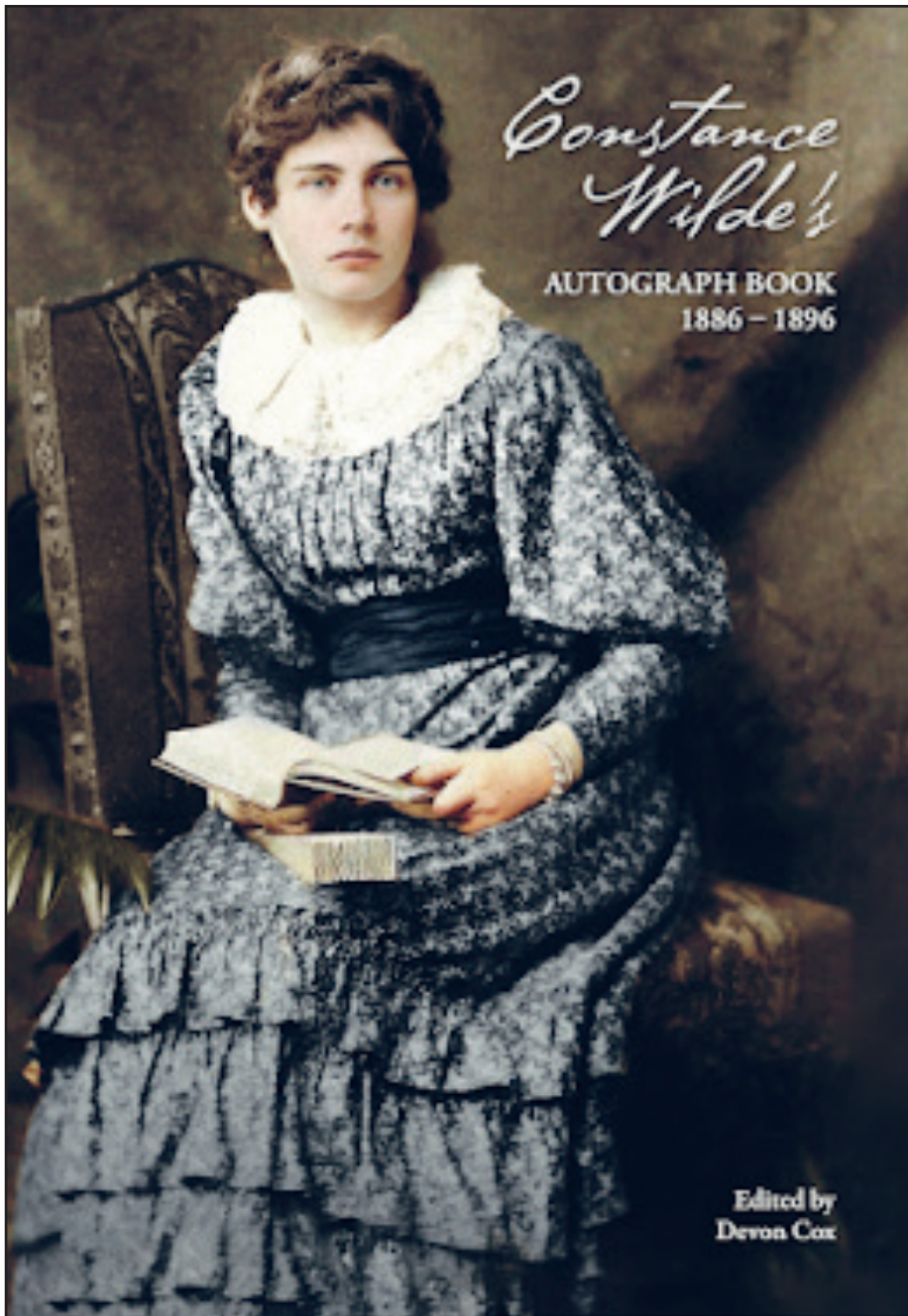


Self Portrait of John Singer Sargent, 1886. Image courtesy Aberdeen Art Gallery

With such a high concentration of artistic talents on their doorstep, it is unsurprising that Constance's autograph book contains a series of highly accomplished drawings, pastels and watercolours. One of these drawings was completed by George Percy Jacomb-Hood, another Tite Street neighbour and active member of the Chelsea Arts Club. There is also a charming pair of pastels by the artists and illustrators Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, the artistic duo who were living in The Vale, off King's Road, where they ran The Vale Press.



