

THE Kensington MAGAZINE

October 2020 FREE

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A Brief Social History Of Kensington

THE Kensington MAGAZINE

This has been a fascinating edition to research and we are particularly indebted to John Hull (95) who gives us his memories of living in Edwardes Square most of his life and also to his daughter, Charlotte, who gives us her childhood memories a generation later. We trace the various histories of the site of what was originally 8 - 13 Leonard Place, more latterly the Odeon cinema site and is now the Lodha Development. Nick takes us on a celoid journey through W8 and Sarah considers the slums of Kensington Court (which might be a surprise to anyone who thought Kensington was always wealthy). And finally, Maria finds out more about The Trafalgar Way - which we bet you didn't know about! We hope you enjoy this edition and find it of social historical interest. Lucy

Front Cover: Promotional material for the Kensington Kinema (sic) Christmas 1926 (Image kind courtesy of RBKC, Local Studies Department)

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CONTRIBUTORS

Aletta Richie, Victoria O'Neil, Maria Perry, Charles Yorke, Benedict Bull, Sarah Goldsmith and Nick Campailla.
Guest Contributors: John Hull and Charlotte Hull

GET IN TOUCH

EDITOR & PHOTOGRAPHY: Lucy M Elliott
0203 667 8762 07921 558520
editor@thekensingtonmagazine.com

PUBLISHER: The Kensington Magazine Ltd

WEBSITE: www.thekensingtonmagazine.com



/TheKensingtonMagazine



#KensingtonMag



Lucy Elliott, Editor

Read by 34,500 residents and businesses each month. The magazine is also available at Sainsbury's Local, Boots, RBKC Library, Marks & Spencers, St Mary Abbots, St George's Church, St Philips Church, The Royal Garden Hotel, The Milestone Hotel, Peter Jones in Sloane Square and many other smaller outlets in W8.

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Back where I began! Kensington in the 1920s and 1930s

By John Hull, (Nearly) life - long resident of Edwardes Square

I was born 95 years ago in 35 Edwardes Square which my parents had been given as a wedding present in 1915. I have few early memories as we moved to a larger house at 59 Campden Hill Road to accommodate my parents, six children, a cook, parlourmaid and nanny! However, My four older sisters recalled playing in the Square, the pony that pulled the giant roller, and Mr Ives the gardener.

We had daily trips to Kensington Gardens (Holland Park was only opened to the public after the War). When I was 7 my younger brother and I were sent to St Thomas More school in Kensington Square which was run by the frightening Mrs Mitchell and her three daughters. My sisters attended the Convent next door. We used to walk to school and take an unauthorised shortcut through Derry & Tom's on the way home and have fun playing in the newly installed electric lifts!

All our shopping was done locally, either at one of the three Department stores: Barkers which had a Harrods-type food hall; Derry & Tom's and Pontings. In Church Street there were the two grocers Barham & Marriage, and Nicholls; the haberdashery, Joshua Robinson and a fish shop. In Holland Street there was Bulgins the bakery, Whitemans the dairy, the sub post office and Mr Cotton the tailor. Also a tea shop called "All Made by Ladies"! Our favourite shop was Mr Pollard's sweet shop in Church Walk. My brother and I used to run a little sweet shop operated from the Pram shed stocked by Mr Pollard who gave us a modest discount. On George V's Jubilee Celebration we surprised our customers with caviar sandwiches! The caviar had been a gift to my parents who

didn't like it but unfortunately our potential customers treated them as a hoax and we didn't sell any! There was a wonderful shop called Norbergs in the High Street which sold sets of lead soldiers, farm animals and train sets where we would spend our pocket money. For special treats we would be taken to Lyons Corner House on the site of Boots to have ice cream sodas.

During the war we kept chickens which roamed freely over Upper Phillimore Gardens. We had two cars as we were such a large family and they were housed in Lex garage up the road as no parking was permitted in the roads by the Council. Bus services along the High Street and up Church Street was our means of transport and it was always a great excitement when the bus was one of the fast disappearing open-topped variety. We always aimed to ride on one of the "pirate" buses which competed with the newly formed LPTB and had taken over the General Omnibus Company. As a special treat on my 7th birthday I was taken to Stoke Newington and back on the '73' pirate' bus. I have always loved buses as a mode of transport ever since!

There was no television in those days but we listened regularly to Children's Hour on the radio at 5pm just after school. We read voraciously and books were all over the house. Sometimes we would go to the two cinemas in the High Street: The Royal and The Kensington (the latter's name changed to Majestic for strategic reasons during the War) and also the Coronet In Nottinghill Gate. Our annual treat was to go to the latest Lesley Henson musical comedy at the Old Gaiety in the Aldwych.

During the War everything changed: blackout curtains, rationing and no cook or any staff. The house became a place of refuge for various members of our family who were serving in the Forces. My father would always ensure that he kept sufficient rationed fuel to light the boiler for hot baths when any of us were on Leave. During the heavy bomb raids we would all sleep in the basement and listen to the bombs and wait for the all clear. I recall the aircraft crashing and destroying Observatory Gardens and the destruction of (the former) Nidderly Lodge now the site of the Town Hall.

I moved back with my wife and children to Edwardes Square In 1964, two doors away from where I was born. We bought

the house from Joan Astley a remarkable widow who had worked with General Ismay in the cabinet office during the War and had attended the Yalta conference with Churchill. We kept in touch with her and became firm friends until she died in her 90s. There have been significant changes since then but the Square has remained essentially the same as it was 95 years ago, a beautiful, friendly and neighbourly place in which to live.

Editor's Note: We are very grateful to John for sharing his memories; giving us an incredible insight into the social history of Kensington over (very nearly) a century.



