

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

32nd ANNUAL REPORT
December 1993





BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH
THE QUEEN MOTHER
DRAPERS

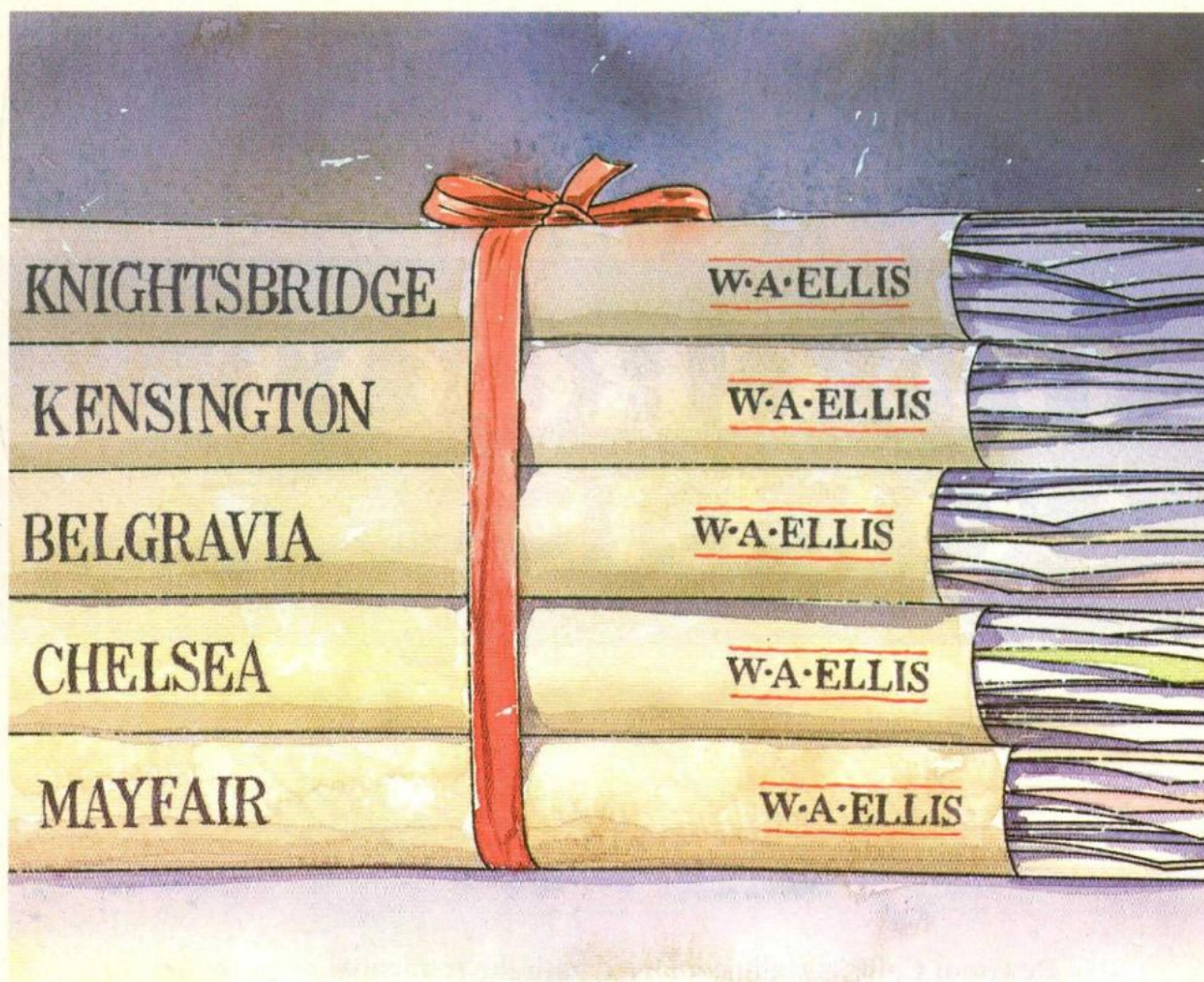


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December 1993

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With good wishes for the festive season and New Year.

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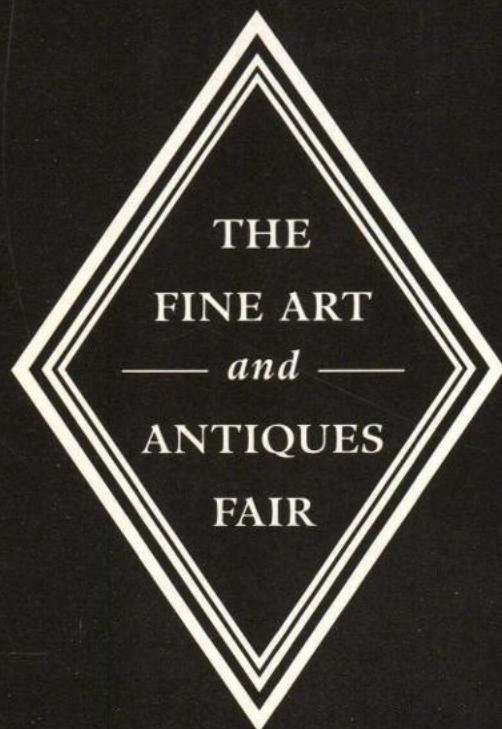
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Anne Bayne, Mrs Allan Ramsay, (detail) by Allan Ramsay. By permission of The Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

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The British Antique Dealers' Association (BADA) is the trade association for leading antique dealers in Britain. Since its foundation in 1918, BADA has set the standard for trading in the antiques business.

Look for the BADA logo

BADA's expertly vetted membership adheres to a vigorously enforced code of practice. BADA members pride themselves on their reputation for integrity, wide knowledge of their chosen field of specialisation and the high quality of their stock. The public, whether buying or selling antiques, is assured of a highly professional service wherever the BADA logo is displayed.

Why buy from, or sell to, a BADA dealer?

- BADA members are experts in their chosen fields of specialisation – indeed many members are world authorities.



They are therefore able to provide reliable information and advice to anyone interested in antiques.

- BADA dealers seek to build up long term relationships with their clients – they are not just interested in making a sale. Getting to know a BADA dealer means that objects you have been searching for will often come to light through his chain of contacts. The advice of a professional dealer will be invaluable to buyers building up or improving their collections.
- BADA dealers are able to provide comprehensive advice on the sale of antiques.
- BADA members are proud of their stock. They provide an after-sales

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confident in their ability to re-sell it, should, for example, a customer's taste or circumstance change.

- Clients wishing to buy or sell major collections and important antiques are able to do this discreetly, and in complete confidence.

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Since long before the Trade Descriptions Act BADA has had its own code of practice. The authenticity of all items sold by a BADA member is guaranteed. BADA dealers are obliged to make a full refund of the purchase price, at any time after the sale, in the unlikely event that there should have been a mistake in the description of an item.

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whether an object was correctly described at the time of sale. The BADA Arbitration Service provides rapid judgement at no cost to the consumer by the same experts who would be likely to be called as expert witnesses in a legal action.

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- Guidelines on buying – and selling – antiques: the role of the BADA dealer.
- The BADA Guarantee and Arbitration Service.
- Advice on experts to consult.



- Information on restorers.
- Information on looking after antiques.
- The BADA Assessment Service.
- Export assistance – the BADA Antiques Certificate Scheme.
- Referrals to packers, shippers, etc.
- Antique Societies and how to join them.

Who to contact?

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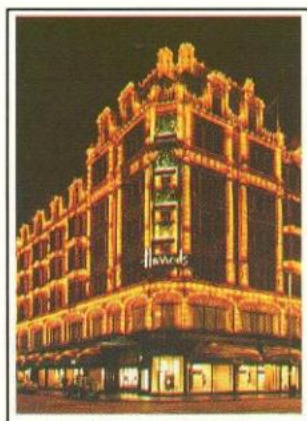
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The steps to the Albert Hall from Prince Consort Road, which have been acquired by the Albert Hall management, making possible a development plan which should benefit ticketholders and local residents. (See page 16.)

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Every year in this report, and in countless articles in newspapers and magazines, in books and in speeches, the same topic is rehearsed over and over again; how to preserve the inner city, how to keep the middle classes living in the centre of the metropolis so that it does not fall victim to the "doughnut" syndrome, which has taken the heart out of so many major cities throughout the developed world.

It must surely be accepted by now that people who have the means, leave the centre of the cities because of the deterioration in the quality of life. The early beginnings of such a fate are recognisable even in Knightsbridge today, as the discerning reader can deduce from the reports that follow.

Organisations such as the Knightsbridge Association came into being to resist this tendency, to try to reverse the trend or, at least, to fight a rearguard action and delay the worst effects. This has become feasible because of those local authorities, (but by no means all), which over the years have been converted to the spirit of conservation, and just as important, been prodded by their electorate into increasing greatly those

services which are necessary to ensure reasonable standards for a pleasant life. This effort has not yet been exhausted and the following pages demonstrate how much there is still to do, but the partnership between the Knightsbridge Association and the two local councils at least gives some hope.