The Pre-Raphaelite muse and model Jane Morris, 1865. By John R Parsons. She and her famous husband William Morris were part of Constance's circle. Image courtesy National Portrait Gallery



The Oscar Wilde Society and the British Library have just published this extraordinary document to the life and legacy of Constance Wilde.

Residents of the Cheyne Walk and its environs will no doubt be pleased to see former residents of the area well-represented in the autograph book as well. Many of the notable literary and artistic personalities who had gathered around Dante Gabriel Rossetti at 16 Cheyne Walk are represented with fragments of poetry and quotes from figures such as Walter Crane, George Meredith, William and Jane Morris, Algernon Swinburne and George Fredrick Watts. Perhaps one of the most personal signatures in the book is that of the renowned Pre-Raphaelite collector and patron, Lady Georgina Mount Temple, who was a close personal friend of Constance's and lived at 9 Cheyne Walk.

The presence of Lady Mount Temple and the prevalence of musicians as well as names associated with women's suffrage and spiritualism helps to illustrate how this unassuming little volume was much more than a trivial past-time, but instead presented a subtle yet viable and acceptably feminine opportunity for Constance to assert some agency in defining a role for herself that went beyond presiding over the tea-table at her 'At Homes' where her famous husband was the main attraction. The Constance Wilde represented in the pages of the autograph book is an educated, cultured woman in her own right with enough influence to

command and curate her own impressive and well-rounded collection within its pages.

Constance died an exile in Genoa in 1898, just two years after the last entry in her autograph book. Almost ninety years would pass before the story of her life was finally told by Joyce Bentley in 1983, by Ann Amor Clark in 1988, and most recently by Franny Moyle in 2011. While each of these biographies has discussed the importance of the autograph book, providing quotations and snippets, its full scope and contents have not been available to a wider readership. In October 2022, with the kind permission of the British Library, the Oscar Wilde Society will be reproducing a full facsimile of the original pages of the autograph book along with a transcript of its contents with brief biographies of each of the sixty-four contributors accompanied by lavish colour images. This autograph book presents a rare and exciting opportunity for readers to glimpse Constance Wilde's own tastes and interests reflected in this 'unique gathering' of extraordinary talent in Chelsea's cultural scene at the turn of the century.

The book will have a limited run, so advance orders are recommended. To order please visit <https://oscarwildesociety.co.uk/autograph-book/> or email Robert Whelan at jacobtonson@googlemail.com.



*Devon Cox, Ph.D., is an American-born writer and historian whose highly acclaimed debut biography, *The Street of Wonderful Possibilities: Whistler, Wilde & Sargent in Tite Street*, was nominated for the prestigious William MB Berger Prize in British Art History. He is currently working on a new biography of John Singer Sargent.*

Shaping the future of Lots Road and Cheyne Walk

By Richard Jacques, Chair, Lots Road Neighbourhood Forumwife

With the Lots Road Power Station development nearing completion, residents of Cheyne Walk and Lots Road may well have been looking forward to a break in the endless procession of cement trucks heading towards our little corner of Chelsea. We may even have hoped for a pause in the influx of new residents to the streets that make our area one of the most densely populated and congested parts of London. We may have been longing for a moment when our community could take a collective breath after years of dust and disruption. But sadly, whatever we may have wished for, this is not the future that RBKC and their developers have in mind. We are challenged by potential new building sites at Lots Road South, Cheyne nursery and Old Ferry Wharf.



The Lots Road Power Station Development is one of the biggest ever in Chelsea. Image: Effisus

Faced with the challenges of this constant disruptive development, residents and businesses have come together with a renewed determination to have their voices heard and to ensure that if and when new development occurs, it reflects the priorities and concerns of those who live and work in this very precious area of Chelsea.