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Childhood Memories of Living in Edwardes Square

By Charlotte Hull (Daughter of John Hull)

My first ever memory of Edwardes Square was when I was a very little girl living in Scarsdale Villas, and my father took me for a walk round Edwardes Square one evening.

I remember peering through the railings and thinking how quiet, atmospheric and secret the garden was. It was dusk and a lamplighter was lighting up the lamps, which reminded me of the favourite poem my father used to read to my sister and me at the time - Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Lamplighter'. Shortly after, in 1964 we moved into No. 33, only two doors from No. 35, the house my grandparents lived in after they were married in 1915 and in which my father was born in 1925, the fifth of six children.

Sadly, the lamplighter my sister and I used to watch putting the lamps out in the early morning was replaced by electric lights in 1970. There were very few cars in those days and there was never a problem finding a parking space. In fact, it was a social solecism if you parked in front of someone else's house! As the roads were uncluttered by cars, it would be a huge excitement to be woken by the sound of the clattering of hooves at dawn, and we would rush to the windows to watch the Household Cavalry riding two abreast round the Square as they exercised their horses through London.

This was the pre-supermarket age, long before Waitrose deliveries, and on Saturday mornings a family-run vegetable lorry from Elephant & Castle would park outside the house. Everyone would buy their fresh fruit and vegetables from the "Veggie boys" as we nicknamed them. This family business had followed my parents every time they had moved, and my father remembers the old father driving the lorry when he was a little boy, living then in Campden Hill Road. The

family also had a shop in Elephant & Castle, an area which had been heavily bombed during the war, and they used to give nurses from St Thomas's free produce in gratitude for their work in the area. The business was sadly killed off eventually by the rise of the big supermarkets.

The milkman used to deliver daily, and the other 'cries of London'; the knife grinder and chair-mender would regularly come and sit on doorsteps sharpening knives and mending chairs, whilst the onion man in his blue French beret would cycle past on his bicycle with strings of onions hanging down over his back wheel. The Rag n' Bone man would also go by crying out "Any Ol' Iron" and we would rush out and feed his horse carrots and apples - he finally disappeared, I think, when his old horse died.

Anigoni had a studio on the south side, where he painted his portrait of the Queen. There was also another well-known portrait painter, Cowan Dobson, who had a studio on the site which was recently redeveloped opposite the Temple. When he died, his widow lived there for many years, an aging beauty with blonde hair and lots of bright red lipstick. Franta Belsky, the famous sculptor, lived in Pembroke Studios at the bottom of our garden. He sculpted members of the Royal Family there, but after the IRA bombings, he used to go to the Palace for sittings. His sculpture of Lord Mountbatten which stands on Horse Guards Parade was created in his studio, and he invited us to have a private viewing. Whenever he finished one of his masterpieces, he would turn it towards our house so we could observe it from our library windows. The other famous artist who lived and, still does, live in Pembroke Studios is David Hockney - still to be seen walking by in his red velvet slippers.

As it still is to this day, the Square was a wonderful place of freedom and space for us children, and we would ride our bikes and form gangs with each other. There was added excitement to our games as, at the time, the Russian Embassy rented two houses in Earls Terrace for their employees, and their non-English speaking children were forbidden to mix with us. We had our own Cold War in the Square. I always remember one occasion when my younger sister Victoria was heard at the gate shouting to my mother, "Hurry, hurry, the Russians have got Jonathan"! When he apologised for his misdemeanour he was released but his apology was rejected. Two spies were arrested there in the early 70s after having been monitored by police for several months from houses on the east side.

Also in the 1970s, there was a big explosion one night from the north-east corner of the Square. We were in our kitchen and there was a torrent of wind and minutes later a policeman ran down the street, shouting to us all to keep indoors. It turned out one IRA bomb had been dumped after a plan had gone wrong, and the policeman was warning us that there were nearly always two explosions.

There was a small pre-school playgroup formed for children in the Square and neighbourhood, the mothers and nannies taking it in turns to supervise. Polly Gunn, one of the first members, who lived in Earls Walk, came back many years later to be the gardener in residence in the 1990s. Mark Parker the first gardener I remember when we moved to Edwardes Square was rather strict and wouldn't let us play ball games. There were also two tennis courts in those days. I can remember seeing Frankie Howerd, the comedian who lived in No 27, playing once.



The Rag n' Bone Man
kindly illustrated for this article by
Raphaella Thomas

On Guy Fawkes Day, the gardener at the time would let off rockets and Catherine wheels and we would stand around eating toffee apples, waving pre-health-and-safety banned sparklers by the fistful.

In 1987, the Committee, under the chairmanship of my father, John Hull, decided to hold the first summer party celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the historic decision of the House of Lords that 'the exclusive right of the care and management of the garden for the benefit of the resident was vested in the Garden Square Committee "for all time".' There was a children's party, followed by 'drinks and snacks', followed by dancing to Joffins No. 1 Discotheque till midnight! Seventy five years earlier, the residents had celebrated by burning fifty cartloads of timber and a bonfire 40 feet high was built and lit amid beatings of gongs, fireworks and a procession around the garden headed by a band of pipers. We didn't have the bonfire but we did have a piper.

The sense of community still exists in the Square, and I think everyone who lives here or has lived here, would agree that it is the most beautiful and best-kept secret garden in London!

Bluebell Cottage Nursery School

Editor's Review By Lucy Elliott

Sara Brennan, Owner and Founder of Bluebell Cottage Nursery Schools may be comparatively young to have set up such a venture, but don't let that fool you – she is on a mission to provide “Empowering Education” to our younger residents of Kensington & Chelsea.

Bluebell Cottage Nursery, (part of London Nursery Schools), provides small class numbers of up to 14 children, and two teachers in each. The nursery works on a House System, where children progress from Bear, Owl to Squirrel. From the age of 2, boys and girls are immersed in activities such as yoga, mindfulness, music, cooking, art, PE and learning languages such as Mandarin and Spanish.