It is now apparent that the cooperation of the people and the local authorities is no longer enough. Today, so much of the power necessary to control the elements that affect the city's life lie in the hands of central government. In the recent past there has been friction between the government and local authorities which have lost some of their powers, but hopefully those days are gone and government and councils can work together jointly with citizens to plug some of the loopholes that are having a potentially ruinous affect on local communities. They could start on the Use Class Order, the further protection of conservation areas, and stronger advice to magistrates on dealing with cases brought by the police, after exhausting work, to discourage illegal street trading. It is all in the report.

THE ENVIRONMENT

During the last few years the work of the Committee has been dominated by major developments which promise to have a significant effect upon the fabric of Knightsbridge. During the past year most of the outstanding matters were resolved and have been replaced by the regular flow of planning applications referred to the Association by the Planning Departments of Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. These applications in their turn all required individual attention, and any reduction in the workload due to the absence of major schemes was more than offset by the time spent dealing with new matters, such as consultation papers on English Heritage and the Protection of Conservation Areas, the final stages of the Unitary Development Plans of both Westminster and the Royal Borough, and the effect of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Act on areas of historic or architectural interest.

The Prudential Development

Previous Annual Reports have given details of this massive re-development which will have a profound effect on the area. At last the extensive negotiations with Westminster Council and separately with the Prudential, have almost come to an end and members have been kept aware of the position throughout. There remain only the safeguards and improvements to the area of the Trevors and Montpeliers which need to be implemented.

Much of the Committee's time has been spent on considering the five traffic-calming options and discussing the environmental improvements incorporated in the project. After consulting with local residents and the Royal Borough on these traffic-calming measures, the City Council announced that the preferred scheme is for two barriers strategically placed to prevent traffic from taking short-cuts through the Trevors and Montpeliers. These barriers will be located in the short stretch of road joining Trevor Place and Montpelier Square and at the bottom of Trevor Square between the square and Lancelot Place. Residents from the Trevors, Montpeliers, the streets off Cheval Place

and Brompton Square will be issued with "smart cards" so that they can drive through as now, but traffic from outside the area will not be able to do so. In the future, outside traffic will have to approach from Knightsbridge if going to the Trevors, or from Brompton Road, if going to the Montpeliers. The type of barrier to be installed has yet to be decided and further consultation will take place. The timing for installation depends on the start of the Prudential development, but it has been agreed that barriers should be in place before the start of demolition of the existing buildings.

Part of the Prudential scheme, negotiated by the City Council and the Association, also includes some environmental improvements and landscaping, the details of which are still being worked out.

Royal Thames Yacht Club and 2 Albert Gate

The Kuwaiti government has received permission to use the premises at No 2 Albert Gate, previously a bank, as an embassy. Refurbishment is in progress and will include the restoration of several historic features long since removed. A proposal to include several floors of the Royal Thames Yacht Club building as part of the embassy was dropped from the application and it is not known whether this will be revived at a later date. This would seem to be an appropriate use for this fine building in a setting which includes the French Embassy.



It is said that 2 Albert Gate and the French Embassy building opposite, when first built, were for many years known in the property world as "Malta and Gibraltar" because they would never be taken.

Princes Gate

At long last the Iranian Embassy has been rebuilt to match the other buildings in the terrace, although regrettably the top floor windows have been made smaller and lack their original decoration. Plans were also submitted to the council for the restoration and refurbishment of No 21 (previously the Liberian Embassy), which is in a very run down state, and No 25 (previously the Royal School of Needlework) for use as single family dwellings. At the east end of the terrace, No 14 has recently been redecorated and it looks as if this fine terrace overlooking Hyde Park may soon regain something of its original character and dignity.

The Committee was very pleased that Westminster City Council refused permission for an additional floor at No 21 despite the fact that No 15 had been granted such permission in 1984. Fortunately the Council's policy on roof extensions has been tightened up since that time and the existing example was not accepted as setting a precedent.

South Kensington Station Redevelopment Plan

Over the past few decades there have been innumerable schemes for the re-development of this site, utilising some of the space which has remained unused since streets and terraces were pulled down to make way for South Kensington station in 1868.

The current plans, designed by Terry Farrell, have some good points, but no attempt is made to ameliorate the traffic problems at South Kensington. Indeed, the huge increase in site use to include a large number of offices, a greatly increased number of shops and many flats and houses where currently there are none, will only worsen the situation. The introduction of a further 100,000 sq. ft. of office accommodation is unwelcome and unnecessary. There is currently a huge surplus of office space in London and one or two office blocks have already been converted to residential use. Conservationists have fought for many years to stop office buildings moving even further west into residential areas; much of South Kensington is a delightful small-scale area which will not lend itself to the type of development suggested. As far as the application is concerned, elements of



TOP: Princes Gate, where the Ethiopian embassy is still undergoing repairs to the damage caused during the siege in 1980 of the former Iranian embassy next door.

CENTRE: The Victorian arcade at South Kensington station.

BOTTOM: The Association is concerned about the future of the Royal College of Organists' building, close to the Albert Hall, which has been empty for some years.

the design are acceptable and it is certainly an improvement on plans discussed in 1988, but the rotunda, with its narrow slit windows resembling a fortress, needs a great deal of refining.

Almost nothing of the station concourse would be retained including the attractive Victorian shopping arcade with its glazed iron structure. All in all, the Committee considers the scheme to be an overdevelopment of the site.

It is a pity that social necessities cannot be considered when such sites become available. It has been suggested, for instance, that a car park for the great museums and the Albert Hall could ideally sit on the air space above the tracks, remembering that there is the famous underground tunnel leading halfway up Exhibition Road which could be provided with a travelator. Users of the car park could be charged a fee with substantial reimbursement for entering the museums. An interesting plan for the Millenium?

The Albert Memorial

There is not much to add to the story of the Albert Memorial that has not already appeared in the press. In June the Association supported The Victorian Society's Conference at the Royal Geographical Society to discuss the position. It remains to say that the Department of National Heritage has undertaken responsibility to restore the Memorial, at an estimated cost of over £10m, but not until more money is available. It is ten years since the Memorial was closed after a large piece of lead fell from the pinnacle, and the then Secretary of State for the Environment undertook responsibility for funding the extensive repairs. If work does not start in the next couple of years it is unlikely that the Memorial will again be on view to the public before the turn of the century. This will be a great disappointment to those who have been pressing so hard for action to be taken.

It is interesting to note that the original funding was paid for partly by a public subscription (£70,000), partly by a parliamentary grant (£50,000), partly by interest on the investment (£22,000) and partly by Queen Victoria, who contributed £5,500 towards the statue of Albert. The total was roughly £150,000, which is said

to be the equivalent of some £12 million by present-day calculations. Work began in 1863 and was completed in 1872.

The Albert Hall

The Albert Memorial may be in a state of suspended animation, but the Albert Hall is very much alive. In September, Patrick Deuchar, the Chief Executive, and Martin Ward of Building Design Partnership, the architects, presented details of a development plan to make the Hall's operations more successful, widen its programme range, create a better working environment for performers and increase comfort and facilities for the audience. The key to most of this work was the acquisition earlier this year of the steps leading from Prince Consort Road to the Hall; this will allow a new underground service yard to be built where all the service facilities can be handled out of sight and away from the main circulation areas. It will also allow the South Porch to be rebuilt and the present roadway around the Hall to be pedestrianised with the creation of a cafe and bar under the piazza to the north of the Hall. These changes to servicing will be a great relief to local residents who have suffered from noise at unsocial hours. Work has already started, and this part of the programme is scheduled to be completed in 1997.

A third phase, which is only in concept form at present, is the creation of a road tunnel taking Kensington Gore under an extension of the pedestrian area. This would join the Albert Hall with the Albert Memorial, providing a direct link between the Hall and Kensington Gardens.

George IV

Not the Prince Regent, but in this case the well known pub, upset local residents by applying for a music and dancing week-day and Sunday licence. This application went before Westminster's Licensing Committee in March, when the Association was represented by a barrister. A good number of members spent the day at the hearing and were relieved that the Association's representations were accepted and the application refused. Another licenced property, in this case The Nelson, was also causing problems to its neighbours, but the owners have now

applied for change of status to residential use, and this has been approved.