This call to arms has led to the creation of the Lots Road Neighbourhood Forum, a body empowered by legislation to represent the views of local people and businesses in the planning process and to produce new ideas for improving the community. The area covered by the Forum is bounded by the Kings Road to the north, the RBKC border to the west, Chelsea Creek and the River Thames to the south and Cremorne Road and Cheyne Walk to Battersea Bridge on the east. Already a number of houseboat residents have joined the Forum and we hope that all those who reside around Cheyne Walk will wish to get involved.

At the heart of the Forum's work will be the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, containing policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the character of the area, developing its green spaces and riverside environment, strengthening its status as an employment zone, improving its streetscapes, and creating a safer, more thriving environment for all. The Forum has already begun consulting on the issues the Neighbourhood Plan will cover, and a public meeting is planned for later in the Autumn to share this emerging thinking and gather further ideas and points of view.

Among specific initiatives already underway, the Forum has applied for funds from RBKC to install an acoustic camera on Cheyne Walk and Cremorne Road to tackle excessive noise from inconsiderate road users. The Forum has also asked for funding for CCTV cameras in the area, given residents' growing concerns for their safety and security.

The success of the Forum in reflecting the views of local residents and businesses and effecting real change will, in large measure, be determined by the contribution of local people to the Forum's work. I would therefore urge everyone with an interest to take a look at the Forum's website, www.lotsroadforum.org, and consider how you might get involved. The Forum provides a platform for local people to shape the future of one of Chelsea's most distinctive and historic areas, and we can't do it without you!

<https://lotsroadforum.org>



Saving the Cheyne Walk Cabmen's Shelter

RBKC Councillor Cem Kemahli gives an update



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

One of only 13 remaining traditional London cab shelters will soon be reborn as a local coffee and takeaway sandwich shop, catering to local residents, tradespeople and of course our wonderful taxi drivers.

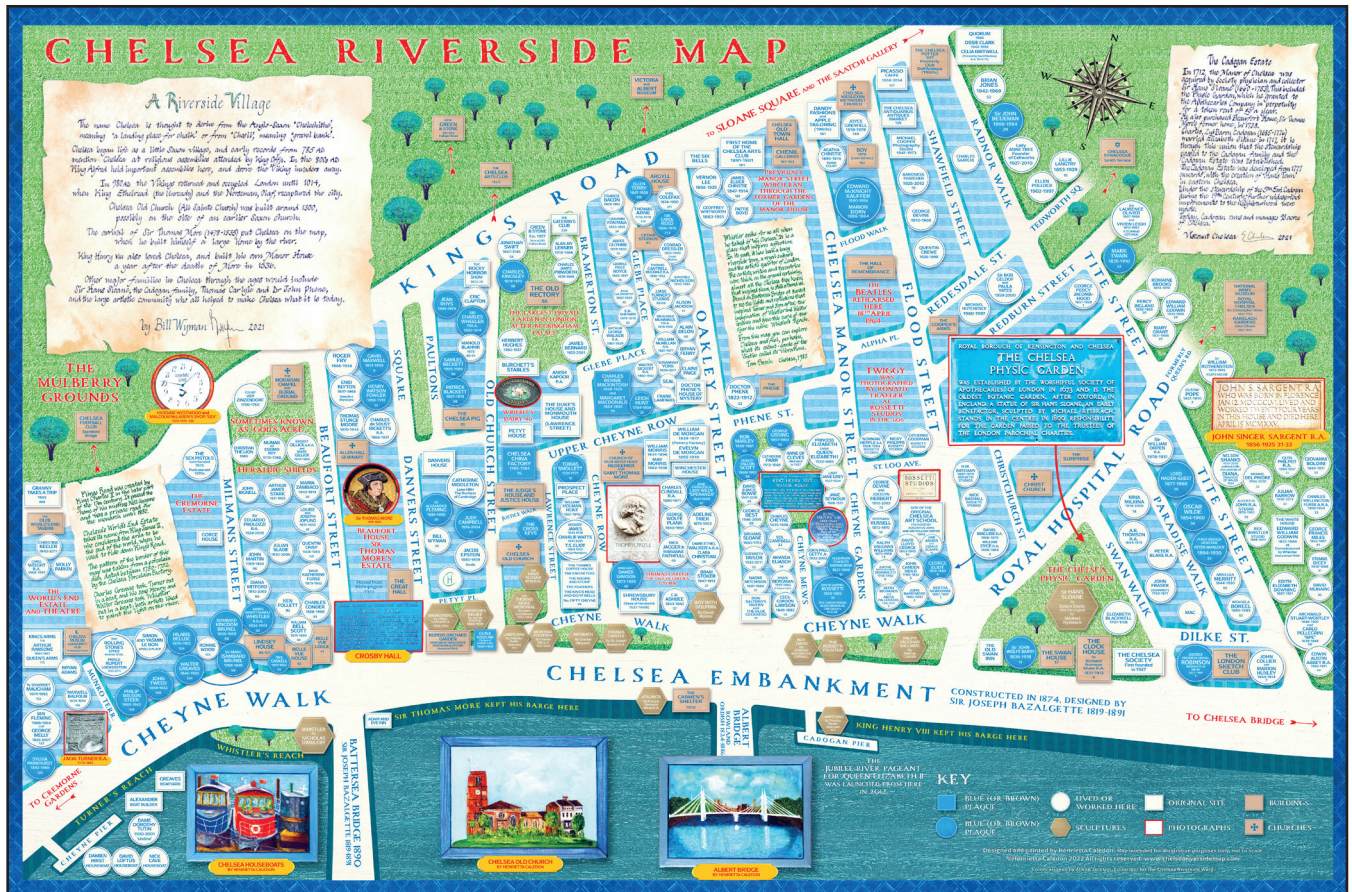
Having been defunct for a number of years, the shelter recently underwent wholesale renovation, thanks to campaigning by the former RBK&C Councillor Alison Jackson; current local councillors; The Chelsea Society and the Cheyne Walk Trust; supported by the Cabmen's Shelter Fund