The focus is on allowing the children to learn through play, making mistakes and building up resilience, independent and confidence to take them through to their next school, traditionally Thomas's, Glendower, Wetherby and Pembridge.

Such is the success of this approach that another Bluebell Cottage Nursery School will be opening in Chelsea very soon – this will be similar to its sister school in Kensington where the building (very light and airy) is very much a ‘cottage’ style, providing a “cocoon, intimate, homely and nurturing environment”. (You may have seen the children play (with great energy) in the garden on Kensington Church Walk). Over the next few years, further schools are anticipated across London.

Sara is both passionate about the style of teaching as well as the schools' role in the community. During lockdown Sara and



her colleagues provided food for a local foodbank and has previously held various initiatives to support Unicef. It is her hope in the future, to have a board of Foundation Trustees, who will assist in supporting local community initiatives. The ethos of ‘caring and sharing’ is very apparent in the school – as is the notion of understanding ‘the other’ i.e. different people in the community and the roles they play. At Christmas a ‘Gratitude Tree’ is erected in the play garden, where pupils and their families gather to write notes of gratitude.

The staff, who are seen as role models for the children, are highly trained, friendly and caring, and together with Management, have built strong links with the parents, keeping them informed of their child's learning and development.

Both schools offer children from 2 – 5 years, the opportunity to attend for mornings or afternoons. If you are interested in a preliminary chat with Sara about considering Bluebell Cottage Nursery School for your child, please email: office@LNS.education

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A Brief History of the Kensington Kinema, The Majestic and the Odeon

By Lucy Elliott

After two years of building and amongst scepticism and opposition, the 'de luxe' Kensington Kinema (*sic*) opened its doors on 4th January 1926. Its owner, a prosperous business man and President of the Cinematographic Exhibitors Association, Joseph T Mears was adding to his cinema collection and commissioned architects Julian Randolph Leathard and W F Granger to design a cinema for Kensington. As it turned out, the most expensive of its time.

Placed on the original (residential) site of 8-13 Leonard Place, the building was erected in the neo-classical style comprising Greek and Egyptian influences. Unusually the architects were also responsible for the interior design of the cinema (Mears believing it led to more "authentic ownership"). Inside, visitors were treated to gilded plasterwork, ornate ceilings and a sweeping balcony. The large atrium was flanked by two spectacular marble staircases, leading to a gallery and tea lounges. (En route cinema goers would have been enticed by a sweet stall.) The intention of management was to "...have a first-class variety stage each week and a prominent number of artists had already been booked." The cinema, one of the largest in the UK, could house 2300 visitors and often doubled up for local community events such as variety performances, concerts, award ceremonies and premiers. Seen from today's perspective and not without a sense of irony, in 1959 it held an exhibition entitled 'Better Towns for Better Living'.

On the 4th January amidst much fanfare, an advertisement featured in 'The Kensington News & West London Times'



The Original Kensington Kinema (1926) clearly showing its neo-classical lines
(Image: RBKC Libraries, Local Studies Dept)

alerting residents that "London's largest and greatest Kinema" was opening. A specially commissioned piece called 'The Kensington March' by Charles Williams was played by 'The Kensington' Symphony Orchestra and the National Anthem was sung. Theatre attendants wore royal blue and gold uniforms and the programme girls, purple dresses with flame coloured collar and cuffs. The large 'pit' contained an orchestra and the organ was apparently one of the best in the country. Over the passing decades the Kinema met favour with residents and was a popular destination – Alfred Hitchcock who lived nearby at 153 Cromwell Road from 1926 – 1939 was a frequent visitor, (indeed, his film 'Psycho' (1960) shown at the cinema was very popular.)

During the second World War, most entertainment ventures with a location in their name were changed for security; hence in 1940 the cinema was renamed 'The Majestic'. In October 1944 the Odeon Theatres Ltd bought all 'Joseph Mears Cinemas Ltd'. In 1976 it was refurbished to become a triple screen cinema, with another screen added in 1980 and in 1991



two more. Sadly, with each refurbishment some of the original neo-classic design was concealed and indeed, by the later time of the Odeon, the façade was hardly visible behind plastic neon lighting advertising the next screening.

In December 2007 Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council ('RBKC') gave permission to property developers' Northacre and Minerva for the cinema to be demolished, retaining only the façade. From this time to September 2015 when the cinema finally closed, the developers and RBKC faced strong opposition from both the local community and wider, with over 10,000 objections (including, amongst others, Richard Curtis, Benedict Cumberbatch and Sir John Hurt). One of the most surprising aspects of all this, is when the building was being demolished for development by Delancey (who acquired Minerva) the original plasterwork, marble staircase, tea room, proscenium and stage were revealed in full - but despite huge efforts to have the demolition stopped and English Heritage provide a Grade II listed building status, English Heritage refused. In 2018 private developers Lodha bought the development site, comprising the Odeon building, the adjacent Post Office Sorting House and Whitlock House. In May 2020 the go-ahead

Artist impression of the Lodha scheme showing the grey overhang of the cinema (background) and (foreground) the original frontage of the Odeon, proposed restaurant (image: egi.co.uk)

was given by RBKC for a £400M mixed use development ensuring (what was left) of the original facade, was retained including the mosaic floor. It will house a Picturehouse cinema (6 screens with seating for approximately 887 and wheelchair access), commercial, retail, residential to include affordable housing, parking and cycle parks, together with hard and soft landscaping. One of the main objections from residents was the original proposal to have the entrance to the cinema on the Earl's Court Road – this has now been amended to be sited on the adjacent post office site. It is anticipated the development will be complete in 2024. The site of 8 – 13 Leonard Place and its fortunes (or otherwise) has given us a tiny glimpse into the social history of Kensington – the fabric of what makes this area so unique.

