

62nd ANNUAL REPORT

December 2023



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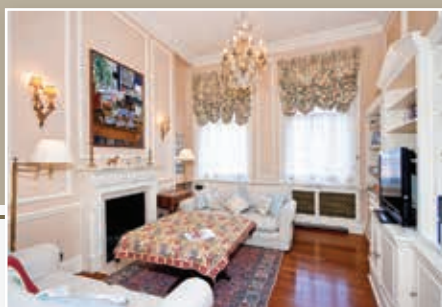
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FEATURES

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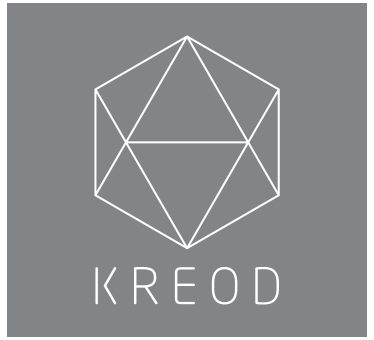


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The image is a festive advertisement for Harrods hampers. It features a deep red background with green holly leaves and berries at the top. In the center, the Harrods logo is written in a white, elegant script. Below the logo, the text 'THE HOME OF EXTRAORDINARY HAMPERS' is displayed in a white, serif font. Underneath, a line of text reads 'Full-to-bursting with delicious confectionery and feasting favourites, there's a hamper for everyone on your list'. The main visual is a collection of wicker hampers and red gift boxes. Two large wicker hampers are in the foreground, each with a dark blue 'H' woven into the front. Behind them are several smaller red gift boxes, some wrapped in red paper with dark red ribbons. The scene is set on a light-colored wooden floor, with a small red gift box and a gold pocket watch lying on the floor in the bottom right corner.

Harrods

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DISCOVER HAMPERS

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[harrods.com/hampers](https://www.harrods.com/hampers)

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THE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



Beautifully refurbished Round Pond bandstand

The year has brought a new Reign; a new higher interest rate economic order; a new food waste collection service to Knightsbridge; a renovated bandstand by the Round Pond; a long-awaited consultation on the cumulative impact of licensing decisions; an on-going consultation, Westminster After Dark, on how and where to roll out the night-time economy ('NTE'); and significantly, first steps towards defining a Local Area Energy Plan. These are all big programmes. They will consume much KA resource in 2024 and are in addition to the Association's daily fare of Licensing and Planning applications that continue to increase as retail gives way to restaurant and café uses.

For the Association, the second half of the year was notable for three events of interest to residents, namely the final determination of the restaurant licence for Nammos,

the removal of advertising hoarding surrounding Princes Court and unfolding discontent amongst residents over construction work in Sloane Street and attendant delays to completion of the northbound phase.

On the last of these, construction in Sloane Street gave rise to a curious contradiction for those who had the good fortune to hear the choral polyphony of Orlandus Lassus and Ludwig Daser rendered by the Tallis Scholars at Cadogan Hall in mid-September. The glorious but complex tangle of interwoven harmonies always neatly 'resolves'; but concert goes, stepping out into the tangled wire and pipework of Sloane Street's ambitious 'greening' project, were left wondering how this confusion could ever 'resolve'; and if it could, how long would it take? While we applaud Cadogan and

RBKC for their vision, the view of those living around Sloane Street is that communication about the project's two-year implementation programme left much to be desired.

This time last year we reported, with disappointment, the Planning Inspector's decision to grant the planning application at 13-17 Montpelier Street. Following a year of vexatious correspondence over the terms of the restaurant licence, I am pleased to report that this has now been resolved. Restaurant conditions will apply thereby avoiding "vertical drinking", see page 19 for details. This brings our 'Great Matter' to rest, for the time being, for which thanks are due to our members for their substantial financial contributions, our three Ward Councillors, our legal team at WSLaw and our MP, Nickie Aiken.

Westminster launched their vision for Public Protection and Licensing

(PP&L) as part of the Cumulative Impact Assessment ('CIA') exercise they are obliged to undertake every three years. It is a redesigned service that aims to be proactive rather than reactive. The practical details were discussed with the Council at a Westminster Amenity Societies Forum (WASF) event on 25 October, attended by the Association. There are six defined services and a new structure of responsibilities and contact points for noise, licensing, and a response team. PP&L covers eight neighbourhood Wards where Knightsbridge is linked with Bayswater, Belgravia and Lancaster Gate.

WASF expressed concerns that residents may have misplaced expectations about the new structure's effectiveness, but the mood of the meeting was that 'we should give it a go' given the impending encroachment of restaurant and entertainment life filling vacant retail in Knightsbridge and adjacent areas. The Association has responded to Westminster's Cumulative Impact Assessment and Night-time Economy consultations, noting in respect of the former that noise disturbance should carry more weight as it has greater impact on residential amenity than other indicators; and is a key consideration in the Prevention of Public Nuisance. Further updates will follow in the Spring newsletter.

The overall ambition of Westminster's Local Area Energy Plan ('LAEP') is to be carbon neutral by 2040, as per London Plan. Consulting engineers Büro Happold have been tasked to support Westminster to achieve this goal and gave a presentation on the 18 October attended by Norbert Kurcz for the Association. Heating is responsible for over a third of UK carbon emissions. Reducing our carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2050 means we must decarbonise the heating of over 30 million homes and businesses in little over 25 years.

It might not be immediately obvious, but Knightsbridge can contribute to this ambitious target

through the development of small local heat networks centred on heat and energy generation in public buildings, university campuses, hotels, department stores and large apartment blocks of which there are many in Knightsbridge. Public assets may be an easier starting point than attempting to retrofit private freeholds on long leases owned by non-resident foreign nationals.

Expectations regarding the speed of roll out need careful management. Sheffield's heat network has taken approximately forty years and is still ongoing. Key to its success was an ample supply of public assets, consistent policy, and no change of local political leadership throughout. Transitioning from an era of "competition for energy supply at the retail level" to more centralised energy supply implicit in a heat network constitutes a major policy shift that legislators, planners, regulators, and the public will take time to adapt to. To this end, the Association has already been in discussion with a major hotel redevelopment that proposes to replace its gas boilers with air source heat pumps. The next stage would be to export surplus heat to adjacent buildings.

We reported in the Autumn newsletter on mixed reactions to Westminster's food waste collection service. Mansion blocks are probably the most challenging client group as the logistics of collecting and presenting food waste from multiple flats to a central collection point are formidable. Your chairman has walked the course to see for himself, at the kind invitation of 199 Knightsbridge. It has also become apparent that there is limited understanding of where the food waste goes and how it can be transformed into electrical energy, and I hope Veolia's article on page 37 will shed light on the mystery.

The street security patrols sponsored by the Knightsbridge Partnership are widely appreciated by residents. Their impact in the Brompton Road is palpable. A second Community Group meeting took place at St Paul's Knightsbridge Church Hall on 7 November where the Partnership announced it had commissioned a consortium of four consultancies to develop 'Place Management' proposals for the Brompton Road. The Community Group seeks to expand attendance at these meetings from all entities with interests in Knightsbridge.

There is much talk about urban greening these days, usually on the sides of buildings or rooftops. A small example of horizontal greening has sprouted in Cottage Place (see below) adjacent to The Oratory. Much to the relief of residents, this worthy act of beautification has cleared up what had become a canine latrine.



Holy Trinity Brompton's pocket forest – 1400 saplings planted in September 'to celebrate the beauty of creation'

It remains for me to send Seasons Greetings to all our members and very best wishes for the New Year.

*Melville Haggard
Chairman*

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

Carol Seymour-Newton

To say it's been a busy year is true, but then it's true of every year! We have seen the completion of several major developments and a welcome appearance of some major luxury retailers to fill some of the new retail spaces. The hotel scene is particularly active with the opening of the Peninsula London at Hyde Park Corner; continuing work on the new hotel adjoining the Berkeley and now a major, much needed refurbishment of the Park Tower. In addition to this there are the myriad of smaller planning applications to deal with on a weekly basis. As we went to press a decision on the South Kensington station appeal was believed to be imminent.

HOTELS

THE PENINSULA LONDON OPENS



The courtyard

The Peninsula finally opened the doors of its London home for a 'soft' opening on 12th September.

The architects' design has lent a new elegance to this iconic part of London, replacing the depressing post war buildings of the Coal and Iron and Steel boards.

Luxury shops are already opening up in the colonnade either side of the Grosvenor Place entrance.

Unsurprisingly, considering its origins, feng shui played no small part in this. Their Feng Shui Master Chun selected the date and assisted them with the furniture arrangement in the hotel, to help with the flow of energy.

Chun is a seventh generation feng shui master whose family has been guiding the great and the good for about 900 years!

THE EMORY AND OLD BARRACK YARD

The Emory, which is planned to open in the new year, is a new hotel at 33-39 Knightsbridge. It will be part of the Maybourne Hotel Group, and sits adjacent to The Berkeley - also part of the Maybourne Group.



The hotel has been designed by the late Richard Rogers and Ivan Harbour of architectural practice RSHP, and introduces a new standard of contemporary design. It is almost complete, with its somewhat controversial 'sails' soaring over the treetops of Hyde Park.

The hotel's new entrance will be off Old Barrack Yard, which has

necessitated a transformation of this little Mews off Knightsbridge, including brand new paving and the creation of a more comfortable pedestrian space, which is currently underway, due for completion around the New Year.

Whilst it has taken a long time to get to this stage, with works first starting on 33-39 Knightsbridge in 2016, the owners assure us that the end result will look fantastic and they have expressed their gratitude for the patience and support of the Knightsbridge and Belgravia communities

PARK TOWER

A major refurbishment and extension of this hotel - completed in 1973 to a design by Richard Seifert - is planned. Surrounded by conservation areas and lacking an entrance on the Knightsbridge frontage, it seems to turn its back on passersby and creates a long inactive gap along the pavement between Harvey Nichols and 55-93 Knightsbridge.



cgi of the two-storey podium

The proposed scheme includes a new two-storey podium at ground floor with retail units; a grand new pedestrian entrance on the Knightsbridge frontage; an upgraded vehicular drop off on Lowndes Square, a colonnade along William Street with seating for cafes and shops; new shopfront windows, and the extension of the tower.

The energy performance of the existing building will be significantly improved and the building will become de-carbonised.

Planning consent was given in 2019 for a remodelling and extension in height. The current proposal will increase the height by around ten metres above the consented scheme, plus a stepped back half-storey plant enclosure.

Members of the KA planning committee attended two presentation meetings in the Autumn and welcomed the significant enhancements provided by the new two-storey podium, the colonnade to William Street and a more attractive ground floor façade to Seville Street.

We were not happy with the proposed increase in height of the tower by another two storeys since previous planning permission had been granted, as it seemed too tall and out of proportion in the context of the original hotel and its context with the wider neighbourhood.