and Heritage of London Trust. Upon completion, the building joins its siblings in being Grade II listed.

With listed building status now granted, incorporating a kitchen requires more detailed designs and assessments by conservation officers. We hope to be successful in obtaining permission in October, with a view to serving the community this side of Christmas. We hope this proves to be a popular addition to the pleasures of the Chelsea Riverside.

The Chelsea Riverside Map

Roper's Orchard Garden has a new work of art that celebrates Chelsea's creative heritage



Bafta award winning artist and recent RBKC councillor, Alison Jackson, commissioned local artist Henrietta Caledon on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to create the Chelsea Riverside Map which is now hanging in Ropers Orchard Garden.

The idea behind it was to show not only the rich history of the local area, but to also highlight the enormous number of talented artists who have lived or worked here over many years, along with the cultural influences.

Says Henrietta, “I was very lucky to get a lot of help from many experts with the research for the map and there is now a copy in the Royal Academy archives.” The map features hundreds of locations and took many hours of painstaking research. It covers diverse landmarks, from where the 60’s model Twiggy launched her career, to where Whistler had his studio. Writers, actors, musicians, artists, eccentrics, bohemians and their works run riot across this wonderfully colourful and informative map.

The map was hand-painted and then uploaded digitally, and Henrietta has released prints in various sizes, ranging from a limited edition of 500 signed Giclee fine art prints, to German etching on hahnemuhle paper, to canvas prints. For further details, or to order, please visit www.chelseariversidemap.com



The unveiling of the map took place on 24, May 2022. Pictured from left to right : Viscount Chelsea, Henrietta Caledon, Alison Jackson, Gerard Hargreaves (then the Mayor of Chelsea), and Bill Wyman.

The Cheyne Walk Trust Committee In Action

*Key issues we're working on for our members,
compiled by Roddy Mullin and David Waddell*

CREST

CREST is RBKC's "Customer and Resident-focused Environmental Transformation programme". CREST initially focussed on building sites and related activity, which resulted in a new Construction Management Team being introduced in April 2019. The next stage of the project reviewed whether the enforcement and engagement functions that were being delivered on streets, in estates, neighbourhoods and parks could be more joined-up to make reporting easier for residents and improving enforcement. This has been largely achieved by new software that classifies and routes reports to those best placed to resolve them. CREST is now an established and developing Council initiative enabling more effective response to resident's concerns and issues.