Sources: West London Observer January 1926; The Kensington Cinema, by P D Hepworth; West London Observer January 1926; The Kensington News and West London Times January 1926 'The Kensington Odeon/The Library Time Machine by Dave Walker: www.rbkclocalstudies.wordpress.com. We would highly recommend this blog for anyone interested in learning more about the history of the Odeon or anything else of the Borough.

BUSINESS NEWS

The first new [Farmers' Market](#) to pop up in Kensington has arrived; every Sunday morning on Phillimore Walk just off the High Street. Run in partnership between London Farmers' Markets and Kensington and Chelsea Council, the High Street Kensington Farmers' Market offers local residents and visitors fresh produce and tasty treats from independent traders. Open air markets can offer a more Covid-secure shopping experience to a crowded supermarket, so stop by for fruit and veg, cakes, cheese, flowers, and even specialist beers. The market will run for an initial three-month period with the potential to continue. Find out more at www.lfm.org.uk/markets/high-street-kensington

[Penny Stirling Private PA](#)

Punctuation, Punctuality and Punctiliousness! Penny is an experienced high-level Executive/Personal Assistant and Office Manager having worked in various sectors within central London including law (paralegal), finance, architecture and not-for-profit. She is efficient, capable, resourceful and creative with strong IT skills and has a meticulous eye for detail. Penny is accustomed to acting on her own initiative as well as working autonomously. She is articulate with an excellent command of the English language both written and spoken (native language). Penny's level of education is postgraduate: Master's degree. Available for working virtually. Both PC and Mac proficient (Microsoft Office software suite). If interested please contact @pennystirlingppa, 07866 716374 pennystirling247@gmail.com

GENERAL NEWS

[Royal Brompton Hospital](#) is pioneering research into Covid-19: Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity has secured a £50k grant from not-for-profit healthcare provider, Benenden Health, for a Covid-19 research analyst at Royal Brompton Hospital. Gill Raikes, Charity Chief Executive, said: "This research into Covid-19 is vitally important as we approach the winter months and Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals are playing a key role in finding out much more about this horrible disease." Bob Andrews, Benenden Health Chief Executive Officer, said: "The nation faces a new medical challenge and we are committed to playing our part in overcoming it."

Ten post-1945 landscapes in the capital have been added to the National Heritage List for England, including [Roper's Garden](#) on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea. Roper's Garden was created on the site of Second World War bomb damage. The buildings previously there were destroyed by a parachute mine on 17 April 1941. The garden was first planted by the Chelsea Society, before plans were commissioned from Peter Shephard in 1960. Shephard was well-established in architecture, landscape architecture and town planning. The centrepiece of the garden, Gilbert Ledward's bronze-cast 'Awakening' sculpture, has also been listed. Ledward lived and worked in Chelsea throughout his career. Historic England invites you to share photos of your favourite London parks and gardens: www.historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/features/love-parks

Kensington News II

Kensington Mums brand new VIP Membership Card entitles card holders to exclusive discounts and benefits at over 50 local businesses. Founder, Dina Maktabi has been working tirelessly to create this new platform throughout lockdown, which is designed to help families save £££'s, whilst supporting local businesses. The card retails at £19.99 for the year, however as part of the Kensington Mums pledge to support the local community they will be giving the first 3 months free. To sign up, and claim your 3 months free (intro offer ends 30/11/2020) please go to www.kensingtonmums.co.uk/vipcard

OperaUNITY returns with online workshops, offering musical fun for all the family at home. Explore Autumn, Halloween and Winter through music, movement and storytelling with the Opera Holland Park Inspire team. Join them for creative family workshops, aimed for children aged 0–5 and those with SEN. Each workshop will explore a different seasonal theme, and there will be plenty of music, dancing, singing and storytelling for you and your family to join in with. Taking place on the first Tuesday of each month at 10.00 am. they will last 45 minutes and take place via zoom. Tickets are £2 per family device. For more information www.operahollandpark.com

Kensington Barbers at 14a Earls' Court Road, provides men and boys classic and contemporary hair cuts, with a great service, value and prices. Services include threading, clipper cuts, wet shave and hot towel, colouring and beard trim. Special rates for boys and senior citizens. Due to covid, Appointment only, pls call 020 7938 2552.



Sir Terrance Conran, Founder of the Design Museum, who died in September
(Image Lucy Elliott Photography 2012)

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of **Sir Terence Conran**. I had the pleasure of meeting and chatting with him several times over the course of the past few years. In September 2012 he celebrated the 'Ground Breaking' at the former Commonwealth Institute, then to become the **Design Museum**. He made no bones about the fact this was one of the best days of his life. Having started the Design Museum in the 'Boiler Room' at the V&A it then moved to premises in Shad Thames. Now, in 2020, The new Design Museum has already (pre-covid) exceeded visitor expectation. During his speech, Conran said that the Government should do all it could to encourage designers, entrepreneurs and engineers, in order that the UK become a world renowned hub for design. He spoke fondly of the parabola roof, (which has been retained); the only one of its kind in the world. The occasion was to celebrate

Kensington News III

the 'ground breaking' and to plant a time capsule to be opened in 2112.

Local English restaurant, based in Kensington Church Street, [Ffonas](#), are now offering a delivery service, gift cards for your friends and are extending the Eat Out to Help Out for the month of October (Tuesdays & Wednesdays). For more information please see www.ffffonas.com. Please show your support all our independent retailers, coffee shop and restaurant owners in W8.

[The Uh Oh Milo!](#) picture book series by local resident Kate Wogan, sees Milo, Mary and their magical Granny meet a series of cheeky mischief makers as they learn about good manners on their adventures. Especially for Christmas, the Excited Elf joins the other books in the series, [The Fabulous Fairy](#), [The Beastly Bogels](#), [The Gobbling Goblins](#) and [The Impolite Imps](#). The popular stories make great gifts, and the range of personalised items make perfect presents too. So, visit www.uhohmilo.com for Christmas gifts for someone special or your very own mischief maker.