THE ESTATES

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

BOUNDED BY SLOANE STREET, BASIL STREET AND BROMPTON ROAD

Spring 2023 saw the completion of the residential element of the redevelopment of this part of the Estate. Knightsbridge Gardens, as the apartments are now named, has seen the first residents move in. The apartments are arranged around a tranquil, private landscaped courtyard and are surrounded by the shops and restaurants of the Estate



cgi of the pedestrianised section of Basil Street as it might look

and beyond. The offices, at One Hooper's Court are mainly let and the stepfree access to Knightsbridge station is still due to open in the Spring. Both the offices and the new access to the station are within the alley.

In addition to the presence of Apple, Burberry and UGG's flagship stores, a new high end Japanese restaurant has opened its first European branch on the 6th and 7th floors in addition to a ground floor café – both accessed from Basil Street.

The proposal to pedestrianise the northern section of Basil Street – between Pavilion Road and Sloane Street – was subject to public consultation in the Autumn. It had been closed since 2019 to allow the development to take place. This will now go ahead and the Estate tells us it is working with the Council on improvements to the streetscape such as trees, planters and a seasonal art feature.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE GATE

55–93 KNIGHTSBRIDGE and
1–4 WILLIAM STREET

Good news! Retailers are at last beginning to open up in this elegant Edwardian building, re-invigorating this part of Knightsbridge which has, for so long, been undergoing redevelopment .

A luxury provider of wellbeing and health treatments has moved into the 4.500 sq ft unit on the corner of Knightsbridge and Wilton Place and Ares Modena, the Italian coachbuilding firm and

luxury vehicles custom specialist, is taking the 5,500 sq ft William Street corner unit. Two other high class retailers are currently fitting out their premises – Les 100 Ciels, the renowned designer cashmere clothing brand and Plateau, founded in 1996 by the furniture designer Leo Duval, which will specialise in the exhibition and sale of contemporary applied art with studio glass being a dominant feature.

Finally, as we go to press, SHOT London, a coffee house, a new café concept is also fitting out and two further lettings at 3–4 William Street and 65 Knightsbridge are under discussion.

The public realm work at William Street, funded by the owners of Knightsbridge Gate, is also now complete. Co-ordination with a number of public bodies proved challenging but it is hoped that the road will be fully operational shortly.



Knightsbridge Gate

AROUND AND ABOUT

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM P

URBAN NATURE PROJECT

Katie Scott, Natural History Museum

The garden redevelopment at the Natural History Museum is making good progress to be opened in Spring 2024. The structural walls of the Garden's entrance from the South Kensington Underground station subway are now complete. This entrance will immerse visitors in the story of life on Earth, taking them on a journey into the deep past and inviting them to explore the diversity of life as it evolves. Visitors will learn about the explosion of life in the seas 500 million years ago, see dinosaurs grazing among tree ferns and cycads and track the evolution of our earliest ancestors.



Access to the garden will be improved, with universal step-free access across the site. This is a view of the evolution garden.

The timber frame of the Museum's new café, the Garden Kitchen, is well underway with the blockwork completed behind the cafe. The blockwork for the Nature Discovery Centre supported by AWS (Amazon Web Services) is also completed,

allowing the construction of the timber frame to start and stone cladding to be installed to the external walls. The Nature Discovery Centre supported by AWS will combine vital facilities for scientific work, monitoring, learning activities, maintenance and supporting the volunteer community that is key to the upkeep of the gardens. Roofing for both buildings will commence in the upcoming months.

Good progress is also being made in the east and west side of the gardens. The historic steps in the Evolution Garden on the east will be removed and construction of the walkways will begin in the coming weeks. In the Nature Discovery Garden on the west, the retaining wall is being installed and the landscape for the meadow area is currently being profiled.

HARRODS

REPLACING THE LIGHTING SYSTEM

As mentioned in the Autumn Newsletter, Harrods is in the middle of replacing 4,000 light bulbs on the façades with a new lighting scheme, and at the same time, whilst the scaffolding is in place, carrying out maintenance and repairs to the terracotta. This should be completed and the scaffolding removed by the end of January.

A NEW PROMOTION

In addition to the Hans Crescent project, see page 25, Harrods has a temporary promotion with Burberry, running from January to mid-

March which involves the tent like draping of three of the doors along Brompton Road and Hans Crescent with blue fabric and replacing Harrods awnings also with blue fabric. The light bulbs along the Brompton and Hans Crescent will also be changed to blue and a blue light wash projection will cover both the Hans Crescent and Brompton Road elevations.

This makeover will pay tribute to Burberry's invention of gabardine which has been used to outfit explorers and soldiers as well as cladding tents to provide refuge for adventurers from the harsh elements.

The whole effect will certainly be eye catching if somewhat surreal.

CHRISTMAS

A vibrant pink Christmas tree has been installed in Hans Crescent outside door 5.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE

THE QUEEN'S TOWER – DANGOOR PLAZA

At the heart of the South Kensington Campus sits the 140 year old Queen's Tower, the last remaining part of the original Imperial Institute which was built in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

In 2020, after a piece of stonework fell to the ground, the college undertook many surveys to understand the extent of repairs



which would be needed – they are considerable!

In Autumn the scaffolding began rising around the tower and will continue to rise into next summer with work anticipated to take two years.

The Queen's Tower sits over the original basements that were reinforced in the 1960s as part of the works to convert the tower into a standalone structure, when the rest of the Imperial Institute buildings were demolished (to the horror of local residents and others).*

The basements are linked by tunnels to many of the other buildings on the South Kensington Campus. Within the basement propping has been installed directly beneath the above ground structure to ensure the loads are transferred to the foundations.

Repairs are expected to last for two years but should provide at least 50 years of further life to the external fabric of this icon of Imperial College, which can be seen in many long views.

**As the result of an unsuccessful battle by the Royal Fine Art Commission, the nascent Victorian Society and Sir John Betjeman, to preserve the Imperial Institute building, the Queen's Tower was allowed to remain.*

A MURAL FOR IMPERIAL

Imperial has lodged a planning application for the installation of a new public art feature on the blank western elevation of the Roderick Hill building (corner Prince Consort and Callendar roads).

The Mural design has been prepared through the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The Mural will be part of the 'Ecosystem Restoration Murals' series, with the objective to raise awareness of environmental issues.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

THE ARCHIVE



James Ainscough, CEO, chatting to guests at the opening.

In October the Hall opened a new public-facing archive with environmentally-controlled storage space, giving the archive collection the home it deserves.

The new £1m project brings the entire archive together - dating back to the 1850s - and contains irreplaceable assets of national and international cultural significance, recording the history of the Hall and its place at the heart of the nation.

James Ainscough, Chief Executive, said: "This famous building has been a crucible of debate, a place of cultural and social transformation, and a prism through which to see a changing Britain. No other venue on earth has played host to the Suffragettes, Albert Einstein and Muhammed Ali, as well as Ella Fitzgerald, The Beatles and Adele".

The archive will be open to historians, researchers and members of the public by appointment.

The niche statues in the north and south porches were unveiled in November. The King and Queen unveiling those of the late Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

1 KNIGHTSBRIDGE GREEN



Members of the Planning Committee recently met with representatives from Berkeley Estate Asset Managers, owners of 1 Knightsbridge Green, to learn of their developing ideas for the future of this major commercial site in the heart of Knightsbridge, bounded by Brompton Road, Knightsbridge Green and Raphael Street.

The existing building consists of a mix of active uses at ground floor and a substantial cruciform office structure at upper levels. Emerging ideas were expected to be launched for consultation later this year or in early 2024.

Built on the original site of Tattersalls bloodstock auction yard, the Triga* sculpture, on the first floor deck, and Tattersalls Tavern, bear witness to the history of the site.

**a chariot drawn by three horses*

LANCELOT PLACE

Both Lancelot Place developments are nearing completion, with nos. 3-11 aiming for late spring 2024.

LICENSING REPORT

Paul Meitner

OVERVIEW of the YEAR

The past year has seen a significant increase in the number of licensing applications, both new and renewals, as well as our interactions with our two local authorities, Westminster (WCC) and Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), concerning matters of concern to all Residents' Associations (RAs) in the two boroughs.

Here is a brief update on the main issues arising.

NAMMOS

13--17 Montpelier Street

As reported by our Chairman in the Autumn Newsletter, the KA successfully objected to two 'minor' variations to the existing restaurant licence, which we feared would have permitted 'vertical' drinking (i.e. the consumption of alcohol without an accompanying meal). Unfortunately, a third application was approved by WCC, which meant that residents did not have the opportunity to submit views and have the case considered at a full licensing committee meeting. Winckworth Sherwood, acting for us, wrote to WCC asking why this 3rd application had been approved when the two earlier ones had been rejected. WCC said that Nammos had taken on board the previous grounds for refusal and amended their application, without providing details. At a meeting with Ward Councillors on 10th October we followed up with a member of the WCC Licensing team. We were told that the amendments related to the number of tables as well as the measurement of noise emanating from the premises.

We will monitor the impact that Nammos has when it opens for

business. We still have the right to seek a review of the licence, should residents experience noise, crime or anti-social behaviour, all of which are covered by the objectives of the Licensing Act 2003.

Although very disappointed with the outcome there is some comfort to be taken from the fact that Nammos dropped their judicial review of WCC's decision to reinstate restaurant conditions into the licence at the time that it was transferred from the previous owner.

DOMIO,

70 Brompton Road
(Formerly Topshop) *necessary*



This involved an 'ancillary restaurant' on the 1st floor, a major concern for residents in the apartments behind the building. We supported them with their objections to WCC and made our own representations. The application was approved by WCC's Licensing Committee on 15 June, subject to numerous stringent conditions, including the requirement to close windows and external doors after 10pm,

no deliveries or waste collection between 8pm and 8am and the dispersal of restaurant patrons after 7pm only onto Brompton Road.

This was a satisfactory outcome, following engagement by the applicant with local residents (unlike some other developers) and a licensing committee that listened to residents' concerns.