The Accademia

The Accademia's current permission to utilise their premises in Rutland Gate as an exhibition gallery with associated uses runs out in December, and it is said the organisation is applying for a 3-year extension. Due to the many complaints received during the first years of its existence, the Council has insisted on an annual review. There seems to be no reason why conditions, which restrict the number and type of major events and hours of usage, should not continue to be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Upper Garden, Rutland Gate

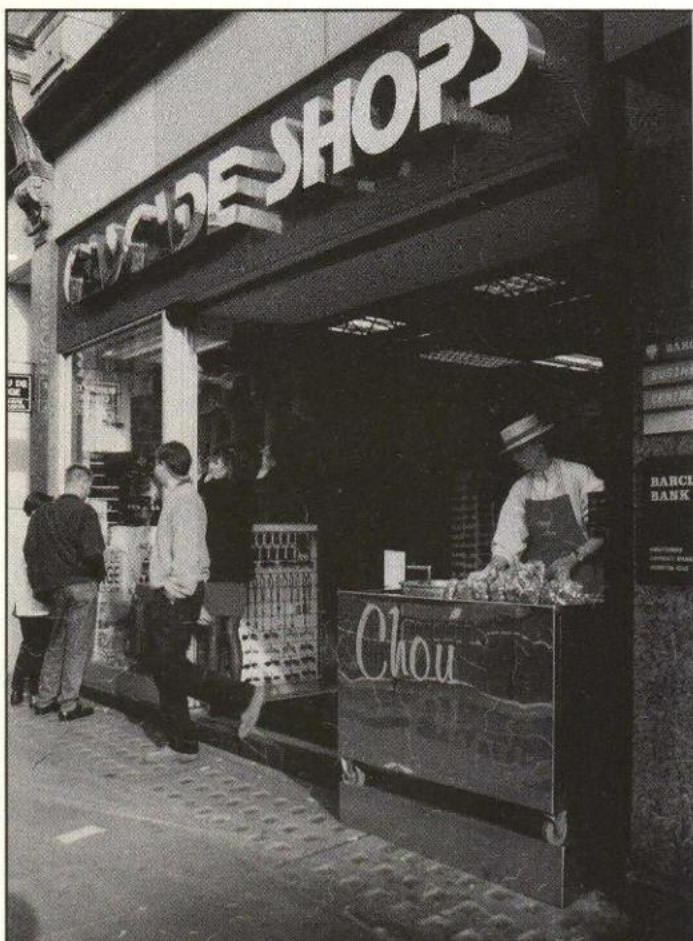
Progress has been made concerning Upper Garden, Rutland Gate, where residents have raised money to maintain the gardens. The owner has now been traced and, with help from the Parks Department

of Westminster City Council, a meeting has been arranged. The money raised locally two years ago, whilst being carefully spent on a regime of economical maintenance, is nearly all used up, and if a resolution to this long running debate with previous owners is not settled soon, another round of modest donations will be sought.

Brompton Road

The Committee is very concerned about the current condition and future of Brompton Road. The change that has come over this famous street is obvious to residents who have lived for many years in Knightsbridge, and many believe that it will permanently affect the quality of life in what was one of the most delightful areas of London.

For some time the Committee has been pressing local authorities to refuse to allow more takeaway shops in this fundamentally residential area. As feared, the street has now become loathsome in



Cascade Shop

The Committee was early with its warnings about the problems which would result from the opening of more takeaway food shops, but it was taken by surprise by the appearance of a souvenir shop at a strategic point in Brompton Road at the southern end of the pedestrian crossing at Montpelier Street. This shop began its trading by broadcasting loud noises of car horns, breaking glass and screeching brakes which confused and irritated many people using the crossing. The frontage was built in spite of the decision by Kensington and Chelsea a Council which refused planning permission. Because of the legal position the shop continues trading out on to the street selling ice cream or nuts until an appeal can be heard. In the meantime, the goods that are displayed have upset many people and the shop appears out of place in an area renowned for its fine shopping.

some parts, being constantly covered with the remnants of food and its packaging. The considerable efforts put into combating this problem have not been enough to stem the tide, and the matter is dealt with by the Litter Committee in their report.

Brompton Road is a street which is shared by Westminster City Council and The Royal Borough, and some efforts have been made to upgrade street furniture with a new all-black livery for bins, but there still remain many dreary aluminium railings at street crossings and tube entrances.

Harrods

As reported last year, Harrods won their appeal for permission to convert their Trevor Square Depository into a five-star hotel, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment, and this was granted in March of this year.

One of the conditions laid down is that Harrods should repair the damage to the garden at the south end of Trevor Square, which has been caused by delivery lorries over the years, and restore the railings. This brings to an end several years of work for the Committee, but no date has yet been given when work will begin on the development.

Royal Geographical Society

In last year's report the Committee referred to the plan to build 14 flats and an underground car park for some 200 cars, and expressed concern that the already hazardous traffic conditions at the north end of Exhibition Road would be made worse by this development. Ever since the project was first mooted in 1986 the Committee have questioned the advisability of building a large car park beneath this site, but Westminster City Council appear content with the present state of affairs and remain unperturbed at the prospect of another 200 cars adding to the cross-traffic and U-turns.

We understand that a condition of approval for the car park will be that the spaces should be reserved for residents of the new flats and other properties in the neighbourhood. The Committee wonders how many residents will take up the offer; Montrose Court, immediately opposite the RGS, has an underground car park and spaces have been advertised for rent by

the general public for more than two years. The car park below Kingston House is also open to the public with an entrance off Princes Gardens.

Builders' Noise

Builders are increasingly causing annoyance to the local community by working outside the permitted hours; often they also appear unable to work unless accompanied by a transistor playing full blast (to be heard above their hammering, sawing etc.).

The permitted working hours for builders are between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays, between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday and never on Sundays or Bank Holidays. If they are working noisily outside these hours they can be requested to stop, and if they fail to do so, both councils have a telephone number which can be called to ask for assistance.

Similarly, if builders are playing radios, either outside on the scaffolding, or inside, loud enough to cause annoyance, and a personal request to desist is not successful, residents should telephone Westminster or Kensington & Chelsea. Reports from members confirm that this method of dealing with the problem is working.

Street Noise and Nuisance

An increasing nuisance in the streets is the proliferation of broadcast noise by commercial premises, sometimes in the form of amplified traffic noises, at others loud music. The new souvenir shop in Brompton Road began its life with blaring loudspeakers imitating traffic noises and smashing glass which could be heard on the adjoining pedestrian crossing, causing much distress. Complaints from the Association eventually managed to have the volume reduced, but the amplified sound is still transmitted to the pavement.

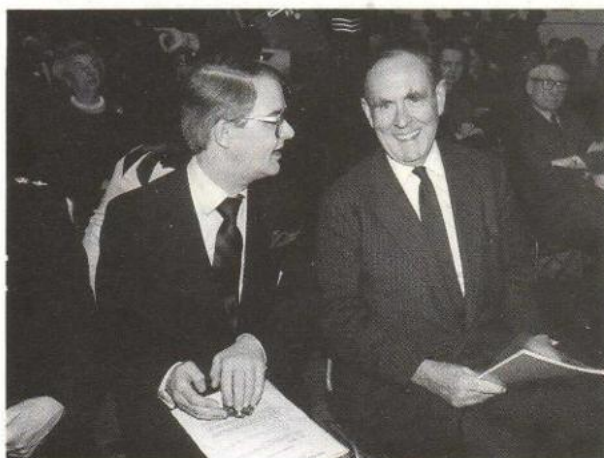
Westminster City Council regards such noise on shopping streets as pollution and has instructed enforcement officers to deal with such matters, but the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council does not yet feel equipped to handle this nuisance. Meanwhile in Parliament, the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Bill has passed all its stages and is awaiting the Royal Assent. This legislation will extend the power of the council officers to cover car alarms, car music systems and general noise in the

Continued on page 22

RECEPTION BEFORE THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER 1992



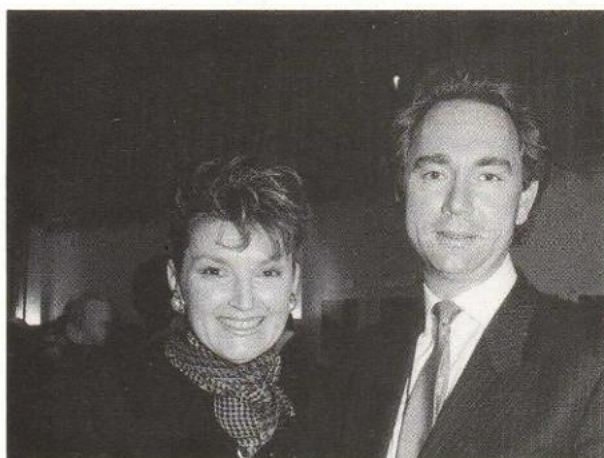
Lionel and Diana Altman.



David Weeks, Leader of Westminster City Council, The Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, Secretary of State for National Heritage.



ABOVE: Lady Gillett and the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Miss Elizabeth Christmas. BELOW: Lillemor Gardner and Mavis Byzantine.



ABOVE: Simon and Lesley MacDonagh. BELOW: Keith Gillies, Lance Stimson, Georgina Greene, Johnny Bergius.





The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Dr Cyril Nemeth, and Jane Walker.



Rida and Bruce Gifford, June Stubbs.



Lance Stimson, Carol Seymour-Newton, and the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Miss Elizabeth Christmas.



Ron Rashbrook, David Morgan, Peter Bevan.



ABOVE: Stanley Steel, Kevin Gardner. BELOW: Inspector Ian Brooks, Peter Grootenhuis, Sgt. Alistair Hill.



ABOVE: Digby Wills, Phyllis Brenner. BELOW: Tariq Nawaz, Mrs Joan Hanham, Leader of Kensington & Chelsea, Desmond Harney.





Jonathan Bodlender, The Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, Secretary of State for National Heritage, Neville Labovitch.



The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Dr Cyril Nemeth, and the Lady Mayoress.



Phyllis Brenner, Norah Black, Lady Grade (with the raffle prize donated by Lady Grade).



Mrs Hodges, Mr & Mrs Paul Gane.



ABOVE: Peter Storrs, Kai Leslie. BELOW: Supt. Carole Howlett, Gordon Shingleton, Chief Supt. Frank Haughian.



ABOVE: Jonna Wegefelt, Gavin Clark. BELOW: Martin Jiggins, Alex Segal, Mrs Joan Hanham, Leader of Kensington & Chelsea.