This initiative is much applauded as an aid to environmental improvement and policing in the Borough. In November 2018 Councillors planned to introduce a CREST mobile app. The app should enable residents to report directly to the Council – sending photographs of anything untoward, such as infringements by contractors, graffiti, illegal parking, dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and suspected criminal activity. The app would also assist the problem of too few CCTV cameras (£15,000 each) or the need for more wardens to police the Borough. Cost pressures have meant that even the dog warden was cancelled to make savings. The app is not yet in place but in the meantime, the Council does now offer an alternative web reporting facility operable from a smartphone or computer. The "Report a Problem" link will be monitored and reviewed with a view to enhancement, improving functionality and ease of operation. It is effectively being used now by CREST Wardens, refuse disposal teams, council officers and residents. If you would like to report an issue, go to the RBK&C website using the link: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/contact-us/report-problem>

PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION-ORDER (PSPO)

As many will be aware, over many months noise disturbances along Cheyne Walk and Chelsea Embankment by loud adapted cars and motorcycles has been a problem, in particular at night and over weekends.

This may have been aggravated by the successful action by the Council to curb such activity in the Sloane St and Knightsbridge area through implementing a Public Spaces Protection Order enabling fines to be imposed after monitoring by noise activated cameras. The measure proved very effective with only some 3 repeat offenders following the issue of 4000 fines. Possibly that success displaced some of this disturbance activity to south Chelsea. Following formal statutory

consultation, the Council has now introduced a Borough wide PSPO to enable more effective control in all areas. This will authorise positioning of the existing or additional mobile RBK&C noise cameras to locations on the Embankment to deter speeding cars, anti-social driving and exceedingly noisy motorbikes. Initial delays in seeking TFL agreement to mount cameras on riverside lamp posts have now been resolved. Additional mobile noise camera coverage for Cheyne Walk/Chelsea Embankment has been secured by the Lots Road Neighbourhood Forum. Hopefully that will curtail vehicle noise nuisance activity by spring 2023.



RIVER THAMES CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN (RTCAMP)

The very welcome Thames Conservation Area Appraisal (TCAA), sponsored in 2017 by the six Royal Hospital and Chelsea Riverside ward councillors, was adopted by the council for RBKC in February 2020. Additional formal guidance in the form of a management plan is required in order to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duty to formulate guidance for the preservation and enhancement of this historic area. This is intended to provide effective and actionable guidance for councillors and officers of the Royal Borough, as well as residents and developers concerned with planning and conservation, when they make decisions that affect the Thames Conservation Area. Consultation and drafting of the RTCAMP began in 2021 but stalled when officers advised that in their view the Council could not exercise planning control in respect of vessels in existing moorings.

RBK&C Officers had taken legal counsel's advice (not shared with residents) as to how far they should be involved with actually policing the Appraisal. In contradiction of the detailed guidance previously established in the River Thames Conservation Area Statement 1983 (RTCAS83), RBKC officers considered that they should not enforce planning guidance for existing boats in established moorings, curiously unlike such controls exercised by other Thames riparian boroughs.

Reluctance and failure by RBKC Planning and Enforcement Officers to apply the erstwhile planning regime has already resulted in significant damage to the heritage and conservation character of the Thames Conservation Area in Chelsea. This appears to have been aggravated by changes in ownership of the two mooring operating companies Cadogan Pier Ltd (CPL) and the Chelsea Yacht & Boat Company (CYBC). In the past, these companies were relatively benign conventional mooring operators that complied with the accepted established riverside planning regime. Since the change in ownership the new owners (who now control both companies) have (it seems) sought to maximise and increase capital value of their investment by challenging the established RBKC planning regime; introducing very large, unsightly and discordant houseboats which already adversely impact and damage the riverside conservation appearance. Unless this trend is controlled, the much-loved character of Chelsea Riverside may soon be catastrophically destroyed and a key element of Chelsea's unique historic charm and beauty lost forever.