CONSULTATION ON THE POSSIBLE CONTINUED DEREGULATION OF ALCOHOL 'OFF SALES' and TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICES (TENs)

Without new legislation the relaxations introduced in 2023 would have expired at the end of 2023, reverting to the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, which allowed a maximum of 15 TENs per year, across a total of 21 days (the current limit is 20 TENs, across 26 days). After consulting with Richard Brown at Westminster Citizen's Advice, we responded to the consultations to say that the temporary provisions should not be renewed, ensuring that all applications (other than those exempted as TENs) would be subject to proper review and appraisal.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL (WCC) LICENSING POLICY

We and several other Residents Associations (RAs) joined a working party which met three times to review the existing licensing policy and look at possible changes. We will let you know once the exercise has been completed.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett

CLEANER AIR

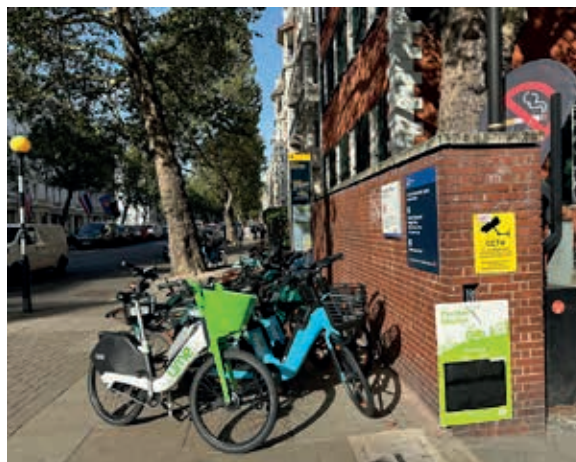
Air pollution in Knightsbridge has reduced by 65% since we first raised the issue in 2006. At the time of writing, year to date concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a toxic gas, were 33 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) in Brompton Road – which is down from 36 µg/m³ in 2022 and close to COVID-lockdown levels. This highlights the success of ongoing measures to reduce diesel exhaust emissions from all categories of vehicles over more than 15 years. It also shows that we need to reduce combustion gas emissions from buildings if this part of London is to comply with the World Health Organisation's new air quality guideline (2021) for annual mean concentrations of NO₂ of 10 µg/m³. Concentrations should only exceed a daily mean of 25 µg/m³ three or four times a year.

ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

Periodically we review the road traffic collision data for Westminster and RBKC. In Knightsbridge, most injuries, including life changing ones, occur along the main roads i.e. Queen's Gate, Exhibition Road, Cromwell Road, Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, Kensington Road and South and West Carriage Drive. They typically involve cars, powered two-wheelers and pedestrians or cyclists. Overall, there has been about one 'slight injury' a week and one 'serious injury' a month over the last seven years in Knightsbridge. The top five contributory factors for collisions involving vehicles

include: (top) driver failed to look properly; failed to judge other person's movement; poor turn or manoeuvre; careless/reckless/in a hurry; and sudden braking (fifth). The first of these is by far the most common. Our tips to pedestrian readers would include: walk on side streets if you can; always use a pedestrian crossing and cross during the green man signal; and don't assume that vehicles (or e-bikes or e-scooters) will stop at crossings or that they are paying attention (or insured). Please pay attention if you're driving. Extra care is needed with quieter electric vehicles and fast e-bikes and e-scooters. Transport professionals are usually the first to follow these tips. Note: 'severe injuries' include broken bones, internal injuries, loss of a limb, penetrating wounds and unconsciousness. 'Slight' is anything less than that. Above 'Severe' is 'Fatal'.

E-SCOOTERS AND E-BIKES



We are hopeful that Westminster City Council's restrictions on e-scooters and e-bikes will address some of the parking problems that we've seen over recent years

i.e. with dumping and parking on pavements. WCC plans to create a large number of dedicated dockless parking bays that could be shared by e-scooters and e-bikes. The KA supports the creation of such bays, provided that the companies pay for them and their use is enforced, but they should be on or within sight of the main roads where the worst problems exist. Putting these bays deep into quiet residential areas would create unnecessary traffic and disturbance and tend to discourage their use.

20 MPH SPEED LIMITS

We are pleased that Transport for London has implemented a 20mph speed limit in Brompton Road and Cromwell Road. While it can be frustrating for drivers while you get used to the new limit or for a few minutes a day, we all benefit 24/7 from safer roads and the reduction in nuisance noise from traffic. We observed an almost overnight and dramatic reduction

in nuisance noise from fast cars and motorbikes once the roundels appeared on the roads and lampposts. It's worth standing on the north side of Brompton Road opposite Beauchamp Place and watching for five or 10 minutes to appreciate the difference. It certainly doesn't look much fun accelerating rapidly to 20mph in a sports car. Those driving much faster, such as between 31mph and 40mph, may need to appear in court and could

be fined up to £1,000, receive between four and six penalty points and be banned from driving for between seven and 28 days. TfL

and other evidence is that 20mph zones bring significant benefits.

ROAD CLOSURES

We have sought to reduce or avoid foreseeable problems with major roadworks. These have included the closure of Piccadilly Underpass (with both tunnels closed at times), Beauchamp Place and Sloane Street northbound. For example, we objected successfully when it was proposed to close Sloane Street southbound while the Piccadilly Underpass works were taking place.



Looking ahead, we expect the Piccadilly Underpass to re-open by the end of the 2023 with fully modernised fire, safety and ventilation systems. Each tunnel will have one lane of traffic only since the second lane was not used. The tunnels have also been cleaned and 'refreshed'. We hope they will give many years of trouble-free service.

Our current concern is the closure of Sloane Street southbound which is expected from the weekend of 6–7 January 2024 until October 2024 (with hints that completion may be delayed until the end of 2024). Without careful planning, southbound closure will cause more problems for traffic in Knightsbridge because there are fewer side street or 'rat-running' options than northbound (e.g. Beauchamp Place or Hans Road

on the west side of Harrods) and people unfamiliar with the area will simply get stuck in a queue eastbound at Scotch House Corner. Tailbacks at Hans Road already block eastbound Brompton Road traffic at times. We have been assured that the longer-term junction arrangements for Sloane Street at Scotch House Corner and Sloane Square will remain unchanged.

Please see the [sloanestreetfuture.co.uk](https://www.sloanestreetfuture.co.uk) website and sign up for their email newsletter for regular updates. These are valuable.

You can also email questions, concerns or feedback to their Public Liaison Officers at FM Conway at sloane.street@fmconway.co.uk or call Helen McConnell or Cate Green on 07917 518 529 or 07443 077 444. Please also visit their website to book an online or in-person place at their hybrid meeting with residents at Cadogan Hall at 6pm on Tuesday 23 January 2024.

Over the medium and longer-term our main concerns are rumours that Beauchamp Place could become one-way (which would reduce network 'resilience' and cause other problems) and the possibility of major construction works at Knightsbridge Green. We also continue to push for the re-opening of South Carriage Drive but this has proved challenging because of



Sloane Street roadworks

an apparent stand-off between the Royal Parks and TfL about the arrangements at the Queen Elizabeth Gate and elsewhere.

ZERO AIR EMISSIONS

Westminster has been working with consultants to explore different options to meet its commitments, in place since September 2019, to achieve 'net zero' emissions from its own assets by 2030 and throughout the borough by 2040. In practice, 'net zero' means 'zero air emissions' from buildings and transport because the 'net' (e.g. tree-planting) will be used for the most challenging to de-carbonise sectors such as the food industry.

We've been seeking to understand what this will mean for buildings in Knightsbridge which are responsible for over 80% of the greenhouse gas emissions generated locally. Our preliminary view for houses, is that this will mean more air source heat pumps (which can double as air conditioners in summer), the replacement of gas boilers by an all-electric equivalent which could work with existing heating and plumbing systems, maximising 'fabric' improvements (e.g. loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and heritage sensitive secondary glazing or slimline double glazing subject to listed building approval) and other forms of electrification e.g. underfloor cooling and heating. Larger residential blocks and offices may be required by law to connect to a local area energy network which could share ground source heat pumps and excess heat from neighbouring units (if available) and the tube network or electricity substations. Hydrogen has been side-lined. Solar panels may have a role but they should be positioned out of sight in Conservation Areas or on listed buildings and preferably combined with some battery storage.

If you want to get ahead of the curve when planning a refurbishment or otherwise, you might consider asking a plumber, electrician or professional about electrification options since that could access economies of scale over the medium and longer term as national wind and solar schemes bring down the cost of energy. For obvious reasons, the KA can't advise individuals on specific projects.

FOOD WASTE, STREET CLEANING, DOG POO and FLOODING

Westminster has introduced food waste recycling this year, see page 37, which is more fun than it sounds. It has also become clear which neighbours are not using it when their waste bags get split open by



foxes, birds and vermin and food scraps are spread across the street and squished by vehicles before breakfast. Dog poo reduced for a few months after we asked people to report descriptions of dog walkers, dogs and times and places using the FixMyStreet website or Report-It tool on Westminster's

website. Please therefore continue to do that. Please also report all instances of rubbish or recycling bags dumped out of hours, including the afternoon before. One 'tip' is to stand at a corner and look down a whole street to spot problems. Please also report any instances of blocked drains or local street flooding to Westminster (or TfL on red routes). This gives us the best chance of having well maintained drains when a peak storm hits Knightsbridge. It should also help FM Conway to identify strategic weaknesses in the local drainage network and hopefully fix them before flooding occurs.

LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Anne Wright and Frances Blois

RELEVANT LEGISLATION – PENDING

It was reported in last year's Annual Report that there were various pieces of legislation relevant to our area at various stages in Parliament: as at the date of writing and following the King's Speech on the 6 November 2023 matters are as outlined below. We will, however, continue to keep watch during the coming sessions and report on those which may have received Royal Assent in the next Newsletter.

SHORT TERM LETTINGS

RENTERS (REFORM) BILL 2022 – 2023 (Second Reading)

This Bill provides for a change in the law about rented homes, including provision for the abolition of fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies; imposing obligations on landlords and others in

terms of registration in relation to rented homes and temporary and supported accommodation; and no-fault evictions.

VAGRANCY AND BEGGING AND PAVEMENT LICENCES

LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION BILL 2022 – 2023 (introduced: 11th May 2022 now in Ping Pong (which is the final stage of the bill process))

This Bill makes provision for the setting up of levelling-up measures and reporting on progress in delivering them; about local democracy; about town and country planning; about Community Infrastructure Levy; about the imposition of Infrastructure Levy; about environmental outcome reports for certain consents and plans; about regeneration; about the compulsory purchase of land; about information and records relating to land, the environment

or heritage; for the provision for pavement licences to be permanent; about governance of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; about vagrancy and begging

PEDICABS (LONDON) BILL (Introduced in The King's Speech)

This Bill, which was very much promoted by Nickie Aiken MP and Westminster City Council, is to give Transport for London (TfL) new powers to regulate pedal-powered taxi cabs in the capital. This would



give TfL the ability to protect customers, cap the number of pedicabs operating in any given area, control pricing and give all pedicabs identifiable information like taxi licences.

SHOPLIFTING TO ORDER

Although supermarkets are among the most frequent victims of shoplifting, as our local Waitrose stores will attest, other sectors such as clothing, jewellery and luxury goods are increasingly being targeted. Members of the Knightsbridge Association Committee attended a recent site visit to Harrods to meet and understand these concerns and the work of their security team. The presentation was impressive and displayed a thorough approach to the problem of theft and excellent liaison with the Police with whom they work side by side.

Although in Knightsbridge we do not have the same levels of shop theft in our stores as elsewhere, with many now seeing organised looting of their businesses on a regular basis, there is a marked a surge in thefts. From our working with the Knightsbridge Partnership and Westminster and Kensington Metropolitan Police, this is due to an increase rise in organised crime and "shoplifting to order", with repeat offenders now coordinating hits on multiple stores in succession.