Iain Walker, Stella Sketch, Jane Walker, The Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, Secretary of State for National Heritage.



Michael French, Carol Seymour-Newton, Desmond Harney, Jeremy Mackay-Lewis, Simon Orr-Ewing.



ABOVE: Jane Walker, Christine Gilbertson. BELOW: Avril and John Cox, Robert Moreland, and The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Dr Cyril Nemeth



streets — a useful addition to the defence against noise pollution.

English Heritage

Towards the end of 1992, English Heritage proposed that they should pass responsibility for alterations and extensions to Grade II listed buildings in Greater London to local councils. In response to the widespread concern which followed this announcement, English Heritage issued a consultation paper to which the Committee sent a detailed reply expressing its anxiety that the proposals would endanger London's architectural heritage.

Many other national and local amenity societies expressed similar fears and there was strong press criticism. In a circular letter issued in March 1993, it was clear that English Heritage had taken note of the public reaction.

Although it is expected that many of their proposals will be implemented, the Committee believes that there will be sufficient safeguards to ensure that people's worst fears will not be realised. In April the Secretary of State authorised English Heritage to proceed with direct negotiations with local boroughs on the basis that any transfer of responsibility must be by agreement with the borough concerned. So far as Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea are concerned, the Committee is satisfied that these bodies have sufficient expertise to take over the responsibilities which English Heritage will transfer to them and that the public would benefit from the resulting reduction in duplication of effort.

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Knightsbridge is one of 51 designated conservation areas in Westminster and there is growing concern at the damage being caused by 'Permitted Development.'

Under town-planning legislation certain types of development, known as Permitted Development, may be carried out without requiring a specific application for planning approval. As a result, much damage has been done by the inappropriate replacement of traditional

windows, doors and roofing material as well as the recladding of exteriors. For a long time planning authorities and amenity societies have drawn attention to the need to stop the damage before it is too late. Recently the Department of the Environment issued a consultation paper and invited comments on whether changes should be made to the existing planning controls over minor development in conservation areas and the Committee was very pleased to have the opportunity to submit its comments.

The Committee recommended that all permitted development rights in conservation areas should be removed to ensure that any alterations or other development, however minor, would be carried out in such a manner that the area would be protected from low-quality or intrusive development. In addition, the Committee stated that, with the passing of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Act and the likely ending of the controls exercised by the original developers of large estates in this part of London, it is more important than ever to control minor development in areas of architectural or historic interest.

Enforcement

Although there have been some changes, the present system still appears to be weighted heavily in favour of the offender and many developers and their advisors are well aware of the fact.

The planning authority will issue an enforcement order where an inappropriate or unacceptable extension or alteration has been undertaken, but the long, drawn-out procedures, even to a listed building, can take many years before a successful outcome is achieved. Frequently all the hard work of the Planning Authority can be undone as a result of an appeal — there is one case in Montpelier Square which has been in progress since 1986. Earlier this year, following an appeal against the enforcement order, the Inspector supported the Council in about 50 per cent of its case and gave the appellant 16 weeks to put matters right. When the 16 weeks had elapsed nothing had been done; the building's owner has left and the Council has been unable to trace him — meanwhile the unacceptable alterations remain.

Such an incident represents an

immensely time consuming and costly exercise for the local authority and, as is so often the case where legal matters are concerned, it is the offender who is allowed to flout regulations with impunity to the annoyance and frustration of those who obey the planning laws.

Leasehold Enfranchisement

The effect of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Act on the built up environment is something of an unknown quantity. Properties, especially blocks of flats, with irresponsible freeholders, are likely to be better maintained under the joint ownership of residents. On the other hand, some of the old estates, which were the original developers of their properties and have since maintained them, have managed them well. If these properties are broken up into separate ownership, they may deteriorate or, when repainted, lack the integrity and charm which they now enjoy to the benefit of residents and the public at large.

The Knightsbridge Association was not the only organisation to have these reservations and was glad to note that during the Committee Stage of the Bill the Government introduced measures to protect the appearance of these estates through estate management schemes. The intention is that schemes, which should be registered as a local land charge on the property involved, would replace covenants expressly contained in leases, and would impose conditions on matters which fall within the scope of the area scheme.

Unitary Development Plans

Following the abolition of the GLC in 1986 all London boroughs were required to prepare Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) to provide both strategic and local planning policies in their areas. These UDPs will replace the existing District Plans. The Association has taken an active part in the development of the policies set out in both the Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea plans. Both plans are now in their final stages — public enquiries into objections have been completed and the reports of the Inspectors are awaited.

A very welcome inclusion in the Westminster plan is the designation of an

area in Knightsbridge, including the Trevors and the Montpeliers, which is to be retained for single-family dwellings and is prevented from conversion into flats, a policy which the Association has advocated for some years.

Use Class Order

Introduced by the Government in 1987, some of the categories of the Use Class Order have been causing concern. One is the A3 restaurant use, which embraces both restaurants and takeaways.

Takeaways as we all know can cause unacceptable problems when the litter they generate is distributed throughout the streets, squares, gardens and parks.

Another concern is the C1 class, whereby hotel and hostel use are regarded as one and the same. This, again, can have undesirable consequences. The Government is committed to reviewing the Use Class Order in 1994/5 and the Committee will suggest appropriate changes.

The Committee

The current difficult state of the property industry may have reduced the number of

major developments for the time being, but this report gives an idea of the immense workload carried by members of the Environment Committee. The Association is recognised as a statutory body for consultation and every application in the area is sent to the Committee for comment. This means not only meetings for discussion of the plans, but site meetings, meetings with council officials, developers and their architects and countless other visits and conferences. The members of the Committee who undertake this heavy burden of work on behalf of the community are highly qualified and experienced and, thus, enjoy the respect of those with whom they negotiate. The Chairman, Michael Wright is a distinguished architect and administrator who leads the Committee with the same degree of dedication as his predecessor, Richard Robinson, who led the Committee so successfully for so many years. The vice-chairman, Lesley MacDonagh, is a partner in a leading firm of solicitors and an expert in planning law. Another architect of note, Jeremy Mackay-Lewis, is one of a number of experienced members of this, the Association's most important committee.

TRAFFIC & PARKING

Although the recession may have saved London's traffic from seizing up completely, traffic remains an intractable problem and the Traffic and Parking Committee, led by Councillor Kevin Gardner, has a difficult task trying to please everybody. The individual's point of view changes at lightening speed as he or she steps out of a car, and changes the role of driver for that of pedestrian, - and vice versa.

The traffic must be kept moving and Brompton Road is set to become a Red Route. Nevertheless pedestrians must be able to cross the road safely, and at the moment the crossing lights do not stay green long enough. Unlicensed ice cream vans must not be allowed to park permanently in Exhibition Road and Cromwell Road near the museums.

A recent initiative by the Royal Parks that has a serious effect on the movement of traffic is the selective closing of the South Carriage Drive. This inevitably

causes a long tail-back along Knightsbridge, and when this occurs at a time when the tunnel under Hyde Park Corner is closed, traffic is almost brought to a standstill. When eventually the rat-runs through Trevor and Montpelier Squares are brought to an end as a consequence of the Prudential development, the pressure on Knightsbridge traffic will be intensified.

The fact that several different authorities take decisions that affect traffic behaviour in the area produces problems for the Committee. The two local authorities, the Traffic Director for London, and the Royal Parks all have a say in what happens. Perhaps the most difficult situation occurs when the borders of the two local authorities bisect a street. The absurdity of the traffic circulation at the northern end of Exhibition Road has surely gone on for too long. In the event, dozens and dozens of cars make illegal U-turns each hour because there is no

alternative.

Residents' cars must also be parked. More spaces for shared parking have been found and the disabled are being allocated designated spaces. In Westminster there is also the possibility of phased costing for multiple car owners after the first or second vehicle. The Committee is still pressing for more parking enforcement at weekends, and is supportive of the plans of the Royal Parks to charge for parking in Hyde Park, the last refuge of the commuter looking for a day's free parking near central London.

Residents living near the Albert Hall have been asking for an extension of parking restrictions to 8 p.m. to deter visitors attending performances from taking all the parking spaces in the evenings. Westminster Council deferred a decision on this request earlier in the year, but it appears that Kensington and Chelsea Council are going to extend restrictions on their side of Queen's Gate - another good reason for liaison between the local authorities.

After many years of requests, and recently returning innumerable coach check cards to Westminster City Council, the Committee has at last received a promise to introduce a coach and lorry ban in Rutland Gate, Ennismore Gardens and Princes Gardens. There is, of course, no way through to Brompton Road, but this has not stopped an increasing number of coaches from ignoring the signs about unsuitability for long vehicles. These coaches must then resort to difficult and dangerous contortions to turn back to the main road.

London Transport

Knightsbridge Tube Station has the air of an abandoned building site. It continues to let the area down badly, and presents an uninviting face to locals and visitors.

The last of the new escalators were finally installed some eight months late. The underground hall in the Harrods entrance still suffers from unnecessary obstruction because of the siting of the ticket office.



Sunday on the South Carriage Drive:

ABOVE: The wide open spaces — closed to traffic, but nevertheless unused by pedestrians.

BELOW: The new gates — closed to traffic, but open to criticism.