Seeking to resolve these difficulties, the CWT, the Chelsea Society and CRBA have funded a further opinion from a senior Planning KC; this opines that the Council for RBK&C does have planning authority to act in relation to the Thames and moored boats. Historically, this had been implemented for over 40 years, with the requirement for any changes to moorings or boats to be the subject of planning permissions taking account of the detailed Annex to the RTCAS83 document. The CWT, Chelsea Society and CRBA seek inclusion of an appropriate planning regime as part of the RTCAMP. The Council for RBKC has noted the submission and undertaken to give it careful consideration in reviewing amendment of the draft RTCAMP. Residents may wish to express their concerns to Councillors, emphasising that protecting the historic character of the Chelsea riverside is an important feature of local life.



The River Thames Conservation Area Plan seeks to preserve and protect the character of Chelsea's riverside

HOUSEBOAT OWNERS STRUGGLE TO ESCAPE EVICTION AT CHELSEA REACH

The directors and owners of Chelsea Yacht & Boat Company (CYBC) have issued eviction notices to five houseboats – to leave the moorings by the end of the September. The first of these evictions was made on 11th October 2022. Many more houseboats are in line for eviction. Should legal notices follow it is understood that CRBA have formulated a response. It is believed that the intention is to replace evicted houseboats with much larger vessels, currently being built in the CYBC owners' boatyard. The houseboat owners are awaiting the determination of an arbitration concerning whether CYBC can charge for licence fees in addition to mooring fees (licence fees were originally zero, but now by way of example, £97,000 licence fees are proposed for ten years for a sixty-foot boat). The houseboat owners are unsurprisingly in a state of turmoil over their futures and seeking legal means to resolve a satisfactory way forward that will enable them to remain peacefully resident in their houseboats and unique community.



Chelsea houseboat owners face more threats of eviction

OLD FERRY WHARF

The CYBC lease ran out in March 2022. RBK&C plans to upgrade the area to improve facilities for the public and youth sports using the river and including the Cremorne Gardens area. Temporarily, RBK&C has issued two five-year lease extensions to Old Ferry Wharf to CYBC while the plans are developed for a future scheme. Residents may wish to appraise Councillors of their views as to how the amenities could be improved.

KING'S ROAD BUSINESS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The CWT Committee volunteered members Roddy Mullin and Denis Strauss to help advise Landlords and the Council to restore the King's Road to the status of a tourist destination, as it was in its heyday in the 60's to 80's.

Destination status is an accolade determined by Visit Britain. After much research it was discovered that along the King's Road some 45 retail spaces were unoccupied. Of the 60 restaurants, cafés and bars, roughly half do not have outside seating (needed for example, should Covid appear again!). The Council and Landlords were informed where unused outside space exists to match vacant premises or shops (such as estate agents) could be moved to provide more outside space. A number of key specialist shops are missing, for example music shops of all types, arts and craft supplies, a games outlet, or vintage clothing. Landlords and Council were informed of shops willing to try an outlet in the Kings Road to achieve more variety, given reasonable terms. A scheme was suggested to help increase the number of shoppers using the King's Road by using both the existing Thames Clipper fleet and a fleet of shuttle coaches from Cadogan Pier to bring in more people. We now await the recently appointed BID chief executive Steve Medway to implement the proposals.



The King's Road has huge potential for attracting visitors

For more information see the Knightsbridge Partnership website King's Road Partnership - Homepage (kingsrdpartnership.com) which has the BID under its banner. Cllr Rendall is the current RBK&C Lead for Business

How the Chelsea Riverside inspired the painter Theodore Roussel

Patrick Duffy of David Messum Fine Art discusses the Franco-British Impressionist's relationship with Chelsea.



*Theodore Casimire Roussel RBA ARE NEAC (1847–1926).
'Blue Thames, End of Summer Afternoon, Chelsea', 1888*

Looking out at the Thames on an overcast day in November, it is difficult to believe that Theodore Roussel's sunny riverscape has any relationship with the same grey Thames that churns its way through the city. However, Roussel had been a familiar face around Chelsea for well over a decade before he completed painting 'Blue Thames, End of Summer Afternoon, Chelsea' in 1888. As Dan Cruickshank recently pointed out, at one time Chelsea had been a village on the banks of the Thames and, well before the arrival of the Chelsea Embankment, it had been an area of London romantically associated with artists such as J.M.W. Turner, who had been drawn there for its clear waters and air. Chelsea provided Turner with the natural materials to fulfil his desire to master the effect of light on land or sea. Roussel was also captivated by the changing nature of the riverfront community, which had grown considerably larger since Turner's day, and adjusted to living there almost immediately.