We are all being asked to be aware of the tricks and tactics of shop lifting – large shopping bags, overly large clothing often held over the arm, dark glasses in doors etc. – so that in the event of witnessing a theft an alarm can be raised with any in house security or member of staff – in preference necessarily to tackling the perpetrator on site. The Police

are increasingly taking shop lifting more seriously and prosecuting those caught although as we all know thefts under a value of £200 are rarely dealt with other than by a small fine.

REPORT FROM THE METROPOLITAN POLICE – KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND BELGRAVIA WARD PANEL

This local panel is Chaired by Frances Blois of the Knightsbridge Association and is made up of some 20 or more representatives from residents' associations, property management and security agents – commercial, residential and retail - Westminster City Council officers and Councillors. The Panel meet quarterly at the Caledonian Club who generously act as hosts for the meetings. Our designated team police officers deliver a full presentation to the panel of current crime figures by comparison with previous quarters and years and provide specific guidance to pass on to those the panel represent.

Overall the past year has shown a

10% increase in thefts from motor vehicles but marginal increase with the theft of pedal cycles and motor vehicles themselves. There has been an increase in reported robberies of around 8% in the Knightsbridge and Hyde Park area mostly attributable to the busier summer months. Burglaries from businesses have increased particularly in Knightsbridge Green and Montpelier Terrace although residential burglaries remain as in the previous year. Incidents of theft from persons have increased again principally in the summer months by about 18% in Hyde Park and the shopping area of Knightsbridge itself and around the tube stations.

Our police team are undertaking proactive patrols across the area with stop and searches being conducted, drugs seized, attention to anti-social behaviour, and generally providing increased engagement with residents and business.

As ever their message to us is to be vigilant and report any crime or suspicion of crime or anti-social behaviour to the Westminster team whose contacts as detailed below:



The Bentley illegally parked for many months in Montpelier Street was found to have no road tax licence or MOT and was removed in October. As Westminster Respark permits will no longer need to be issued it will inevitably be more difficult for members of the public to see whether a motor vehicle is legally parked.

- ❖ Inspector **Christopher Sadler** – Christopher.M.Sadler@met.police.uk
- ❖ Police Sergeant **Claire Napper** – Claire.Napper@met.police.uk
- ❖ Police Constable **Paul Wyllie** – Paul.Wyllie@met.police.uk
- ❖ Police Constable **Aadil Baqar** – Aadil.Baqar@met.police.uk
- ❖ Community Support Officer **Zack Slaney**– Zack.Slaney@met.police.uk

Telephone: 07769 164 785

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATIONS at KNIGHTSBRIDGE BARRACKS

Olivia Cox



Awaiting the arrival of the children with the support of the Hyde Park Mounted Police

The Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is a UK-based charity providing horse riding and carriage driving to those with learning and physical disabilities. It is a federation of about 500 independent groups supporting over 17,000 adults and children annually. HRH Princess Anne has been the organisation's President since 1985.

The therapeutic and health benefits of riding have been recognised since Greek times and became better known across Europe after World War II, particularly for people with muscular dystrophy and polio. In the 1960s its popularity grew following the success of the Danish rider Lis Hartel, who won the silver medal for Individual Dressage at the 1952 and 1956 Olympics, despite being paralyzed from the knees down by polio.

Three separate RDA groups – the Royal Mews Group, the Knightsbridge Group and the Hyde Park Group - arrange

weekly sessions at Knightsbridge Barracks by kind permission of the Commanding Officer Lt Col. Matt Woodward, and with the support of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment. Each group caters for different riders, adults and children, and raises their own funding through donations, grants and charity events.

In 2019 the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) celebrated its 50th Anniversary as an independent organisation. The Royal Mews Group was established a year earlier in 1968 under the auspices of the British Horse Society, making it one of the longest established groups. It was formed and originally based at the Royal Mews, but now operates at the Hyde Park Barracks, providing weekly riding opportunities each term for eight severely disabled children from Swiss Cottage School.

The rented ponies and horses used by all three groups come from the Ross Nye Stables in Bayswater, and they are stalwart examples of the steady and patient mounts required to look after their disabled riders.

The Royal Mews Group volunteers, with three qualified coaches and over 20 dedicated supporters, ranging in age and experience from teenagers to volunteers who have supported the group for nearly 40 years. One of our volunteers Roya Nikkhah, the Sunday Times Royal Editor, competed successfully in the charity race, the Magnolia Cup, at Glorious Goodwood this year.

The riders benefit physically and mentally from their riding experience which helps their confidence, mobility, and balance, and provides them with a sense of independence and achievement. For the volunteers it is both rewarding and fun to see the progress and improvement of the riders over time, and to share their enjoyment of a new and exciting experience.

To make a donation or find out more about volunteering, please contact rdaroyalnews@gmail.com

LOCAL AUTHORITIES



WCC Cllrs Rachael Robathan, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Tony Devenish and Council officers meet residents at the street surgery outside Bonhams



RBKC Cllrs Sof McVeigh, Walaal Idris and Mary Weale on a walkabout

There have been numerous consultations on various policies by both RBKC and WCC and many of these on which we have commented or are in the process of commenting, are referred to elsewhere in the Report.

Local ward councillors have been engaged, in Westminster on the Nammos case and recently conducted two street surgeries, with council officers, to pick up on local problems; and in RBKC, they are carrying out discussions on the

future of Beauchamp Place which is looking increasingly down at heel. A meeting was held with residents and businesses in October to consider options and a further meeting was due to be held as we went to Press.

PUBLIC REALM SCHEMES

SLOANE STREET PROJECT

CONCEPT

Mark Poole, Destination Marketing Manager, Cadogan

The aim of the Sloane Street Transformation public realm scheme is to create a stunning, one kilometre, green boulevard from Knightsbridge to Sloane Square, with; wider pavements to stroll down, greater accessibility, a magnificent planting scheme to enhance biodiversity and air quality,

elegant street furniture to improve dwell time, plus enhanced, energy efficient lighting on the carriageway and pavement, to improve visibility and security.

The improvements create a beautiful and welcoming environment for pedestrians, without compromising the street's character. In addition, a new waste management collection service by eco-bike, plus a programme to

combine retailer deliveries, ensures a far cleaner and greener streetscape, which enhances traffic flows.

TIMELINE

Helen McConnell, Public Liaison Officer, FM Conway

Back in 2016 / 2017 over 1,100 people took part in a consultation on the public realm scheme proposed for Sloane Street*. This consultation undertaken by RBKC was made up of



cgi of Sloane Street scheme

70% residents, 16% local businesses and 14% visitors to the area. Three-quarters of those respondents said they supported the proposals, with over half preferring the option for maximum pavement widening in the central section of the street. All responses were considered and, where possible, the feedback received has been incorporated into the final design for the street, which was approved by the Borough's Key Decision process in April 2019.

Preparatory works commenced on this major project in early Autumn 2022.

FM Conway began the public realm aspects from January 2023 and to

facilitate the installation of the initial stages of the project, the northbound closure of Sloane Street was installed during the weekend of 7th and 8th January 2023. This part of the scheme is now nearing completion with all retail areas of Sloane Street, on the western side, due to be completed by mid-November. The completion date has been timed to coincide with the switching on of the Christmas lights and the build up to the Christmas trading period. Work on the residential areas of Sloane Street will continue until the week before Christmas.

The construction teams will be back from the first working week

in January 2024. The focus of the works will be on the eastern footway. Sloane Street will be closed to southbound traffic from that time also. Buses will also be on diversion. All information on those diverted bus routes and road diversions are listed on www.sloanestreetfuture.co.uk

This website also includes regular project updates, with an opportunity to sign up to the newsletter, together with information regarding the next community meeting. The entire project is due for completion by the end of 2024.

Should you have any specific questions about the scheme FM Conway have a public liaison team who will be happy to help.

Please contact sloane.street@fmconway.co.uk or call Cate Green on 07443 077444 or Helen McConnell on 07917 518529.

**Surveys, as part of a leaflet detailing the proposals, were sent to 12,936 properties in the area surrounding Sloane Street in Jan 2017. A total of 1,168 responses were received before the deadline of 27th February 2017 (in addition to 31 letters/e-mails).*

HANS CRESCENT

Most people would agree that the pedestrianisation of Hans Crescent has not been entirely successful, but now plans are in the offing with Harrods, The Knightsbridge Estate (the freeholders either side of Hans Crescent) and RBKC joining forces to redesign the area.

Landscape designer, Andy Sturgeon – also responsible for the Sloane Street project - has drawn up proposals to enhance this stretch of the Crescent with hard and soft landscaping. Consultation with the KA and other associations throughout the area took place in the Autumn and a planning application was lodged in October.



cgi of Hans Crescent proposed redesign

In time this will entail removing the clutter of tables and chairs which were allowed to proliferate during and remain after Covid restrictions, and generally make the area more

attractive and welcoming to visitors.

Improvements will include new paving down the centre; new raised landscaped planters with integrated seating, replacing the benches; retention of four trees with three new trees at the Basil Street end; new heritage lighting; a zone for public art on a plinth and a more defined drop off zone at the Basil Street end.

The KA stressed that maintenance will be key and the authors are well aware that this, including constant removal of litter, will be necessary to keep the area safe, clean and tidy.

MEMBERS' SECTION

MEETINGS

2022/23

61st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND 60th ANNIVERSARY

Finally, after several delays due to COVID, we were able to celebrate our 60th Anniversary in conjunction with the 61st AGM – back in the beautiful Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental.

Members and guests, joined by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Hamza Taouzzale, and the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, Cllr David Lindsay, mingled happily prior to the AGM. The Raffle, in aid of AgeUK Westminster, raised an unprecedented £2,200 including a generous, anonymous gift of £1,000.



Chairman Melville Haggard opens the meeting



Cllr Hamza Taouzzale draws a winning ticket

2023/24

62nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEW YEAR RECEPTION

Monday 15 January, 2024

Our grateful thanks are again due to the management of the Mandarin Oriental for allowing

us to hold our 62nd AGM in the Ballroom. This will take the usual format with the reception prior to the AGM, followed by Reports from Committee Chairmen and

a Question and Answer session. This year the Raffle will be in aid of London's Air Ambulance, who are raising much needed funds to replace their two elderly helicopters.

LONDON'S AIR AMBULANCE



Medics watching one of the air ambulances landing on the roof of the Royal London Hospital

"Since 1989 we have treated more than 45,000 patients, commonly responding to road traffic collisions, falls from height and penetrating trauma. Operating in a densely populated city means we see more patients with life-threatening injuries than any other air ambulance service.

With one of our two helicopters over 20 years old, our fleet is reaching the natural end of its lifecycle. It is becoming increasingly costly to maintain the aircraft, so we need to replace our fleet. Donations and pledges have been made, but there is still much more we need to raise.

Our largest supporter is the population of London itself.