Although this is not in W8, we did feel it was a wonderful initiative and might inspire someone to start it here. A group of West London residents are setting up a [flower market](#) in Chiswick, which will be the first new open-air market selling just plants and horticultural accessories to be created in London for 150 years. "We want it to be the Columbia Road of West London" said Ollie Saunders, whose idea the market is. The markets will be held on the first Sunday of every month: 4th October, 1st November and 6th December in the Old Market Place,

opposite Waterstones in Chiswick High Rd. W4 2DW.

We are honored to have been asked to provide a copy of the Kensington Magazine to be included in a [Time Capsule](#) for the [Lodha Development](#) (former Odeon site)- this was co-incidentally timed as we decide our themes a year in advance, and this edition focussing on the Social History of Kensington, seemed particularly suitable!

This month is a special one for a few of our local businesses and we would like to wish a very happy and special Anniversary to;

[Marcellas](#) in Holland St, who celebrate their 20th Anniversary this month and as such are pleased to offer clients their 'Treat out to Help Out' scheme. where you will receive 10% off any bill over £50.00. Applicable between Monday- Wednesday in October;

[Gallery 19](#), a family - run beautiful gallery in Thackeray St. who celebrate their 25th Anniversary,

And as we wrote last month, it was 50 years ago on 12th October 1970 that Mike Gooley founded [Trailfinders](#) with four staff from a top floor 'garret' on the Earls Court Road. Amazing!

With our congratulations to all.

We would also like to congratulate all those who were nominated and received the [Mayor's Awards](#) last month, by the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Cllr. Gerard Hargreaves.



S&P Gallery Opening

Following the success of our South Kensington launch this September, Smith and Partner are proud to present the official opening of their new gallery, featuring contemporary fine art pieces from artists like Warhol, Picasso and many emerging artists across London.

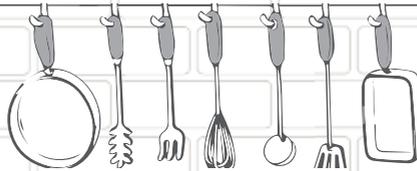
For any questions or support contact us via: 0845 3096394 or email at gallery@smithandpartner.co.uk

Come visit us!

58 Gloucester Road, South Kensington, SW7



3 Abingdon Road Kensington



W8 Café is open Monday to Friday offering delicious healthy food to eat in or take away, this is made daily in our own kitchen. Please take a look at our website

W8catering.com to view our daily specials menu



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Reflections on a Celluloid Journey through W8

By Nick Campailla

Anyone partial to the innumerable British B-Movies made after the Second World War will tell you that one of their undoubted pleasures is the 'location shot', when the camera was occasionally dragged away from a low budget studio set and let loose on the streets to capture a car chase, bank hold-up or docklands scene. The viewer is rewarded with a glimpse of a vanished Cityscape and a puzzle: where is that half familiar extant building and what was later put up on the bombsite alongside it?

In the opening sequences of *Radio Cab Murder* (1954) actor Jimmy Hanley is a cab driver at the wheel of his Austin FX3 taxi when Melbury Court bursts onto the screen, unmistakable and reassuringly unchanged. Slow the film down and you can see Hallpikes beneath, the sole surviving shop from that era, then replete with overhanging clock, and Luigi's, purveyors of Ladies evening wear (or so it seems).

We pass the space that will be filled by the Commonwealth Institute in 1962, beyond which, in the recently opened Holland Park (1952), plans were afoot to turn part of the ruins of Holland House into a youth hostel - well-timed perhaps, given that the phenomenon of the 'teenager' was about to enter the world in perpetuity, together with the demand for cheap travel. The taxi approaches Troy Court, we can make out The Wooden Horse at 222 Kensington High Street (which advertised a 'First Class Menu at 3/6d and 5/- Also A La Carte Served to you in 'Charming Surroundings by an amiable trained Staff') and stops near an unnamed travel agency at Number 220 where there is the mandatory hold-up at gunpoint. A contemporary newspaper



The (former) Commonwealth Institute
now The Design Museum
(Image Lucy Elliott Photography)

refers to the 'Styria Holiday Agency' at that address – would there really have been a dedicated agency for just one part of Austria at that time?

To the left we catch the Lyons Corner House on the corner of Earl's Court Road and a large wooden hoarding in front of what is now the entrance towards Our Lady of Victories church.

Our 1954 celluloid taxi driver travelling eastwards up Kensington High Street could tell an interested passenger that the church was destroyed in 1940, but that a new building was under way (it opened as the Parish Church of Kensington in April 1959), and that other sites nearby were devastated by a flying bomb in July 1944. He might draw his passenger's attention to Pettits on the corner of Allen Street, the Adam and Eve Pub, on the corner of Adam and Eve Mews, dating from before 1722; Pontings, Derry and Toms, Barkers; on the North Side of the street, the Public Library (1852), previously the Old Vestry Hall, and the Town Hall (1880).

Crossing over at the bottom of Kensington Church Street, where St. Mary Abbots Church was also undergoing restoration for wartime damage, we see Slaters Stores and Café and the Royal Palace Hotel, replaced by a new Royal Garden Hotel in 1961. After pointing out the Goat Inn opposite, the site of Kensington's oldest pub (c.1695), our driver (let's give him a ghoulish disposition) adds that it was there that John George Haigh, the acid bath murderer, picked up his first victim in 1944.