HERITAGE

The Association, which was established 33 years ago to protect Knightsbridge from wanton destruction, has from the first followed a policy of restoring as much of the area's heritage as possible. It was in 1986 that the Prince of Wales switched on the first of the ornamental lamps in Knightsbridge facing Hyde Park. These the Association had restored to celebrate its 25th Anniversary, and there still remain five missing lanterns along Kensington Road which must be replaced to complete the restoration.

It has been a long term aim of the Association to see the restoration of the railings which originally surrounded all the beautiful garden squares, and also encourage the repair of house railings, many of which are sadly dilapidated, with missing finials and broken or missing gates.

Some of the squares, such as Ennismore Gardens and Montpelier Square, have replaced their railings. The Committee is delighted to see that Holy Trinity Brompton are mounting a Railings Appeal, to restore railings to the north and east sides of the churchyard replacing the broken down chicken wire fence which has acted as a substitute for the last 50 years. The Association has made a donation to the fund, and hopes that many local residents and businesses will also wish to support the appeal.

When the Harrods Depository is converted into an hotel the Trevor Square railings are to be replaced. This would leave Rutland Gate and Princes Gardens as the last major squares still needing elegant railings to surround their gardens. The Association hopes that this might soon become a viable project.

RUBBISH, LITTER AND RECYCLING

Keeping the streets clear of rubbish and litter is one of the most important duties of a local authority. In the modern world the amount of domestic rubbish is so large and the sea of litter so continuous, that co-operation from the public is an essential ingredient of a clean neighbourhood.

The tireless and dedicated labours of the leader of the Rubbish and Litter Committee, Frances Rice, and her helpers has produced an excellent working relationship with the appropriate departments at Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough resulting in clean pavements in the residential areas of Knightsbridge. This liaison extends to the private contractors which do the day-to-day work, and it is true to say that the residential streets and squares serve as an example to other areas of the capital. Local citizens are indeed indebted to Frances Rice for her unceasing efforts to keep Knightsbridge a pleasant place in which to live.

Brompton Road

Leave the smart residential streets and squares of Knightsbridge and enter another world of squalor, sleaze and apparent capitulation to the sea of litter,

that makes the condition of this famous thoroughfare something to be ashamed of.

Of course, there are several factors which have led to the decline of Brompton Road. Once one of the smartest roads in London, it now features takeaway food shops with attendant litter and new retail arrivals which belong in tinsel town. It was emphasised in the last Report that Knightsbridge is the victim of its own success as a shopping centre, but it is arguable that the Council could have taken a stronger stand on the uses that it permitted to retail establishments. In the absence of other measures, the Royal Borough could increase its enforcement where litter is concerned, and step up the number of collections during shopping hours. Litter attracts more litter, and it is disheartening to see foreign visitors, who would not dream of dropping discarded wrapping and food containers at home, adding to the mess beneath their feet without a qualm.

Recycling

Both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea continue to increase the number of recycling facilities within their borders. In



Rubbish accumulates in Brompton Road – unfortunately a continuing problem.

addition to the normal refuse collections, Kensington and Chelsea Council are now collecting separate glass, metal, paper and cloth from every domestic household. Westminster Council have also instituted pilot schemes, but they are not yet available in Knightsbridge, which has recycling bins in Relton Mews and Princes Gardens. Although popular with residents, it is not possible to increase recycling activities at the moment because the

contractors cannot deal with all the materials collected. In Germany the collection of waste for recycling has so far outstripped the capacity to convert it, that waste has had to be shipped to other countries, flooding the market with recycled materials and bringing down the price. Details of how to obtain information about recycling and the disposal of large heavy objects are available from the councils.

LAW AND ORDER

It is perhaps indicative of the times that we live in that the report of the Law and Order Committee becomes longer each year. This body, the newest of the Association's committees, was formed only a few years ago to combat not only the increasing crime which is common to every part of the nation, but especially the overt law breaking which has moved into the area of Brompton Road and Harrods. The Committee is chaired by Gordon Shingleton, an expert in security matters, and the Deputy Chairman is Mrs Ellie Brook, one of the Committee's Justices of the Peace.

In 1988 the Association called a meeting with the co-operation of Harrods management, at their premises, and invited officers and members of Kensington and Chelsea Council, and representatives of Chelsea Police, to discuss the increase in crime witnessed in the area. The vicinity of Harrods, particularly between the store and the underground station, had become crowded with illegal street traders selling fake jewellery, three-card tricksters, women accosting pedestrians and demanding money for sprigs of heather, and ice-cream vans trading regularly from positions which breached the parking laws near Harrods as well as the area around the museums in Exhibition Road.

Until about ten years ago these lawbreakers had plagued Oxford Street but constant pressure from Westminster Council and the Police, added to the lure of a large increase in tourists flocking to Harrods, prompted them to move to Knightsbridge.

Since the Association's initiative, the Chelsea Police and officers of Kensington and Chelsea Council have co-operated in taking action against the offenders in

ever-increasing numbers, but they are constantly frustrated by the actions of the courts which do not recognise the seriousness of the offences. Magistrates have regularly been imposing fines of about £100 on offenders taking over £1,000 per day, mostly profit! Added to this is the frustration felt by residents whose cars can be clamped immediately upon a parking offence, when they see ice-cream vans trading day-in and day-out from double yellow lines.

The Association has been consulting with the authorities on these points. The London Local Authorities Bill 1991/2 currently working its way through Parliament, introduces powers of confiscation as well as heavier fines. It is hoped that there will be a marked improvement in the situation when this act becomes law.

The Law and Order Committee enjoys a close and continuing liaison with the police in both boroughs. The new Belgravia Police Station opened in September at Semley Place (next to Victorial Coach Station) and has taken responsibility for the area previously covered by Gerald Road and Rochester Row Police Stations, while Chelsea Police Station in Lucan Place remains responsible for the southern part of the Association's area including the museums, Princes Gate Mews and Brompton Square. The Committee expresses its thanks and good wishes to Chief Superintendent Frank Haughian, who retires from Rochester Row, and welcomes Chief Superintendent Tom Lloyd, who has taken over at the new Belgravia Station.

The introduction of Sector Policing has ensured that there are more officers on duty in each area, whilst the local beat

Continued on page 30



CRIME STATISTICS

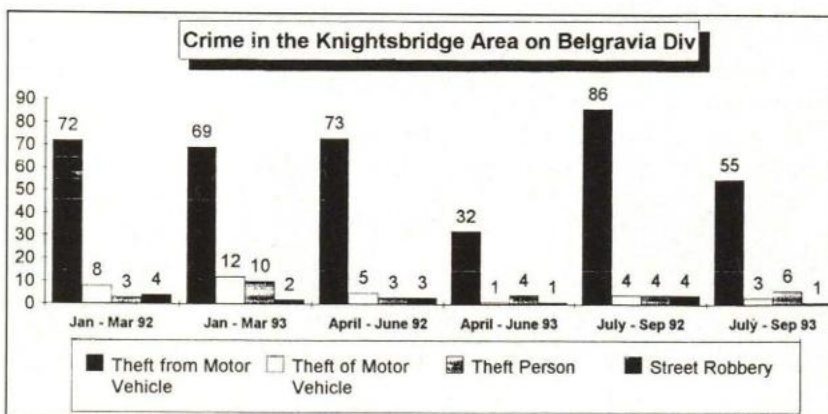
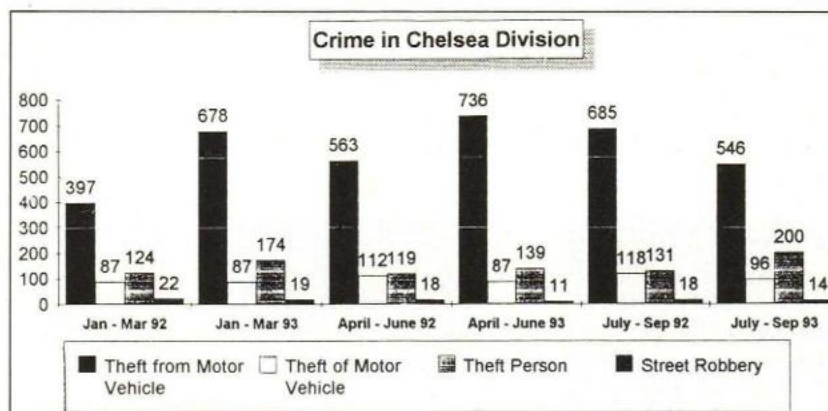
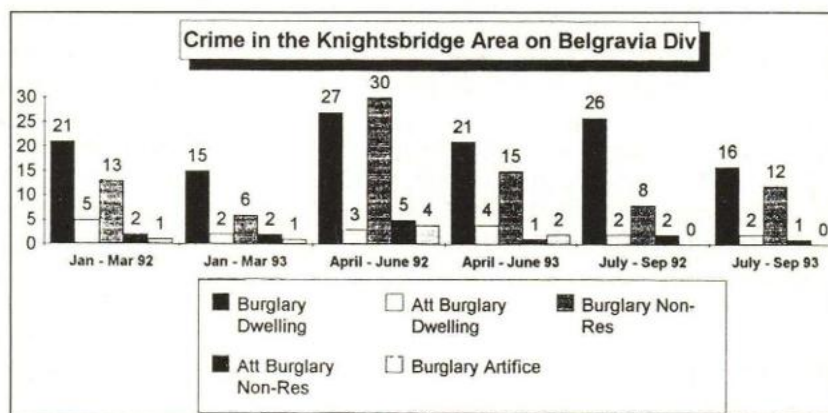
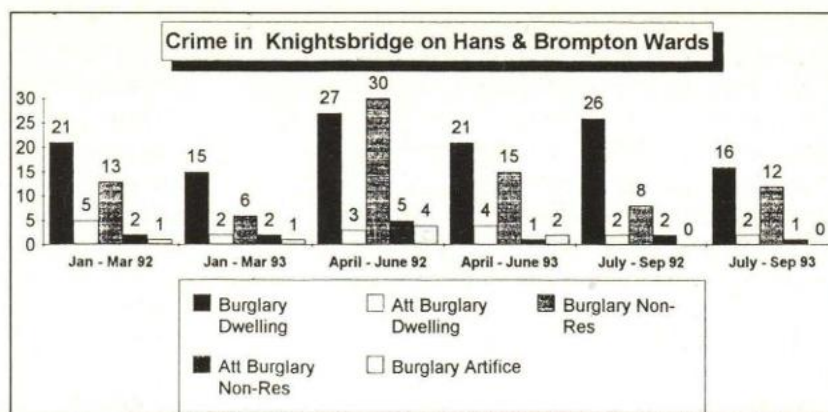
The Metropolitan Police have kindly made available to the Law & Order Committee these statistics of crime in the area covered by the Knightsbridge Association. The figures compare the first three quarters of 1993 with the same periods of 1992.