60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Rachael Stearns, Kazuko Bouch and Sylvia Fei



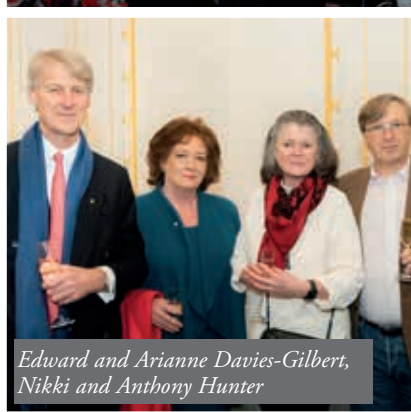
Felicity Buchan Mp, Cllr David Lindsay, Mayor of RBKC and Jane Low



Richard Howell, Bette Lau and Gary Lapidus



Chun Qing Li, Panda Morgan Thomas and Nicholas Colquhoun-Denvers



Edward and Arianne Davies-Gilbert, Nikki and Anthony Hunter



Mary Ann Masucci, Richard and Julie Bond



Helga Carvalho and Egli Petta



David Kent-Lemon, Lorraine Buckland, Matteo Margaaroli and Anne Wright



Cezary Pyda and Lisa Cavanagh-Smith



Tony Jones and Tanny Gordon



Chris Barrass, Sally Noonan and John Lavery



Paul King, John Zamit and John Whelan

60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Alexandra Morgan Thomas, and Mary Regnier-Leigh



Melville Haggard, Cllr Hamza Taouzzale, Lord Mayor Of Westminster, Frances Blois and Paul Meitner



Cllrs Sina Lari and Emma Dent Coad



Anica Alvarez Nishio, Tony Daggart and Simon Birkett



Douglas Temple, David Edwards, Lucia and Philip Dinkel



Norbert Kurcz, Diddi Malek and Melissa Woolford



Caroline Burke and Sarah Mason



Stephen Medway and Ian Shackleton



Jason Taylor, Sue Price and Tom Jarvis



Marcela Alatorre and Eleonore Jensen



Soozee Gundle, Carol Seymour-Newton, Yoshi Nishio, Tamara Haggard and Clifford Gundle



Suzanne Karger and John Dunbar Roake

MEMBERSHIP

Membership has increased over the last year thanks to a new Residence membership as well as new individual and corporate members. The website has been updated to encourage new members to sign up for direct debit subscriptions, and we hope to stream-line the options for membership payments further in the next year.

Since last year Olivia has stepped back from the treasurership and this is now in the capable hands of Panda Morgan Thomas, whilst Olivia continues to handle Membership.

FINANCES

The Accounts to be presented at the AGM on Monday 15th January 2024 cover the period from 30 September 2022 to 30 September 2023, of both the Knightsbridge Association and for the Nammos Licensing Appeal which is a separate Lloyds Bank business account. Members will have received a copy of The Accounts with their invitation to the AGM.

Advertising revenue covered the cost of the 2022 Annual Report.

The Nammos Licensing Appeal Account currently stands at £8,861.60. There are no debts outstanding.

APPRECIATIONS

CHRIS BARRASS

We are grateful to Chris for taking time out of his busy schedule to chair the Transport and Environment committee; and for introducing the KA to WSLaw who supported the Association robustly throughout negotiations on the Nammos restaurant licence.

SIMON BIRKETT

Thank you, Simon, for the time you devote to running the Transport and Environment committee. This has been a particularly busy time given the introduction of e-scooters and e-bikes and the bringing into force of measures that attempts

alleviate the reckless abandonment of scooters and bikes on pavements and roads. Your efforts are much appreciated.

FRANCES BLOIS

The regularity of Law and Order committee meetings slipped during 2023 and the aim is to revitalise this in 2024 and to link this work to participation with The Royal Parks safety and security committee meetings. Your experience at Westminster City Council is much valued and seems to have been instrumental in securing the removal of one SORN registered Bentley!

FRANCESCO BRENTA

Our thanks to Francesco for his persistence in maintaining support amongst the resident community throughout negotiations on Nammos's restaurant licence; and for holding to account Nammos contractors for their multiple parking infringements in and around Montpelier Place. Never did a day pass without contractors being made aware that people actually live here!

NEIL CARTHY

Our email system works smoothly and without a hitch due to Neil's careful oversight and management. You devoted much time to familiarising our new Treasurer with the Association's IT systems and this has helped to smooth her transition into the new role. Thank you for your continuing, quiet and reassuring help on such vital technical matters.

OLIVIA COX

Having successfully handed over the Treasurer functions to Panda Morgan Thomas, Olivia now devotes her energies to finding new members and maintaining the membership database. Nothing is too difficult for Olivia to manage! Thank you for your continued dedication to KA's affairs.

BARBARA LINTON

Once again, our special thanks to Barbara who has 'type-set and

published' the KA's annual reports and newsletters since 2001. Thank you for being such a patient, resourceful and unflappable curator of the Association's public face.

PAUL MEITNER

Paul continues to handle the vital membership communications brief on top of his role as principal licensing scrutineer. Both functions are time consuming, made more so by the recent launch of Westminster's new, proactive licencing and cumulative impact policy proposals. Thank you for your active contribution throughout the year across so many fronts.

PANDA MORGAN THOMAS

We are very fortunate that Panda expressed interest in taking on the Treasurer role from Olivia Cox and delighted that the transition has occurred so smoothly. Congratulations to both of them for making this happen given the importance of this role for the Association.

ALEXANDRA MORGAN THOMAS

Alexandra's second year managing the advertising for the Annual Report has proved as successful as her first year. Thank you. The systematic way you approach advertisers and report results works; and we hope you will achieve another good result for us in 2024! Thank you for the time you devote to this critical event in KA's calendar.

CAROL SEYMOUR-NEWTON

Once again Carol has played a pivotal role in the preparation of the Annual Report that, along with the Autumn and Spring newsletters, provides the glue that binds our Knightsbridge community together. Her encyclopaedic knowledge of the area never fails to come up with the article, contact or precedent needed to solve any current dilemma. Thank you, Carol, for continuing to radiate the KA's message to the wider community.

ELMAR TOIME

After this year, Elmar will be stepping down from handling the printing and distribution of Annual Reports and newsletters to relocate to Australia. His efforts turned the Association's external communications methods from a cottage industry into an industrial process. We are very grateful that he applied his knowledge of postal services so generously to help the Association put its distribution onto a cost-effective basis. Thank you Elmar, you will be greatly missed.

ANNE WRIGHT

We are very grateful to Anne for a second year on the Law and Order committee while continuing to work as a practising lawyer. Thank you for your forthright contributions at Licensing hearings and for picking up the baton on several other pressing issues.

SAMER YOUNIS

Samer and his colleague Ganesh provide invaluable support to Carol in the administration of the Planning and Conservation

committee. Thank you for this vital contribution and for populating responses to our food waste collection survey into an intelligible spreadsheet! Your efforts in beautifying Ennismore Mews with floral displays bring delight to passers-by every day.

MR PEPYS (cocker spaniel)

For helping Veolia's Hercules with litter collection through an unerring nose for discarded plastic bottles, food wrappers and other misplaced paraphernalia.

PHYLLIS LUSHER Treasurer 2008-2013.

Phyllis sadly died at her home in the US earlier in the year. When she took over as treasurer in 2008 she was responsible for bringing the KA membership and financial management up-to-date. By the time she handed over to Olivia Cox, the banking arrangements were all online. Prior to Phyllis's tenure the financial records were all beautifully handwritten in a ledger. She was also responsible for setting up the membership database.

American by birth, she and her husband spent many years in Hong Kong before settling in the UK, sharing their time between London and their farm in



Surrey. After her husband died she bought and completely rebuilt no. 12 Ennismore Mews. In 2017, due to deteriorating health, she returned to live in the States. Phyllis was charming and had a keen intellect. Through her charitable work she was an ardent supporter of the arts and education.

REPORT FROM THE ROYAL PARKS

Jason Taylor, Park Manager Hyde Park

This year has seen biodiversity enhancements in both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. In Hyde Park, this has included enriching areas of the park with wildflower seed mixes, clearing overgrown shrubbery of plants with limited habitat value, planting 13,000 bluebells and 10,000 snowdrops, and managing reedbeds to further diversify wetland habitats. In Kensington Gardens, corporate

volunteers have helped to manage the woodland areas and have planted 6,000 woodland bulbs as well as building dead hedges for wildlife. Tree avenues continue to be restored and the park team has been busy restoring acid grassland habitats, which include fine grasses and wildflowers that attract burrowing bees, wasps and birds such as the green woodpecker.

BOATING

The Royal Parks' boating and swimming in Hyde Park entered its second year of insourced trading. Boating continues to be popular and this year saw the introduction of a new accessible boat to help remove any barriers for enjoying a sail on the Serpentine. Boat hire in Hyde Park is open throughout the year and public swimming will resume in the Serpentine Lido next May.

SHOP

In July, The Royal Parks Shop was launched at the Boat House, providing visitors to Hyde Park with a new way to engage and support the Royal Parks charity. The sustainability-focused product range includes homewares, gardening accessories, books, prints and stationery and the shop itself is fitted out using reclaimed and repurposed materials. Spring 2024 will see the introduction of an online shop, allowing anyone to browse and purchase the unique gifts and products, as well as mobile units which will travel to the other Royal Parks.

EVENTS

In May, Hyde Park hosted public screening sites to allow the public to come together to watch the Coronation of King Charles III. Four screens on the Old Football Pitches, the Cockpit and Boat House Lawn saw jubilant crowds, undeterred by the wet weather, witness the historic occasion. Catering units, toilets and accessible viewing areas were set up to accommodate those who made the journey to Hyde Park to celebrate.

BST Hyde Park returned in 2023 for the second year of its 9-concert model, featuring a diverse range of headliners including Bruce Springsteen, PINK, Blackpink, Take That, Billy Joel, Guns N Roses and Lana Del Rey. Sandwiched between the weekends of concerts

Pink at BST Hyde Park



The world's most beautiful half marathon

was Open House, the free-to-enter event with entertainment and activities for all ages such as live music, film screenings, yoga classes and much more. BST Hyde Park will return for 3 weekends of music in June 2024, with headline acts to be announced soon.

Following a cancellation in 2022 due to the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, Swim Serpentine returned to the iconic Hyde Park Lake in September with over 4,000 competitors taking on either half a mile, a 2 mile or a 6 mile swim. In October the Royal Parks' flagship event, the Royal Parks Half Marathon took place with a new brand.

16,000 runners participated in the world's most beautiful half marathon, taking in not only Hyde Park, Green Park, St James's Park and Kensington Gardens but iconic parts of the city too, including Trafalgar Square and the Houses of Parliament. The event raised £5.3 million for over 550 charities.



In November Hyde Park Winter Wonderland returned for its 16th event in the park. 2023's event introduced a new unlimited ride package for Santaland, a new 'Norse Mythology' theme for the Magical Ice Kingdom and an enhanced Scandinavian themed market square.