A postscript from 2020 is a further litany of closures and demolition. The heyday of the Kensington Department store came to an end in the 1970's when Pontings, Derry and

Toms and Pettits shut their doors; the Adam and Eve went in 1972 when its licence expired. The old Town Hall was demolished overnight in June 1982 by underhand means that caused public outrage, and yet the bombsite near the corner of the High Street and Earl's Court Road was not fully redeveloped until the 1980's.

Much of social history is about buildings and space and the uses to which they are put, driven by supply and demand and changing tastes, but also the exercise of power and influence at a moment in history, which posterity may come to applaud or regret.

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The Slums of Kensington Court in the 1800s

By Sarah Goldsmith

Before the advent of mass social housing, most poor in Victorian London lived in what would now be termed as slums. The worst of those slums, the Jennings Buildings (sometimes called Jennings Rents or the Irish Rookery), was just off High Street Kensington between present-day Young Street and Victoria Road, where Kensington Court now stands. Most slums were constructed as such: “courts” of wooden structures behind street frontages. In fact, the pub frequented by Jennings Buildings residents, the Marquis of Granby at 17 Kensington High Street (now Fouberts), was a back entrance into the narrow alleys and warrens of Jennings Rents. From the 1830s until their demolition in 1873, the Jennings Buildings were considered the worst of the very worst of the London slums.

Residents of the Jennings Buildings were by and large Irish labourers who first made their way to Kensington to work in the market gardens in and around the area. As the Victorian suburb developed and the market gardens gave way to residential development, the Irish labourers came to work on the building sites. While historians cite work as the reason for residents’ move to Kensington, the slum itself was known by reputation more for its residents’ involvement in petty crime as the work itself was seasonal and sporadic. In fact, one of the names for the slum – the Irish Rookery – was a common name at the time for a criminal area. Jennings residents also had their own special reputation: annual summer riots, raids on local banks and shops, and organized crime as the reigning law throughout the slum. Past social historians seem to by and large blame the residents for their condition, instead of

reasons more modern social historians cite: lack of a social safety net, lack of hygiene, lack of opportunity. What also seems forgotten is, at the time in Ireland, the poor were being evicted from their land in addition to escaping an on-going famine. Not only were people arriving for work, they were arriving as refugees.

The slum provided cheap accommodation if work was sporadic though living conditions were poor to say the least: unglazed windows, open cesspools, decaying wooden houses with dunghills at the door. The foul living conditions leant themselves easily to disease, and both cholera and typhus were rampant in the slum, located only meters away from Kensington Palace. One observer noted that “every street in this pestiferous neighbourhood assures the passenger that he is exposed to the inhaling of fatal disease with the stinking air which it contains.” The Buildings themselves were 80 2-story wood buildings grouped around 5 narrow courts. Approximately 1500 people lived in space that was originally meant for 200. There were only 49 latrines.

In 1873, Albert Grant finished buying all the parcels of land that comprised the slum. Instead of becoming a slumlord, Grant had larger plans: to demolish the slums and build his own mansion a stone’s throw from the Palace. To entice the tenants to move, Grant paid them each £2 a room to leave and any building materials they could cart off. It took residents about a week to effectively demolish their former residences, and they dispersed throughout other slums in the City.

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The Trafalgar Way and Other Stories

By Maria Perry with illustration by Charles Yorke

Having written about Blue Plaques in the September issue of this magazine, I was fascinated to find a black one! Nestling in the yew hedge beside the front gates of Holland Park, it relates how news of our victory at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21, October 1805 reached the Admiralty.

Lieutenant Lapontiere sailed H.M. Schooner Pickle to Falmouth. Then travelling for 37 hours he made the 271 mile journey to London by post-chaise, changing horses 21 times. He arrived at Kensington in dense fog on 5th November. All subsequent despatches followed the same route, which became known as THE TRAFALGAR WAY.

Kensington by that time was renowned for its horses, its hospitality and its hostelries. Some which would have pre-dated 1805 still flourish. In the sixteenth century Kensington was famed for its healthy air „ believed to derive from good drainage, Caused by the Gravel Pits. In Tudor times royal offspring were sent to Kensington to convalesce from childhood illnesses, but the brilliant time of its social life began in the reign of William III. He bought a house from the Earl of Nottingham to escape from the fume and filth of Westminster. The King suffered from asthma. He wanted a house however that would not be too far from Whitehall, the centre of government and asked Wren to transform Nottingham House into Kensington Palace. Queen Anne added The Orangery for summer parties. When the Court settled at Kensington, persons of fashion and influence flocked here .

Great houses were built throughout the eighteenth century – Holland House, a hotbed of Whig intrigue, Gore House where



‘the gorgeous Lady Blessington’ held court with her friend, the talented Count D’Orsay.

Some of the taverns popular in 1805 had existed long before Trafalgar. The Goat, which opened in 1771 boasts it is the oldest pub in Kensington. Others, like the Scarsdale in Edwardes Square were established a little later. The Square was designed by Louis Chazeur, a French builder, who went bankrupt just as Napoleon began his retreat from Moscow. Leigh Hunt described it as ‘a French Arcadia, it would never have occurred to an English mind to design it.’ The square was planned to house French officers if Bonaparte’s fortunes had revived. It preserves an atmosphere of good fellowship and the pub still retains many paintings of the square during its early development, including one when it looked over towards Earls Court Farm. To add to the *Je ne sais quoi* notice on the bar claims ‘Every pint is served with love.

GET WELL SPOON



October

October One-Pot

This is a vegetarian version of a classic South African dish, Baboutie. It is a delightfully hearty meal, perfect for cheering up October. It serves six hungry people. The moussaka like topping makes this dish feel very generous. As the winter begins, I hope you that you enjoy this dish.