As the area is covered by two separate Police Divisions, each of the two kinds of crime shown, burglary (in the upper tables) and types of street and vehicle crime (in the lower tables) is shown in two separate graphs relating to each of these divisions.

For burglary, it is possible to add together the figures from each graph to arrive at the totals of these kinds of crime for the whole area. This is not possible for car crime and street theft and robbery, however, as the basic crime figures are recorded differently, and separate figures are not available for the Hans and Brompton wards, but only for Chelsea Division as a whole.

However the figures show some interesting trends, particularly a growth in theft from motor vehicles, which was due to heavy use of car phones in the area. The phones, being visible in the cars, were frequently stolen. But the Crime Prevention Officer for Chelsea, Peter Wayne, who produced these graphs on his computer, has told us that the police have successfully taken action to reduce this type of crime in the area.

In the labelling on the graphs, "Att Burglary" is short for Attempted Burglary, "Non-Res" refers to offices etc, and "Burglary Artifice" describes burglaries where entry has been obtained by deception (the criminal pretending to be reading the gas meter for example) or trickery of some sort.



officers who are known to residents have all been retained. It is interesting to note that one crime statistic which continues to rise concerns crimes that take place with the unwitting help of the victims. Residents still continue to give access to their buildings to callers who impersonate representatives of public utilities. Three years ago the Association issued 10,000 copies of a doorstep card which advised residents on how to take precautions regarding this and similar security problems. A copy of the contents can be

supplied by the Hon. Secretary, pending a new addition.

The Committee has frequently drawn the attention of residents to the danger of thieves using scaffolding. The police should be informed, as well as neighbours, prior to the erection of scaffolding, so that advice may be obtained on what precautions can be taken. Prevention is better than cure, and the crime prevention officers who attend the Association's AGM are only too willing to arrange a visit to residents' premises to advise on security.

HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

One-and-a-half years after the privatisation of the Royal Parks, there seems to be general agreement that the parks are looking very good. The chief executive, David Welch, a skilled horticulturist, has demonstrated that an administrator who also knows the business can deliver economies without lowering standards.

The Association's submission to the Royal Parks Review Panel recommended that there should be a charge for parking in the Royal Parks. In Hyde Park particularly, many commuters were taking advantage of the free parking and leaving no spaces for people who were actually visiting the park. Recently, the Park authorities appointed consultants to examine all aspects of traffic and parking,

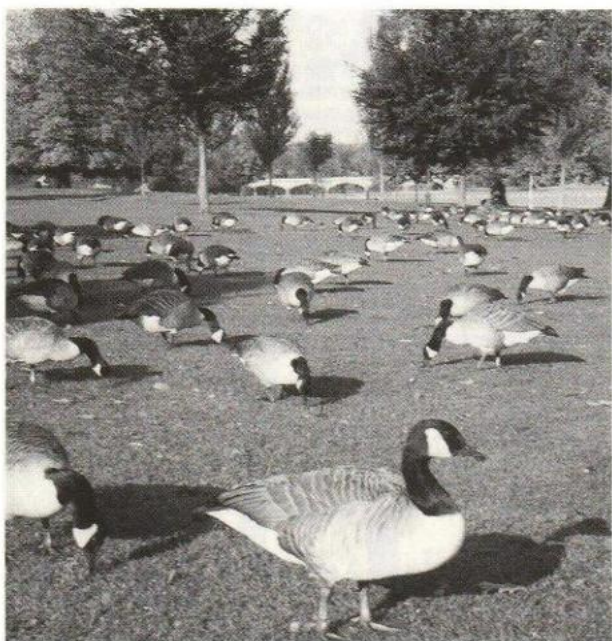
and it is likely that this will result in a system of parking charges in Hyde Park.

The need for safe and well-designed pedestrian crossings was also pressed by the Committee and it is hoped that these, too, will be forthcoming. The head-on confrontation of traffic leaving the park through the controversial new gates on South Carriage Drive with the flow of vehicles coming from Hyde Park Corner moving north along Park Lane, was taken up with Westminster Council. Formerly, cars were able to join the traffic flow by filtering in much as they would when joining a motorway. The Council believe that this would cause accidents, but it is difficult to see why.

The former catering contractor Pru Leith, who took on the franchise in Hyde Park with the aim of improving the quality of food offered to visitors, has retired after finding the task uneconomical. She has been succeeded by Crown Catering Group. They are using more mobile units than before, but these are not yet all in Park livery, although it is understood that they will be soon. With properly sited cafes or restaurants, it is questionable how much one should chase consumers with food in a beautiful park.

The size of the Canada Geese population still gives cause for concern because of the devastating effect that it has on the areas around the Serpentine and the Round Pond. It is understood that the park authorities have this problem under review.

Horse riding is an historic recreation in Hyde Park and the Association has been, and continues to be, very supportive of all measures to keep the tradition alive. There is much sympathy with the



Canada geese: population explosion?

Equitation Trust in its desire to bring stabling as near to Hyde Park as possible. The Association is concerned only about

where such a stable might be sited and that the facilities be limited to that purpose alone.

LOCAL AND OTHER AUTHORITIES

Much of the work of the Association is concerned with the two councils which administer the area of Knightsbridge, and a good working relationship based upon mutual respect has grown up between members of the committees and councillors and officers of Westminster City Council and Kensington and Chelsea Council.

The Royal Borough covers a smaller part of Knightsbridge than the City of Westminster, but it is an important and sensitive area which occupies an increasing amount of the Environment Committee's time and interest. It was a great shock when members learned of the death of Mary Dent, the Executive Director of Planning and Conservation for the last four years, at the early age of 51. The Association expressed its condolences to all those in the council who worked with her and had lost a good and talented friend.

The Association is again grateful to the Leader, Joan Hanham, for her continued interest in its affairs, and also to Andrew Fane, the Chairman of Planning and Conservation. Thanks are also expressed to Timothy Coleridge, Chairman of Environmental Services, Jonathan Munday, Chairman of Public Health and Works, and the new Chairman of Traffic, Patrick Gilford. The untimely death of Mary Dent has placed an extra burden on Michael French, Directory of Planning Services, with whom the Association has worked for many years.

The Association has never been very demanding on its ward councillors for the Royal Borough, but Nicholas Paget-Brown and Mary Glyn have been ready to be of assistance and this will be of great help in the new climate of Brompton Road. Nicholas Scott MBE, the Member of Parliament for Chelsea is particularly interested in changes of use in Brompton Road where the Association is very concerned.

The major part of the Association's area lies in Westminster, and during its long history the Knightsbridge Association has worked continuously and harmoniously

with Westminster City Council. Nowadays the two bodies see eye to eye on the major issues involving conservation, planning, traffic and other services, especially cleansing.



JOHN WALLIS

It was with great sadness that the residents of Knightsbridge heard of the death of John Wallis after a severe illness. Many appreciations of John have been written, but the Knightsbridge Association has a special reason to remember him. He was Chairman of the Association from 1974 to June 1978. During this time he fought strenuously to protect the fabric of Knightsbridge against wanton demolition, although he was at the same time very forward-looking and fond of good modern architecture. A kind, gentle and resourceful man, he was responsible for the enrichment of the neighbourhood by replacing a great deal of the damage done to the historic part of Knightsbridge. It was after he retired from the chairmanship that he was able to inspire the replacement of the ornamental lamps on the entrances to the beautiful terraces along Knightsbridge and Kensington Road. Later he inspired the replacement of the railings which now surround Ennismore Gardens, where he lived with his wife Nina. He will be sorely missed by his friends and neighbours.