London's Royal Parks have been recognised as among the best in the UK, after all of them, including Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, received Green Flag awards this year – the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

EXHIBITION ROAD CULTURAL GROUP

Susie Newbery CEO

Arriving into the summer buzz of South Kensington as I took up the role of Director of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group (ERCG) was a total joy. The museums, galleries, academic institutions and performance venues which make up this unique cultural quarter work in partnership under the banner of ERCG to promote the area and ensure it is the best possible place for the millions who visit, live, work and study here. We work collaboratively to develop and promote South Kensington as a world-class centre of learning, innovation and inspiration in the arts and sciences. Discovery is at the core of what happens here in South Kensington and we share this through our website, *discoversouthken.com*. It has been good to meet the local residents and members of the Knightsbridge Association and a pleasure to set out here the constituent parts of ERCG to inform and encourage participation.

THE V&A MUSEUM

Fashion has been the prevailing theme of the V&A's hugely popular temporary exhibitions lately. *DIVA*, which opened in June, celebrates

the power and creativity of iconic performers, exploring and redefining the role of 'diva' and how this has been subverted or embraced over time across opera, stages, popular music, and film. In September, the first UK exhibition dedicated to the work of French couturière Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel opened, charting the establishment of the House of CHANEL and the evolution of her iconic design style which continues to influence the way women dress today. In 2024, *NAOMI*, the first exhibition of its kind exploring the extraordinary career of fashion model Naomi Campbell will open in June. Through the work of leading global designers and photographers the V&A will celebrate her creative collaborations, activism and far-reaching cultural impact.

The V&A's newly opened Photography Centre is the most extensive suite of galleries in the UK dedicated to a permanent photography collection. Spanning global contemporary photography and cutting-edge commissions, to interactive displays and themed galleries showcasing the rich breadth and history of the collection, the seven galleries

of the completed Photography Centre enable visitors to experience photography and its diverse histories in new ways.

THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

The Science Museum is exploring music in the newly opened exhibition, *Turn it Up*: how music shapes our lives. This landmark interactive exhibition asks why does music have such a hold over us? What is it about music that drives us to create, perform, feel, connect with others? It comes to the museum following a critically acclaimed residency at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester.

The Museum has unveiled a fascinating new free display featuring an asteroid sample approximately the same age as our solar system. The display explores the remarkable Hayabusa2 asteroid sample return mission. Located in the Exploring Space gallery, the display gives visitors the opportunity to see a 4.6-billion-year-old grain-sized sample collected by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) from asteroid Ryugu, which is on public display in the UK for the first time. The new display explores



An exhibition of the extraordinary career of fashion model Naomi Campbell will open in June



3D printed facsimile of grain sample of asteroid Ryugu and grain sample collected by the Hayabusa2 mission
© Science Museum Group

the importance of studying asteroids and what this could tell us about the origins of life.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The Museum also holds one of the world's finest collections of meteorites. The collection contains approximately 2,000 in about 5,000 registered pieces. The Imilac Meteorite, also reckoned to be as old as the Solar System, is displayed in the Hintze Hall.

The Museum's Titanosaur exhibition has been a huge hit with families who can come face-to-face with the colossal titanosaur Patagotitan mayorum, one of the largest known creatures ever to have walked our planet. Perhaps face-to-face is inaccurate, given the dinosaur is four times heavier than Dippy the Diplodocus and 12 metres longer than Hope, the blue whale!

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition has recently opened at the Museum and is well worth a visit. Through photography, soundscapes, video and expert commentary, visitors can explore the planet's habitats, from a sprawling metropolis to the deep polar seas, and meet the creatures that rely on these places. There were around 50,000 entries this year from across 95 countries. French underwater photographer and marine biologist Laurent Ballesta was awarded Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2023 for 'The golden horseshoe', an otherworldly image of a tri-spine horseshoe crab accompanied by a trio of golden trevallies. Come for the stunning photography, stay for the inspiring stories of how we can protect the beautiful natural world those photographs capture.

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Following a successful Proms season, which saw 84 Proms featuring over 3,000 musicians from July to September, upcoming



Hope, the blue whale

highlights from the Royal Albert Hall include the return of the Mountbatten Festival of Music from 8-9 March, featuring the Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines. The Hall's ever-popular Films in Concert series includes a special screening of La La Land on 27 December, featuring the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, and in March audiences can hear Howard Shore's beautiful score for The Lord of the Rings performed live alongside the film.

CROMWELL PLACE



Janet Rady Fine Art exhibition in June: a solo presentation of paintings by contemporary British-Iraqi artist, Athier Mousawi

In September we partnered with Exhibition Road Cultural Group's newest member, Cromwell Place, to invite local residents to explore the venue, including the 14 gallery spaces that house a changing roster of exhibitions.

Split across five Grade II listed townhouses, Cromwell Place has recently refurbished its beautiful bright café bar on the first floor. It is open morning into the evening for light bites, a glass of wine and everything in between. The gallery is situated at No.4 Cromwell Place, opposite The Natural History Museum.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL

The Festival in June saw more than 55,000 visitors explore this annual celebration of science and the arts. The festival captivated attendees with a diverse range of events designed to inspire, motivate change, and ignite innovation. The weekend-long extravaganza showcased the power of awe and wonder, drawing individuals of all ages to partake in an amazing array of hands-on workshops, talks, performances and installations.

Papercraft workshop





The festival captivated attendees with a diverse range of events

Returning in 2024 on 15–16 June, the theme is “Flourishing”: a celebration of how science and the arts can help people, communities and nature to flourish.

SOUTH KEN ZEN+

Behind the scenes the Exhibition Road Cultural Group partnership is busy collaborating on an innovative response to the climate and biodiversity crisis. South Ken ZEN+, which stands for Zero Emissions Nature Positive, sees the 22 members of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group joining forces to deploy their world-leading creativity and expertise in science and the arts, to develop collective approaches to tackle the greatest challenge of our age. The South Ken ZEN+ Programme will help us all go further and faster to achieve our sustainability goals by drawing on experience from across the ERCG member network, addressing the pressing demands of climate change. Together, we will unlock critical priority areas, and share in the benefits of creating a future-proof, sustainable neighbourhood. To keep up to date with our progress you can sign up to the newsletter here: southkenzen.com

ACADEMIA, ART AND SCIENCE

Alongside record visitor numbers for Exhibition Road’s museums this year, it is good to see the academic institutions on Exhibition Road listed with top rankings for their exceptional programs in science, engineering, medicine and business, as well as for being a vibrant hub of artistic exploration and collaboration. The Royal College of Art has been ranked the No.1 university for art and design internationally for the 9th consecutive year, according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023.

The Royal College of Music has also been ranked as the global No.1 institution for performing arts. Imperial College London has risen one place to sixth in the QS World University Rankings for 2023, with an additional certificate of recognition for “internationalisation”, acknowledging the College’s global community and collaborations across the world. This follows a series of achievements for the

College over the past year, including its best-ever results in the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) and a Queen’s Anniversary Prize in recognition of pioneering work during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Royal College of Music

Imperial College (below) was named University of the Year 2022 by the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide and University of the Year for Student Experience 2022 by the Good University Guide, following last year’s highest ever student satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey.



If you want to discover more, visit our website www.discoversouthken.com where you can also sign up to our fortnightly newsletter to keep up to date with all the latest news and events in the area and get special invitations to private views. If you would like to sign up for our special events for neighbours, please email sarahb@exhibitionroad.com.

Susie Newbery, who joined ERCG as CEO this summer, has had a career in theatre communications and operations including roles at the National, RSC and Almeida Theatres

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Simon Birkett

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum's (the "Forum's") priorities in 2023 have been to comment selectively on significant planning and licensing applications, update the Knightsbridge Evidence Base Document, seek to strengthen our neighbourhood plan by responding to major planning consultations and make progress on the use of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL).

We have also commissioned a report on the impact of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) on planning decisions in the five years

since our plan was 'made' (ie. adopted) on 11 December 2018. Our most important lesson is that the KNP has been a positive influence in most of the larger planning applications that have been approved, refused, appealed or withdrawn in Knightsbridge. It is also possible that some of our biggest successes have been to discourage harmful applications from coming forward. Our encouraging findings are reinforced by the success of neighbourhood planning elsewhere in Westminster with six 'made' plans out of 17 areas and more on the way. We

expect to publish our report in early 2024.

Our priorities for neighbourhood CIL remain the restoration and improvement of heritage assets, public CCTV, attracting more nature to Knightsbridge and accelerating action towards a zero emission (and climate resilient) neighbourhood.

The second of our projects was completed in November 2023 with the unveiling of the statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in niches on the north side of the Royal Albert Hall. NCIL part-funded the lighting of the statues.

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Steve Medway CEO

Approaching the Knightsbridge Partnership's second anniversary, I look back on a challenging but rewarding year. Since that time, we've had a change of leadership in government, the beginnings of the campaign for new leadership at City Hall and a difficult economic environment.

These challenges have reaffirmed our strategy of celebrating and communicating Knightsbridge's strengths: its history, its character and the unique experiences that bring people here from the world over. We launched the Knightsbridge Edit a year ago as a shop front for all that the district has to offer. Buoyed by its popularity, our first print newspaper based on the Knightsbridge Edit has just been launched. Please contact saskia@knightsbridgepartnership.com if you would like a copy.

Yet Knightsbridge has also faced its own challenges, and in so

many ways our core principle of partnership has guided how we have made Knightsbridge a safe, clean and welcoming environment for visitors and residents alike.

While the trading environment in Knightsbridge has remained buoyant, we know that European counterparts have seen post-pandemic recovery twice that of districts like ours. A key distinction between Knightsbridge and the Champs-Élysées or the Via Corso is tax-free shopping, a measure worth hundreds of millions of pounds each year to Knightsbridge businesses. As part of a larger coalition of organisations, our calls for a return for the tax-free regime have been featured in The Times, The Telegraph, Daily Mail and Reuters in over 35 articles. In early September a treasury minister responded to a parliamentary debate on the impact of making Britain the only European country not to offer tax-free shopping to

non-EU international visitors. For the first time, the minister set out on official record the reasoning behind the Government's decision.

In terms of safety, our street team Oumar and Bilal have been a visible presence and a source of support to local people and businesses.



While the headlines of late have been dominated by rising retail crime, the groundwork we have laid in crime prevention is delivering. In 2023, the Knightsbridge Partnership Street Team has recovered £54,271 in stolen goods, and supplied case files leading to prosecutions of prolific offenders with an 80% success rate. Through our collaboration with the police, local businesses and residents, we have seen theft levels decrease across Knightsbridge by 14.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2019.

Improving places often operates on simple principles. A core focus has been on enhancing the streetscape so that the district is putting its best foot forward. In our dialogue with you, the residents, you flagged the frequent issues with commercial

waste collections and lack of street cleaning. We have since acted to unify commercial waste collection under a coordinated regime with two providers, and over the summer have brought online a new street cleaning service providing both on-request and on rota assistance. The net result is tidier streets that benefit from cleaning on a monthly rather than annual basis.