Ingredients:

- 1 glug oil
- 3 onions, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, pressed or finely chopped
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 tsp medium strength curry powder
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 3 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 250g dried green lentils or 2 tins pre-cooked
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 4 tbsp apricot jam
- Handful of raisins
- Handful of almond flakes
- 1 tsp vinegar or lemon juice

For the topping:

- 5 bay leaves
- 3 eggs
- 250ml milk

Using a one-pot (like Le Creuset), fry the onion and carrot until soft, then add all the other ingredients (except topping ingredients). If using lentils from a tin, there is no need to drain. Mix well and let it simmer for about 15 minutes, you can put a lid on to make sure it doesn't dry out.

Remove the lid and flatten the mixture with the back of your spoon so that it is even across the bottom of the pot. Whisk the eggs and milk together in a small mixing bowl, then pour over the baboutie. Stick the bay leaves into the egg mixture. Cover with the lid and put in a preheated oven for 45 minutes at 190C (170 fan).



Text: Victoria Keel Illustration: Aletta Ritchie

Lentils are low in calories, rich in iron and folate and are an excellent source of protein and health-promoting polyphenols. These are active compounds that fight against harmful agents in the body; everything from ultraviolet rays and radiation to heart disease and cancer. A portion of lentils contains 3 times as much protein as an egg, a third of your recommended iron and good amounts of calcium and magnesium.

However, lentils also contain lectins which have been linked to inflammation and upset stomach. Remove the soapy scum that forms when cooking dried lentils to remove these. Canned lentils contain less lectins.

The lovely spices and herbs in this dish will also offer lots of protective phytochemicals.

Our book 'Knife, Fork, Get Well Spoon' is available at Wholefoods in Kensington and on Amazon.co.uk

W8 & South Ken Cultural Quarters: What's On I

KENSINGTON + CHELSEA ART WEEK 2020

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Royal Borough. www.kcaw.co.uk

A MONTH OF FANTASTIC SCREENINGS FROM CINÉ LUMIÈRE

1 Oct onwards Times & Dates vary from £5
Don't miss this month's screenings from
the Oscar-winning comedy of manners *Le
Charme Discret de la Bougeoisie* to *Undine*,
an update on the doomed water nymph –
and more! Institut français
www.institut-francais.org.uk

CURATOR TALK BY HARA KENYA: ARCHITECTURE FOR DOGS

1 October Online Booking essential Free
Go behind the scenes of *Architecture for
Dogs* with a special online curator talk by
exhibition director and leading Japanese
design personality Hara Kenya.
[https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/
whats-on/2020/curator-talk-by-hara-kenya-
architecture-for-dogs/](https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/whats-on/2020/curator-talk-by-hara-kenya-architecture-for-dogs/)

PUB-LESS QUIZ BODIES AND BRAINS

1 Oct 7:30pm-9pm Online Booking required
Free

No pub, no problem! Assemble your team
of thinkers and drinkers to pit fact against
fiction. In this quiz you'll be exploring
the wonder that's the human body,
from anatomy and ailments to medical
advancements. Imperial College
[www.imperial.ac.uk/events/123407/pub-
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DAVID ATTENBOROUGH: A LIFE ON OUR PLANET

2 October 3:30pm Adult £10 Child £8
For the first time, David Attenborough
reflects upon both the defining moments
of his lifetime as a naturalist and the
devastating changes he has seen.
Institut français www.institut-francais.org.uk

LOYD GROSSMAN: AN ELEPHANT IN ROME

2 Oct 7pm-8pm Online £5 Join author and
broadcaster Loyd Grossman online as he
discusses his new book on the intertwined
lives of Bernini and Pope Alexander VII as
one of the greatest artistic double acts in
history. V&A www.vam.ac.uk

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Sunday 4 October 2.00 pm.
Bring along your small pets to receive a
blessing in celebration of St Francis of Assisi
who loved all God's creatures. St Philips
Church, Earls Court Road.

THE SURVIVAL OF KELP FORESTS

7 Oct 7pm-8:15pm Zoom Free
Kelp forests are predicted to disappear
by the end of this century with the loss
of more than 90% of marine wildlife, but
a restoration project within a 300km² of
Sussex coastline might be the solution.
Royal Geographical Society www.rgs.org

SCIENCE BREAKS: THE DINOSAUR-DOOMING ASTEROID AND HOW WE STOP THE NEXT ONE

8 Oct 12:30-1:30pm Online Free
66 million years ago the age of the
dinosaurs was abruptly ended by an
asteroid the size of Jersey. The impact
formed the 200-km wide Chicxulub crater
in today's Gulf of Mexico. www.imperial.

W8 & South Ken Cultural Quarter: What's On II

[ac.uk/events/121349/science-breaks-the-dinosaur-dooming-asteroid-and-how-we-stop-the-next-one/](https://www.ac.uk/events/121349/science-breaks-the-dinosaur-dooming-asteroid-and-how-we-stop-the-next-one/)

KCWC (Kensington Chelsea Women's Club)

Thursday 8 October 10am – 12 noon

We are delighted to host Earl Spencer at the Royal Geographical Society. Attendance is limited. We invite you to log onto www.kcwc.org.uk to explore our new website and the many activities on offer. Join KCWC to experience friendship and the best of London.