The Knightsbridge community is always most grateful to Sid Sporle. As Director not only of Planning and Transportation, but now also of Environmental Services, he carries an awesome responsibility which he discharges with apparent ease. The Association appreciates his personal interest in its affairs and his prompt attention to its requests. These same thanks are due to Gordon Chard, Divisional Director (Development), and the enthusiastic team at City Hall.

The former Leader of the Council, David Weeks, was always interested in the affairs of the Association which now looks forward to working with the new Leader, Miles Young. Robert Davis has moved from the Environment Committee, which is now chaired by Harvey Marshall, to be the new Chairman of Planning and Development, where he has already commenced a dialogue with the Knightsbridge Association. Martin Jiggins

remains Chairman of the Traffic Committee where he will be liaising with the Association's own Traffic Committee chaired by fellow councillor Kevin Gardner.

During the year the Association has leaned heavily on the two Knightsbridge Councillors, Robert Michaels and Robert Moreland. From the moment of their election they have been keen protagonists for the area and of considerable help to the Association.

Westminster is fortunate to have a Member of Parliament who is not only a distinguished Cabinet Minister, but also a model constituency member. However important the post and however onerous the duties, Peter Brooke always has time for his constituents. In particular, he has always taken a great interest in the affairs of the Knightsbridge Association and tries to attend its meetings whenever possible.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND THE AGM

There were no special events to report during the year, but last year's Annual General Meeting took place as usual after the Annual Report had been printed.

The reception before the meeting is always well attended, and last year's was no exception. A record number of members came to meet their neighbours at this most enjoyable party, which was, as usual, masterminded by Lady Grade.

At the meeting members were addressed by the local Member of Parliament, who is of course the Secretary of State for National Heritage, The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, CH, MP. As usual, questions from members were answered by experts from both councils, the Police and other guests.

This year's AGM will take place on Monday, December 6th in Holy Trinity

Church Hall. The reception will take place at 6 p.m. and the meeting will start at 6.30 p.m. when members will be addressed by the Guest-of-Honour, The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment. Other guests will include the Lord Mayor of Westminster and the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. There will also be many officers and councillors from both local authorities and a large contingent of police officers from the local stations.



*The Rt. Hon. John Gummer,
MP Secretary of State for
the Environment.*

FINANCE

Despite the scope of the work done by the Association, and although the membership charges are exceedingly low by today's standards, the current financial position remains satisfactory. There are several reasons for this, firstly the Association has very low overheads compared to other similar organisations. Secondly, many members of the Committee provide

professional expertise which might otherwise have to be brought in from outside, and thirdly the Treasurer, Christine Gilbertson keeps a strong hand on the expenditure. Members should note, however, that the complexity of some of the matters now arising may well necessitate the use of specialist help and advice.

APPRECIATIONS

The Knightsbridge Association could not achieve its objectives without the amazing dedication shown by so many people who serve on the different committees to which they give so much of their time. The secret is that they are all busy people who have learned to use their time to best effect. The chairmen of the committees are all men and women of considerable experience who are masters of their subject. They deserve the appreciation of all the people of Knightsbridge and I am deeply grateful to them and to the members who serve with them.

There are too many people who deserve appreciation to be able to name them all, but I must offer thanks to Raymond Benardout for organising the advertising pages for this Annual Report. These are not easy times, but this is the only opportunity that the great business houses of Knightsbridge have to express their appreciation for what the Knightsbridge Association does to protect and enhance the area in so many ways. They benefit with the local community and we are grateful for their expressions of support.

There are many unsung heroes in voluntary work throughout the country, but in Knightsbridge I would nominate the Hon. Secretary, Carol Seymour-Newton, who supports all the committees and whose single-minded dedication to Knightsbridge enables the Association to do its work.

The Knightsbridge Association grew up from the grass roots because the local community was not prepared to see this unique part of London develop into a faceless, heartless part of the jungle that the centres of so many cities have become. Today, people of the same calibre form the membership of the Association. It is the support of this concerned and interested membership that encourages the committees in their endeavours to protect and enhance the quality of life in Knightsbridge.

Neville Labovitch
December 1993

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

6 Montpelier Street,
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Telephone 071-823 9103

MAIN COMMITTEE

Chairman: Neville Labovitch LVO MBE
Hon. Secretary: Carol Seymour-Newton
Hon. Treasurer: Christine Gilbertson
Raymond Benardout
Jonathan Charkham
Rosalie Digby-Seymour
Baroness Gardner of Parkes
Cllr. Kevin Gardner
Lady Grade
Jean Lyell
Frances Rice
Richard Robinson
Gordon Shingleton MC
Nina Wallis
Sarah Wills
Michael Wright CMG FRICS RIBA

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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Vice Chairman: Lesley MacDonagh
Cllr. Kevin Gardner
Joyce Goodman
Diana Jenkins
Neville Labovitch LVO MBE
Jean Lyell
Jeremy Mackay-Lewis BArch FRIBA
Frances Rice
Richard Robinson
Carol Seymour-Newton
Stanley Steel MD FRCP
Cynthia Thompson
Sarah Wills

LITTER AND RUBBISH COMMITTEE

Chairman: Frances Rice

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE

Chairman: Gordon Shingleton MC

TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Chairman: Cllr. Kevin Gardner

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

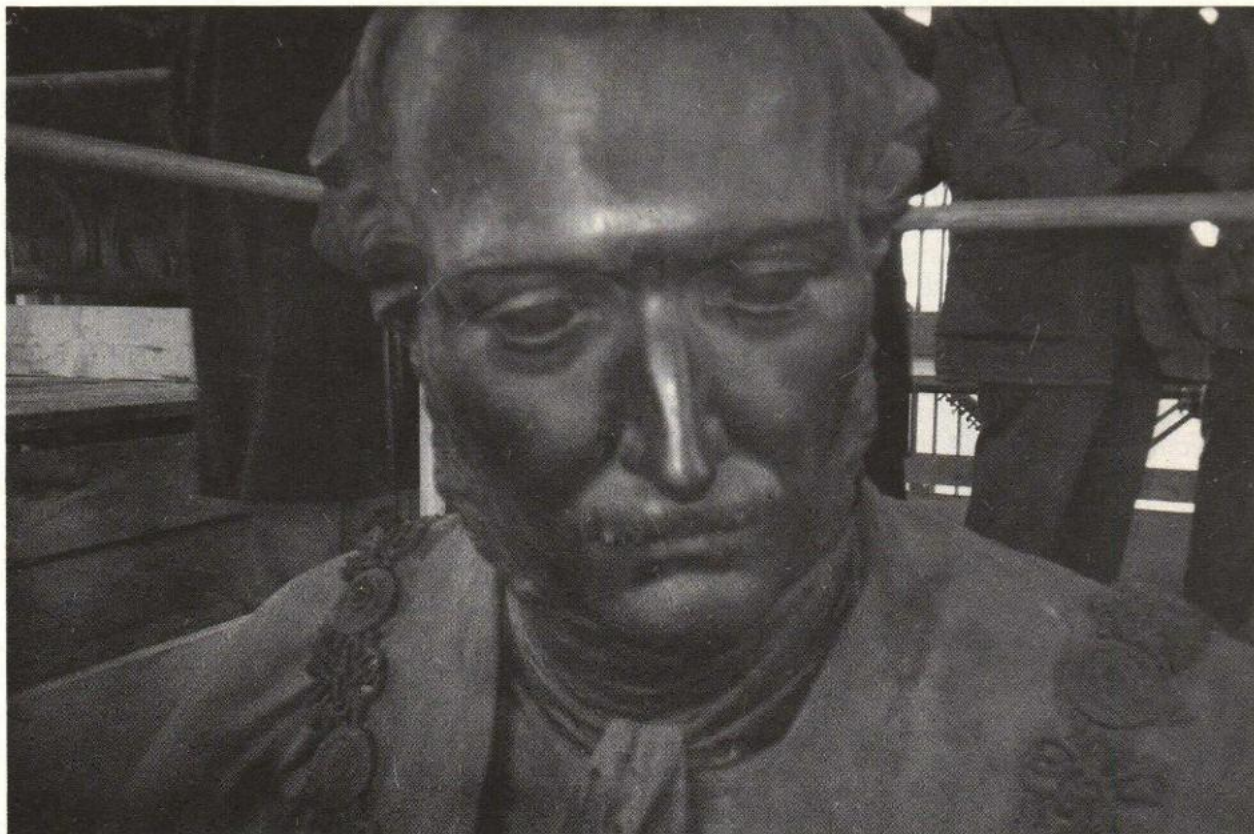
Chairman: Raymond Benardout
Hon. Secretary: Rosalie Digby-Seymour