Many local businesses have found the economic environment challenging with spiralling outgoings. Our business cost reduction scheme was launched over the summer, offering free consultancy on key business expenditures such as utilities and waste collection. Over £197,000 of savings have been identified for eight businesses, saving on average £25,000 per business

and over 2/3 of these savings have already been actioned.

For us, partnership with the local residents is paramount. You are often the first to notice changes in the local environment and often those with the right suggestions to help us to put things right. By our turn, our relationships with public services and authorities give us the means to help. Our community group meetings are a vital sounding board for us and, if you can spare the time, we'd love to see you at our next one on February 8th at St Paul's Knightsbridge. In the meantime, please fill out our stakeholder survey being run by Commonplace – there's no better way to let us know your views, needs and aspirations for the place we all call home. www.knightsbridgepartnership.commonplace.is

FOOD WASTE!

...and what happens to it

Annabel Kramrisch and Katie Mountford

Education, Communications and Outreach (ECO) Officers at Veolia Westminster.

You scrape your peelings, save your apple cores, and tip your coffee grounds and tea bags into your silver kitchen caddy. But once you tie up your food waste liner and put it in your outdoor bin, where does it go?

As the waste management partner of Westminster City Council, Veolia has been collecting waste in Knightsbridge for almost 30 years. A lot has changed since then, as society has shifted from a one-way model of waste collection and disposal to a circular economy based on waste reduction, reuse, recycling and energy recovery.

As part of its plan for a zero-carbon Westminster by 2030,



and following a successful trial in 2019, Westminster City Council in partnership with Veolia expanded the food waste recycling service for residents across the City in 2022. Since then, over 2,150 tonnes of food waste has been collected.

Around 4,000 residential properties in Knightsbridge are able to recycle food waste. Most properties use the kerbside food waste bins, and present their waste for collection on a nominated week day. Some apartments have a communal food waste bin, and certain properties without any bin storage area for their

property can drop their food waste off in neighbourhood bins. Please head to westminster.echoweb.co.uk/property to check your property's service type and request a kitchen bin if you don't already have one.

While participation in the food waste recycling service across Westminster is rising, there's always room to improve. Food waste currently makes up around 30% of waste disposed of in general household rubbish, so disposing of it correctly makes a huge difference to your environmental impact. In Knightsbridge alone, use of the food waste service has raised the overall recycling rate by around 2% since it was introduced last year.

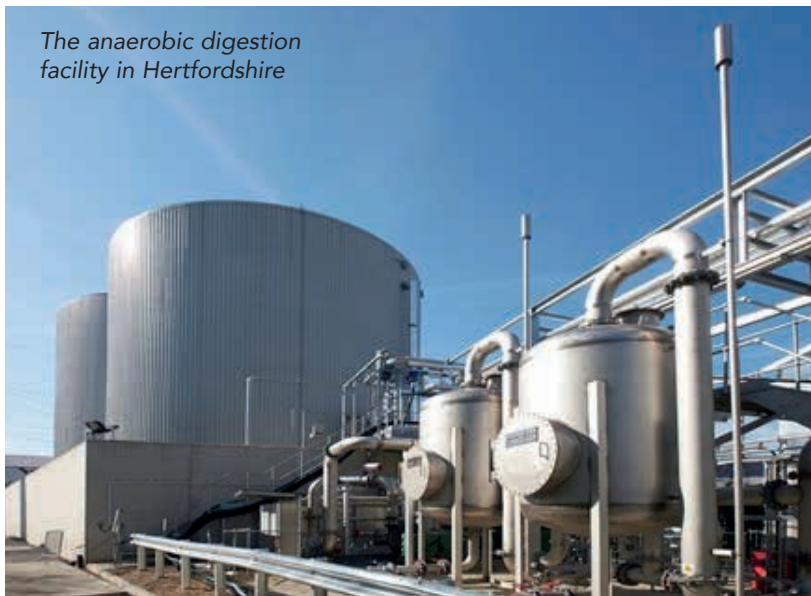
Among the concerns Veolia hears most often from residents on the doorstep is that they don't want to put out their food waste without knowing where it's going, and what will happen to it. People often ask why they can't put garden waste in their food waste bin, and if the food waste is being composted.

In fact, food waste in Westminster is recycled via a process called anaerobic digestion, rather than being composted. Where composting isn't suitable for food waste such as bones or offcuts, anaerobic digestion can break down all food waste into pesticide-free biofertiliser, and gas used to generate electricity.

This article will take you through the process of anaerobic digestion, and explain exactly what happens to Westminster's food waste.

After food waste is placed out for collection, it's picked up by one of Veolia's operatives, often in one of Veolia Westminster's 85 electric collection vehicles. They transport it to the Veolia depot in Alperton, where food waste from across Westminster is collated.

From there, it's taken to an anaerobic digestion facility in Hertfordshire run by Biogen, the UK's largest anaerobic digestion operator. This facility processes 65,000 tonnes of food waste from across the UK each year.



The anaerobic digestion facility in Hertfordshire

When food waste arrives at the facility, a visual inspection is performed. Any contaminants such as wood and metal are removed, and the waste is fed into a 'hammermill' that shreds the organic material and removes the plastic liners.

The used liners are sent to an energy recovery facility (ERF), where they are used to generate electricity. The food waste recycling service currently uses 100% recycled clear plastic liners, which enable Veolia operatives to collect food waste hygienically and check for contamination.

Additionally, plastic liners are more durable than compostable ones, and neither form is suitable for the anaerobic digestion process. However, Westminster City Council in partnership with Veolia is constantly looking to improve the environmental impact of its services, and regularly assesses the suppliers it uses to ensure that they're the most practical and eco-friendly option.

At this stage, the waste resembles a thick soup, and is easy to pump around the facility. It is pumped into a raw waste buffer tank where it is held until it is fed into a digester, gradually, in small quantities.

Anaerobic digesters work almost like mechanical cows' stomachs - hundreds of bacterial species break down the food in a process which produces biogas, or methane.

This is sent to a combined heat and power facility, where it is converted into electricity and fed back into the National Grid. The Biogen facility which processes food waste from Westminster generates 3 megaWatt hours of electricity per year, enough to power 5,200 homes.

The digested food waste, referred to as digestate, is then pasteurised.

Pasteurisation involves heating the digestate to 70 degrees Celsius for an hour to kill any harmful bacteria, using excess heat from the digestion process.

The pasteurised digestate is passed through a fine filter to remove any physical contaminants. After being filtered, it is suitable to be used on the land as a food grade biofertilizer.

Across the UK, Biogen produces 500,000m³ of biofertilizer a year, which is spread over 60,000 acres of farmland within a 20-mile radius of each of its sites. So keep putting your peelings in your kitchen bin - the next time you head to the farmers' market on a Saturday morning, you could be buying produce grown using your own food waste!

Around 84% of properties in Westminster currently have access to the food waste recycling service, with a target of 100% by March 2024. If you have any questions about the new food waste recycling service, please email the recycling team on foodwaste@westminster.gov.uk

If you use the food waste recycling service and require more plastic liners, you can pick them up from your local library for free. Alternatively, please contact the recycling team via foodwaste@westminster.gov.uk or phone the call centre on 020 7641 2000 to request another roll of liners. Please provide your full address, including flat number (if applicable) and full postcode

KNIGHTSBRIDGE'S APPEAL PREVAILS

despite challenging market

Nicolas Pejacsevich, director Nicolas Van Patrick.

Since setting up Nicolas Van Patrick nearly a decade ago, we have only ever known challenging markets but 2023 has taken this to a new level. The housing market is very different to what it was back in January, with consecutive interest rate rises affecting all walks of life, resulting in a needs-based market with few sales transactions although the lettings market remains buoyant. The impending general election is also starting to feature in conversations with clients, with many buyers and sellers preferring to adopt a 'wait and see' mentality if there is no pressing need to move.

Yet while these are difficult times and the market is undoubtedly challenging, Knightsbridge's appeal remains strong. As a boutique agency in the same location on Montpelier Street where Hobart Slater was based for decades before we acquired it, it is unlikely



to be surprising that we believe in Knightsbridge. While the market is unlikely to gain much traction until the outcome of the election is known, the attractions of the area are many and varied, particularly its famed retail offering, restaurants, and the park. When I walk around Knightsbridge Village on the way to meet a client, I am always taken by the beauty of Rutland Gate or Ennismore Gardens, and the hidden oasis behind the Brompton Oratory, to my mind one of the area's best kept secrets.

Given current market conditions, considered advice from an experienced local agent is vital. We pride ourselves on getting the most value for our clients in a sale but at the same time we understand the realities of the market and what needs to be done to achieve a successful transaction. In some instances, we are not afraid to advise clients not to sell; if you don't have to, why not sit tight?

On a more positive note, we have been excited to welcome new families into Knightsbridge Village this year, who have bought houses to live in, not as investments. While we haven't done as many sales as we would have liked, the majority of those who have transacted have been people looking for a home. Although there may be further short-term challenges to come, this bodes well for the future of Knightsbridge.

AN INTERVIEW WITH BETTINA KOREK

CEO of the Serpentine Galleries

Can you tell us about this year's pavilion?

This year, we are honoured to present Lina Ghotmeh's first structure in the UK, *À table*. Drawing on natural elements that reflect its local surroundings, Ghotmeh's design promotes unity and conviviality in its form and function. Like all our programmes, *À table* is open to all, and our hub for free programming in the park. It also pays homage to the original function of Serpentine South as a tea house, built in the 1930s by James Grey West before being converted into a gallery in 1970.



Considering food as an expression of care, the Pavilion's design is a space for grounding and reflection on our relationship to land, nature

and environment. By offering a moment of conviviality around a table, Ghotmeh welcomes us to share the ideas, concerns, joys, dissatisfactions, responsibilities, traditions, cultural memories, and histories that bring us together.

How did the commission begin?

When the Pavilion began in 2000, all participants were major international architects who had yet to build on British soil. In the second decade of the programme, its success, and the generous support of our collaborators like Goldman Sachs — supporting

the annual project for the 9th consecutive year this year — led by Julie Burnell, with Stage One, AECOM, David Glover and others enabled the commission to be extended to up and coming architects. In doing so, the commission has become a career defining catalyst for the world's most visionary rising architects. Now we can invite promising architects to submit proposals which drive the selection process for the commission.

Francis Kéré went on to receive the Pritzker Prize in 2022.

Many of the Pavilions reach back to this original use of the Serpentine South Gallery as a tea house, which is in a sense where the institution began—as a place for convening people in the park to reflect on conversations and ideas. Our commitment to utilizing the Pavilion throughout the summer as a hub for our live programmes and other events, such as Park Nights, express how Serpentine

How did Zaha Hadid inspire the commission?