A true anglophile, Roussel came to England in 1874 after serving in the Franco-Prussian War. Intending a brief stay in order to study British portraiture and Romantic landscape painting, this insular young French artist found the English way of life more congenial than that in Paris. He settled permanently in London in February 1880, and within five years had joined James McNeill Whistler's entourage, alongside Mortimer Menpes and Walter Sickert. The art historian Kenneth McConkey, who has written extensively about Whistler and Roussel's relationship, explains how Whistler had taken up residence in Chelsea in 1863 and during the 1870s, using the riverscape facing his house in Lindsey Row for many of his 'nocturnes' – infamous poetic evocations of the river, recreated in the studio from memory, using thin, almost uncontrollable washes of colour. During the 1880s the artists' quarter expanded and new studios were being built. The borough attracted

young painters such as Fred Brown, Alfred East, and many others. Among Roussel's more immediate comrades, Sydney Starr and Paul Fordyce Maitland were both painting Whistlerian views of the London river.

Roussel's views across the Thames to the Battersea shore provided an ideal opportunity for analysis of the marquetry of repeated shapes provided by the flat gables of factory buildings. Their minute alterations of hue were recorded in oil sketches, while line and tone were caught in small jewel-like etchings. These supplied information for the larger studio production – Blue Thames – End of a Summer Afternoon, Chelsea. And if the location was important, so too were the time of day and the season – the end of an afternoon in summer. Menpes recalled:

"We were continually asking one another to guess what hour such-and-such a picture was painted. A Follower would suggest eleven-thirty. "Right you are – almost," the proud possessor would answer. Not eleven-thirty, but eleven-fifteen – ... The school was becoming scientific. To be able to tell the time of day by a picture was astounding!"

worked upon with greater deliberation. Only in this context could a daily scene take on the visionary intensity of Blue Thames. With this wider recognition, Roussel emerged from Whistler's shadow, arriving at a technique that was distinctly individual and characteristic. His quasi-scientific observation of the world that surrounded him was matched by his sensitive handling of paint. As Sir Frederick Wedmore pointed out:

"It is the beauty and the poetry of the world and life – the quiet waters, the massed town, this strong man's character, the flowers, that woman's hand, and this child's face – it is all that, our world today, and not the technical achievements of the masters who have gone before him, that is the source and the origin of Roussel's so refined, so very modern, since always so sincere and personal work."

Unusually for a friendship of Whistler's, he and Roussel remained on good terms for life. One can only speculate what the pair would think about the riverfront today, as the remnants of its industrial past are being transformed for residential use and leisurely activities. As time meanders on, perhaps one day not too far in the future the residents of Chelsea will once again be able to look out over sapphire blue waters of the Thames on a late summer afternoon.

Adapted from an original text by Prof. Kenneth McConkey by Patrick Duffy of David Messum Fine Art.

Meet your new Riverside councillors

In their own words



Councillor Laura Burns



Councillor Sonia Zvedeniuk

I am passionate about my community and actively participate in local campaigns and issues. My main campaigning is via Conservative local party issues. I am also on the Environment Committee, so I am pushing for green local areas and maintaining as much heritage and green space as possible.

‘Having graduated from the University of Westminster with a degree in Commercial Music, I went on to enjoy a career as a model, actress, and physiognomist. I’ve also worked within the hospitality sector for a number of years curating, organising, and overseeing entertainment, media, and arts events. I’m a long-standing member of an American media group, where I work as a presenter, interviewer, and reviewer for major film and music festivals.

‘With my high energy and enthusiastic approach, I aim to encourage residents to enjoy Chelsea Riverside’s rich heritage and green spaces. By sharing and understanding the needs and experiences of the local community, I want to help build an open dialog around key concerns such as safety and the local economy.’