TAKAHASHI HIROKO: STUDIO VISIT & CONVERSATION

8 October 2020 Free Online Booking essential. Japan House London is delighted to invite guests to a behind-the-scenes insight into the work of contemporary textile artist Takahashi Hiroko through a live guided tour of her workshop and showroom in Sumida, Tokyo. www.japanhouselondon.uk/whats-on/2020/takahashi-hiroko-studio-visit-and-conversation/

BACH BITES

9 Oct 1pm Free Online

Bite-sized Bach series continues this autumn with a charming programme of masterworks from one of the Baroque period's most prolific composers. These compact concerts will be performed on their Flentrop Orgelbouw organ, and on their new Mietke harpsichord. RCM www.youtube.com/rcmlondon

CONNECTED

Til 11 October Free

Connected is an experiment that challenged nine international designers and craftspeople who adapted their working

practices during lockdown to create a table and seating, personal to them, for home living and working. Free entry with From Kraftwerk to the Chemical Brothers. Design Museum www.designmuseum.org

IN CONVERSATION WITH LORD DARROCH

Tues 13th Oct - 18:30; Suggested donation levels: £15-35

Hear the former British Ambassador to the US talk with FT's George Parker in aid of North Kensington-based charity The ClementJames Centre, about Donald Trump, Brexit, diplomacy and a forty-two-year career in the British civil service. 020 72218810 www.clementjames.org Tickets: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/cjkimdarroch

OCTOBER THIRD THURSDAY: STATE OF CLAY

15 October 2020 Booking essential Places limited £60. A fantastic opportunity to learn how to throw miniature porcelain ceramic works on a small wheel in a two hour workshop with State of Clay. Create something truly unique! The Royal Society of Sculptors www.sculptors.org.uk

CAPTURE YOUR TRAVELS

21 Oct 7pm-8:30pm Online £6

Would you like to find out how to create great travel videos and take your content to the next level? Join the RGS' panel of travel vloggers and videographers for great insights into developing your own video-making abilities. www.rgs.org

KIMONO: KYOTO TO CATWALK

Til 25 Oct Wed-Sun 11am-7pm From £16

As a dynamic and constantly evolving icon of fashion from the 1660s to the present day, the exhibition reveals the kimono's sartorial,

W8 & South Ken Cultural Quarters: What's On III

aesthetic and social significance, both in Japan and the rest of the world. Must see! V&A www.vam.ac.uk

ENTANGLED LIFE BOOK CLUB

28 Oct Online £4

Entangled Life is a mind-altering journey into a spectacular and neglected world and shows that fungi provide a key to understanding both the planet on which we live, and life itself. Olivia 'Lilly' Edward, a nature journalist, will guide the evening's discussion. www.rgs.org

HIGH STREET KENSINGTON FARMERS' MARKET

Every Sunday 10am to 2pm
A brand new farmers' market has opened just off Kensington High Street run in partnership between London Farmers' Markets and Kensington and Chelsea Council, offering fantastic fresh produce and tasty treats from independent traders. Phillimore Walk, W8 7RX www.lfm.org.uk/markets/high-street-kensington

MUSEUM OF BRANDS - WE HAVE REOPENED!

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WHAT MAKES YOU SMARTER THAN A CHIMP? WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE? WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU?

Wed-Sun 10am-6pm Free
Who Am I? invites you to explore the science of who you are through intriguing objects, provocative artworks and hands-on

exhibits. www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

VICTORIA: A ROYAL CHILDHOOD

Wed-Sun 10:30-5pm Included in price of ticket Adult £17 Child £8.50
A fascinating glimpse into the world in which Victoria was born and grew up at Kensington Palace before becoming Queen. Kensington Palace www.hrp.org.uk

LEIGHTON HOUSE MUSEUM

Weekends only 10am-5:30pm Adult £9 Child £7 . Pre-book your ticket for a wonderful day at this unique treasure trove of art and sculpture at the former studio-house of artist, Frederic, Lord Leighton. www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/museums.aspx

ELECTRONIC: FROM KRAFTWERK TO THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

Til 14 Feb 2021 Advance booking Mon-Thurs & Sun 10am-6:30pm Fri & Sat 10am-9pm Adult 17.50 Child £7.75
Lose yourself in a club-like environment and explore 'how electronic music rewired the world'. www.designmuseum.org

DESIGNERS IN RESIDENCE: CARE

Til September 2021 Free
A new decade characterised by technological acceleration, climate uncertainty and longer working hours a crucial role has developed for design in supporting the ways we care for ourselves, the planet and the community. Four emerging designers explore our needs. Design Museum. www.designmuseum.org

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Social History of Gardening in Kensington

By Benedict Bull

The wealth of nineteenth century gardening with its expanding boundaries and its eclecticism is only partly represented in RBKC today. For example, one must go a little further out to find a cottage ornee or a rugged outcrop.

But in terms of the technological and botanical and horticultural developments, the burghers of Kensington had hot houses, glass frames, horticultural and botanical rarities, productive orchard trees and rare flower nurseries even near Olympia. The gardenesque style and the garden of curiosities and the Italian pergola and Oriental gardens are all represented within W8 and W11.

With respect to garden history there is the archaeological register, the built landscape and then there is the published body, the archive of ideas and their expression in drawings and records of people, plants and places. In a bustling borough such as ours, very few gardens endure unmodified, the weight of folk and coin is too great. Those curious relic gardens are normally preserved by remoteness, austerity or paucity. There is a wonderful cheek by jowl quality to metropolitan gardens in Europe, including London, the new and old sharing a party wall.

The quality of our parks, museums, tree lined avenues and roads, our garden squares, and our private gardens are a great privilege. Just take the Serpentine Gallery's pavilion projects and the garden experiments it makes. These temporary curated architectural constructions are season long events, more than a weeklong



Autumn colours in Edwardes Square
(Image: Lucy Elliott)

Chelsea Flower Show garden rooms, these pavilions in the garden of the gallery are for residents to meet and feel in different light and weather.

As we go through the park in our daily lives, we experience the space, not so much as a show garden but as a reference point. We encounter the ideas and materials; we can consider them in a greater luxury. It is a conceptual and artistic encounter and free of charge to perceive it. Like the works of art in our great museums, we can visit the permanent collection free of charge, if not in so many rooms as before. Though we do well to protect this privilege of free access here and know our history a little and the great wealth of our borough.

We are developing a garden tour and please email ben@smartlandscapes.com to know more about the innovative and outstanding gardens of Kensington.

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