SOCIAL & EVENTS COMMITTEE

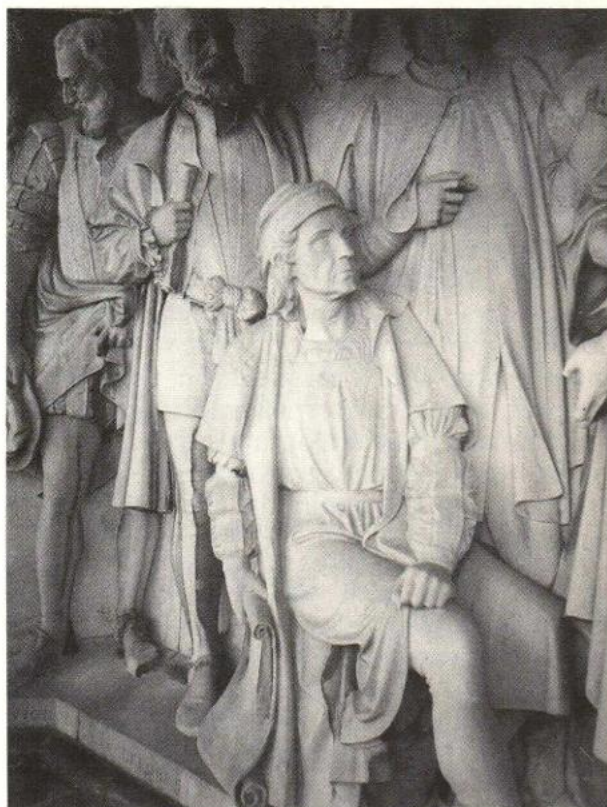
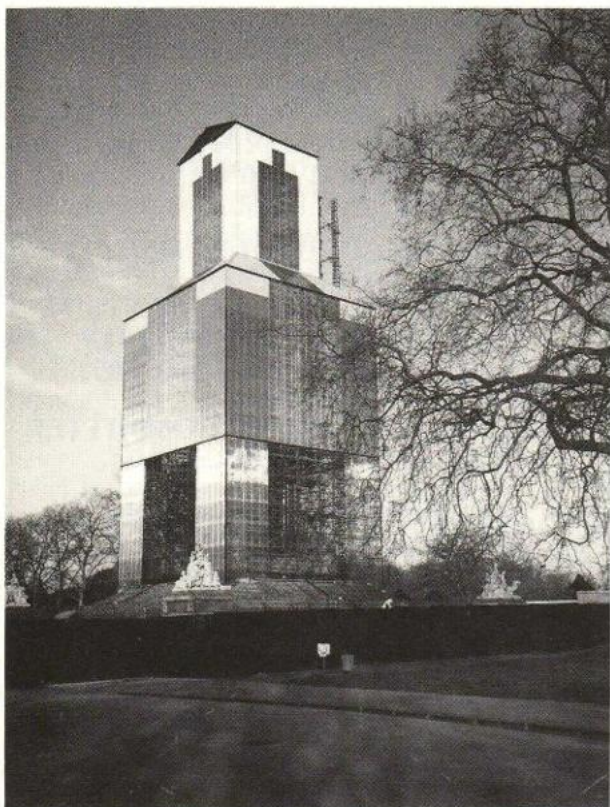
Chairman: Lady Grade

THE ALBERT MEMORIAL

Photographs by Neill Mitchell

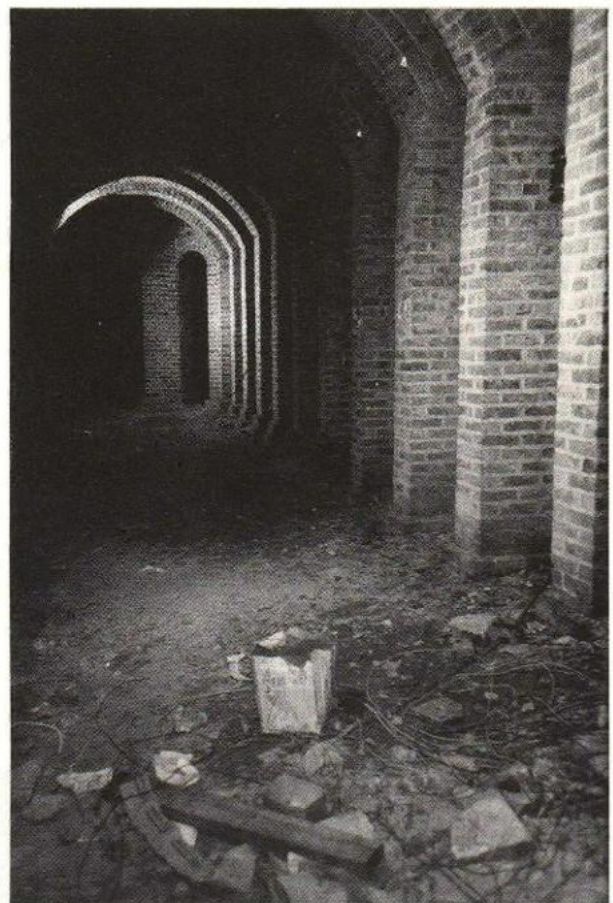


ABOVE: Prince Albert, part of the statue by J H Foley. This close-up view is only possible because of the access provided by the scaffolding. BELOW LEFT: The memorial as it appears today. BELOW RIGHT: Sculpture of architects on the podium north front. (Left to right: Vignola, Delorme, Sansovino, Peruzzi. Seated: San Gallo.)





ABOVE: The upper portion of the canopy over Prince Albert's statue. CENTRE LEFT: Close-up showing the pillars encrusted with gems and rusted metalwork. BOTTOM LEFT: Allegorical mosaic on the tympanum (the cubic portion of the pillar) representing Art. BOTTOM RIGHT: Part of the massive brick catacomb-like structure supporting the steps and platforms surrounding the monument.



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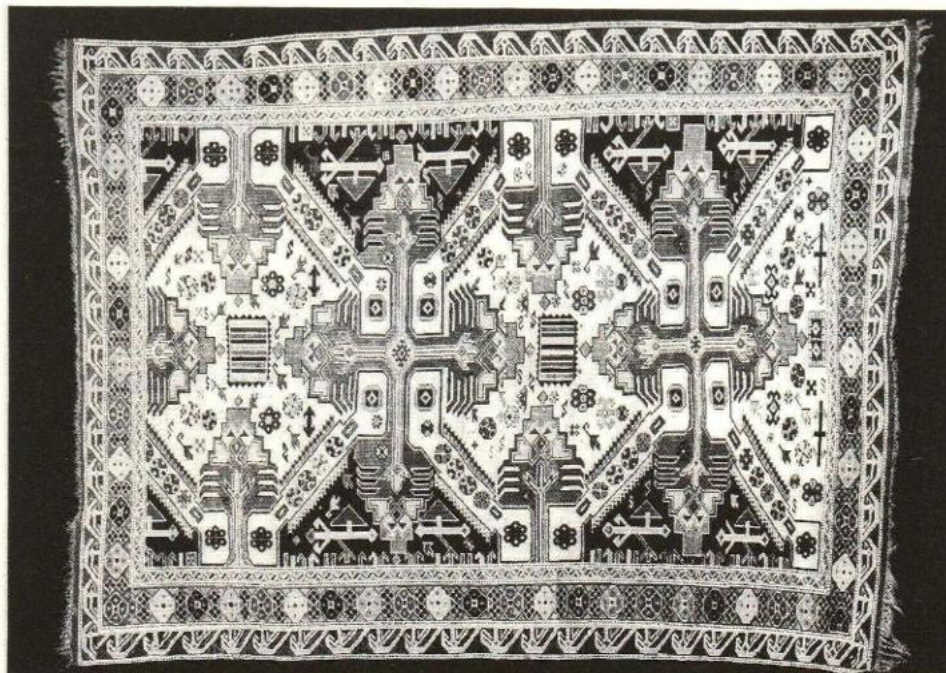
MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ANTIQUE DEALERS'
ASSOCIATION



C. John.

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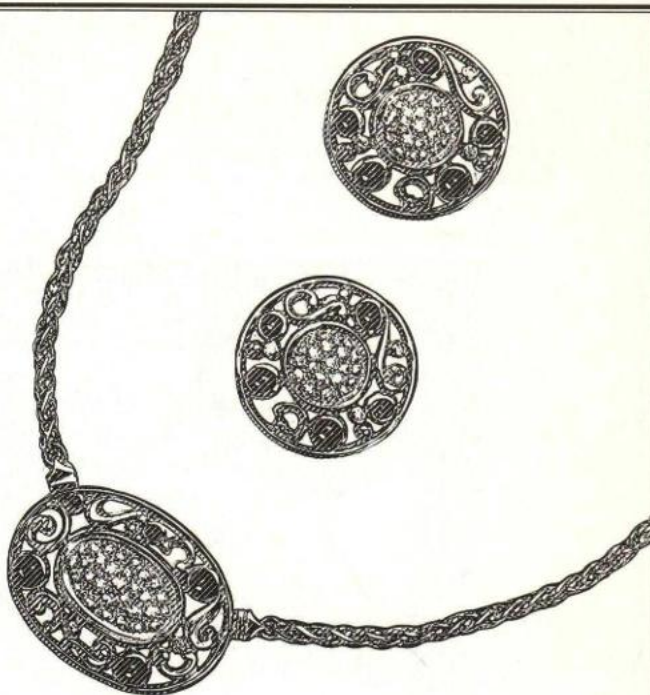
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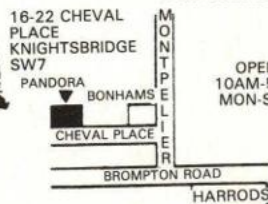
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Street sweeping/emptying litter bins		
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		Out of office hours 071-828 8070
Noisy Party Patrol (Friday & Saturday nights from 11 pm)	}	071-828 8070

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