I have been active in Chelsea and Kensington since I moved to England and it is an honour to have been elected in May to represent Chelsea Riverside. I care deeply about the history and heritage of Chelsea and I am committed to standing up for local residents on your priorities, particularly strengthening community safety and local character.

‘I studied at the University of Melbourne and the University of St Andrews and my professional background is in international trade policy. I have worked as a civil servant and adviser in Whitehall as well as a tech start up in the city. I have worked on local campaigns focused on reducing noise pollution and I currently sit on the Planning Committee and the Family Services Select Committee.

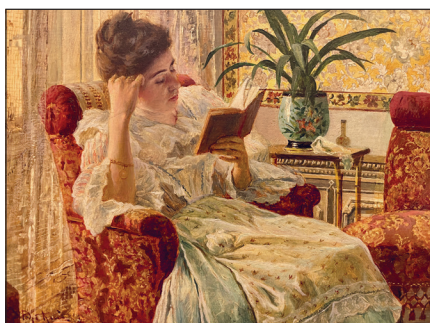
I am very excited about working with residents to revitalise our river, parks, and green spaces along the embankment and am always happy to be in touch.’

VALETE Councillor Alison Jackson

We fondly thank Alison Jackson as a Riverside Ward Councillor on standing down after four years in office in May 2022, in order to focus on her numerous activities as artist, photographer, author and film maker. Alison always been a most enthusiastic and supportive RBK&C Member on behalf the Trust and its members and all residents of the whole Thames riverside community of Chelsea, as a member of numerous Committees over the years, including Planning; Housing; Environment, and Family Services. She regularly attended and supported our Trust Committee meetings as an essential local ally and link to the Council for RBK&C. Alison is an immensely colourful and interesting personality in her working life as an exceptionally successful artist and photographer with a long Chelsea association, as a graduate of the Heatherley School of Fine Art, Chelsea College of Art and the Royal College of Art. Her great enthusiasm for young people and drive to encourage them to experience the art world led to her founding the hugely successful annual Chelsea photographic competition “A Day in Your Life” with its splendid award ceremony and exhibition in the Saatchi Gallery. We wish Alison ongoing success in her remarkable range of artistic endeavours.



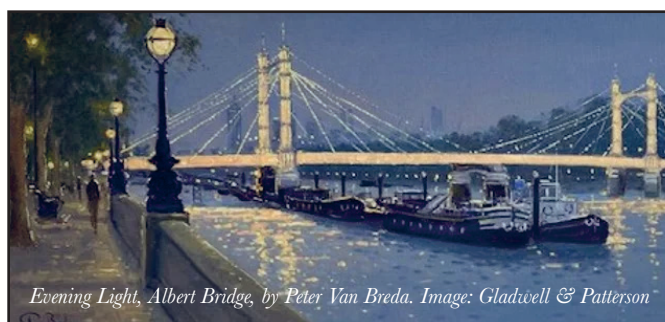
Join the Cheyne Walk Trust Book Club



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. In the last two years we have covered such diverse and diverting personalities as Thomas More, Hans Sloane, JMW Turner, Whistler, Augustus John, Oscar Wilde, and Somerset Maugham. We meet every six weeks or so over wine and canapés to discuss the books, which are usually biographies, social history, or fiction. We also host guest lectures and outings. For details email Hallie Swanson: halliecreative@aol.com.

The Cheyne Walk Trust AGM 2022

The Committee of the Cheyne Walk Trust Invites you to the Annual General Meeting and Reception at St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Street, SW3 3RP on Monday 21st November 2022 at 6.30 pm. Members' guests are welcome to attend and make a £10 contribution at the door. After the AGM Councillor Elizabeth Campbell Leader Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea will speak on "Matters of Local Interest"



Evening Light, Albert Bridge, by Peter Van Breda. Image: Gladwell & Patterson

The Cheyne Walk Trust Committee

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Hon. Treasurer: John Kozak

Roddy Mullin

Charles Mayes

George Nicholson

Denis Strauss

Anthea Turner

Honorary Member: Dave Walker, RBK&C Archivist



'Summer in Cheyne Walk' by Paul Maitland (1863-1909)

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**