When Serpentine was developing the concept with the first Pavilion architect, the late Dame Zaha Hadid (above), she and then director Dame Julia Peyton-Jones had an ambition to show architecture in a way that was more interesting than displaying drawings and models. This led to the decision to break ground and build. Zaha Hadid said “there’s no end to experimentation” and this credo has remained central to Serpentine’s programme. She was an inspiration on so many levels, and she led the path for other women architects, too. It’s also important to note the representation of female architects over the years of the commission. Before Lina Ghotmeh, Sumayya Vally designed the 2021 Pavilion connecting visitors to the stories and sounds of lost spaces



We look to architects who employ interdisciplinary practices that reflect Serpentine’s own artistic programme. We solicit proposals from those who are tackling timely themes and challenges with their work, from methods of bringing people together in real space, to matters of sustainability and the environment.

has evolved into an institution that presents art beyond the walls of the museum, and extends our reach into the park that serves as a natural gathering place for so many Londoners and visitors year-round.

How does the Serpentine Pavilion relate to the rest of the institution’s programme?

The pavilion is a monument to how Serpentine works across and between different creative disciplines is possible on a grand scale, and how spaces for art are an integral space for this kind of ambitious experimentation. Just like a solo exhibition for an artist at Serpentine, the Pavilion commission has a profound effect on the career of an architect. For example, just five years later, the 2017 Serpentine Pavilion architect



across London. Frida Escobedo designed the 2018 Pavilion and has recently been selected to realize the renovation of The Met's modern and contemporary galleries demonstrating again the significance of the Serpentine commission for architects' careers, and Kazuyo Sejima of SANAA designed the 2009 Pavilion with Ryue Nishizawa.

How do you reflect on the history of the Pavilion?

Each Pavilion has been strikingly different, and from year to year the changes have not progressed in a linear fashion. The 2006 pavilion by Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond stands out for it was the first to feature a circular design, and whose inflatable canopy constituted a mechanical architecture that changed with the weather. Nature has grown to an important throughline of the Pavilion, as concern for the environment has taken greater priority across culture. Rem's structure was also utilised as a content machine as the site for our first Marathon—the Interview Marathon. Frank Gehry in 2008 worked with wood in a turn towards natural materials that reflect the surrounding context of the park, and this continued with Smiljan Radic in 2014 whose fiberglass structure resembled a cocoon perched atop a foundation of massive boulders. Several architects have experimented with designing structures without walls, as in the case of SANAA in 2009, Ai Weiwei and Herzog and De Meuron in 2012—this was also to some extent present in Sou Fujimoto's 2013 Pavilion nicknamed "The Cloud," whose grid of translucent white boxes defines an enveloping space which is nevertheless visible to and from the outside world.

What is the goal of the Pavilion in a globalised world?

A goal of the Pavilion is to enable rising architects to innovate and experiment in the context of a park in the heart of London. Whether as a destination or by happenstance,

thousands of visitors come to the Pavilion each year, which brings it to life. It's essential to continue to maintain a diverse programme around initiative—both in terms of the commissioned architects and the many events and performances that take place there each year—because without a wide variety of perspectives, cultural experiences, and approaches to architecture, how could we leverage our present moment to produce innovation? While the Pavilion is now a mainstay of Serpentine's calendar, which so many look forward to each year, it is also completely new again and again. For instance, in 2018, Serpentine and WF CENTRAL (Beijing) launched a new temporary architecture Pavilion, designed by JIAKUN Architects, at the WF CENTRAL development in Beijing. It brought the commission to new audiences and expanded the model in new and engaging ways.

Is there a city that you especially pay attention to and how does it compare to London's cultural scene?

My hometown of Los Angeles will always continue to hold my attention. I am very interested in the links between Los Angeles and London and while Serpentine deepens local roots, our reach will continue to spread globally. Some of the most compelling qualities of LA as a city are intrepid innovation, fluidity across disciplines, and an irrepressible preoccupation with the future. Both cities are incredibly innovative, diverse, cross-pollinating, and risk-taking, and both have amazing entrepreneurial qualities. Both are national hubs for entertainment industries, and entertainment and art are naturally symbiotic fields—two interrelated layers of the culture industry that contribute to the overall richness of the city's landscape.

You mentioned the live programme staged in the Pavilion. Can you give us more details please?

The Pavilion doubles as the hub for Serpentine's Summer programme, Park Nights, our annual series

of experimental, interdisciplinary encounters. Rising practitioners in the fields of art, architecture, music, film, philosophy and technology are commissioned to create new, site-specific work in response to each year's structure. From The Living and The Dead Ensemble, a group of artists, performers, and poets from Haiti, France and the United Kingdom, presenting a performance installation that reweaves a fragmented geography and asks if there is a possible future beyond the repetition of all kinds of catastrophes, to DJ sets and a performance and installation exploring ritual, dance and celebration in both Afro-Brazilian and Western cultures by Brazilian-born visual artist, writer and psychologist Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Park Nights is an eclectic, cutting edge series that platforms up and coming creators in the park at the height of London's exciting summer season.

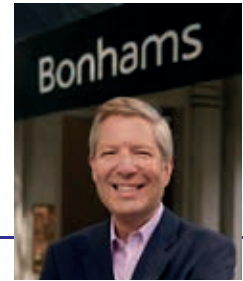
Last question – how do you find harmony in the programme?

We are a museum in the park, and the Pavilion reminds us of this. While all of Serpentine's exhibitions and programmes are also open to the public and free of charge, the Pavilion is an especially permeable cultural attraction. Unlike a gallery space, there is no threshold separating the Pavilion from the park, and all throughout the summer visitors wander in and out of the space. This kind of inclusivity and spontaneity catalyses what is special about Serpentine's programme. Just like our exhibition programme, the Pavilion is a unique, artist-led experience that could only take place here at Serpentine.

2024 will be an exciting year, we'll be presenting a solo exhibition of historic and recent works by American artist Barbara Kruger. The exhibition will feature a unique selection of works including site-specific installations covering the walls and floor of the gallery spaces, a selection of moving image works and multiple soundscapes. It will be the artist's first institutional show in London in over 20 years, following the presentation at South London Gallery in 2001.

A BRIEF HISTORY of BONHAMS KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Matthew Haley, Managing Director, Bonhams Knightsbridge



Just before 10am on 24 September 1940, Savile Row in London's Mayfair was bombed for the second time in eight days. Bonhams, which in those days was headquartered at 14 New Burlington Street, was not hit directly, but the street was blocked by debris, the local water mains burst and there was no electricity.

Fortunately, the auction house had acquired a second premises in 1935 at 19 Whitfield Street, north of Oxford Street in Fitzrovia, to which it was able to move and



continue trading. Ten days later, it too was bombed. "Everything went up in black smoke," says Nicholas Bonham, the last of the Bonham family to work for the company. "All the records. All the history. Everything."

Until the war, Bonhams, which had been in business since 1793 and had had a Bonham in charge since the 1850s, had been run by Nicholas's father, Leonard Bonham, who was at the time "serving in North Africa. But he was allowed to come back to the UK to sort things out,"



Leonard Bonham (left) and Helen Maddick (right)

recalls his son, whereupon he rented a building opposite the Hyde Park Barracks on Knightsbridge, and soon it was holding sales again.

"You couldn't get hold of carpets because all the factories had been repurposed for the war effort," recalls Nicholas. "So if you wanted to buy one, you had to get it at auction. They used to lie them in a pile, with lot number one at

the top, and as they were sold, they'd be rolled up and taken away, and there was the next lot underneath." Bonhams had consequently thrived throughout the war, selling furniture and soft furnishings too.

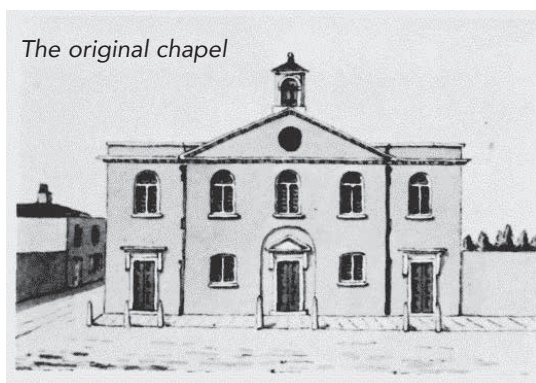
In Leonard's absence, the company had been run by his sister, Helen Maddick, one of the



first female auctioneers in the UK, and their father, Charlie – though by then his eyesight was too poor

for him to be able to identify bidders at the back of the room. Bonhams remained on Knightsbridge until the mid-1950s, "When first thing one morning, Dad walked down to Harrods to borrow a book from the 'lending' library it had in those days." On getting back to his office, he realised he'd read it, so back he went to return it. "It can't have been more than about half an hour later, but in the meantime someone had put up a for-sale notice in Montpelier Street, on the corner of Cheval Place."

At that time the site was occupied by a handsome but



The original chapel

no-longer-functioning neoclassical chapel, consecrated in 1769 and dedicated to St John. It had a fine façade but had long struggled to find parishioners. In February 1884, for example, Henry Crosswell, a clerk and Sunday school teacher attended evensong there, an experience he described in his diary as "too decent, dull and respectable", with a congregation consisting only of "Ten little girls, six young women and four young men in the choir stalls. Curious so few. All decent poor." The organ, he judged, was "small and very ordinary".

The site struck Leonard as perfect. "He jumped in a cab, went straight to his bank, drew out some money and went over to the estate agents and put a deposit down on it," says his son. The exact price paid is no longer

known, "But a few thousand pounds – maybe £5,000 – for the whole site," estimates his son.

Although the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1944 and 1947 had established the principle of listing buildings deemed to be of special architectural or historical interest, the chapel had not been listed, and the presence of deathwatch beetle in its timbers meant it wasn't a candidate for conservation.

Even so, "It took a long time to get planning permission." And Westminster Council made it a condition that the windows in the new building be positioned as they had been on the chapel. "That's one of the reasons it looks as it does, and why you see the staircase going up past the window," says Nicholas. "They also didn't want us to take down the whole church," he adds, so the part at the back, bordering Relton Mews, was amalgamated into the new design, a section that became known as the Annex, which now houses Bonhams' books department. At the top of it was a small flat, where Leonard,



Nick Bonham

who commuted each day from Berkshire – and in principle the other directors – could stay if they needed to overnight in London.

The first sale was held in June 1956. "I can remember going to the opening," recalls Nicholas. "I was almost eight. I remember playing in the lift with my brother, going up and down. I'd never been in a lift before." A decade later he was working there. "I joined pretty much straight from school, starting in the picture department as a gofer. They sent me off to learn how to touch



Eve Bonham

type – I can still type at 40-50 words a minute – because in those days you had to type up the advice sheets, the results sheets and accounts sheets, all the envelopes. They all had to be typed up separately. Fifty per cent of my time was typing.” And the rest of his time? “I didn’t do any portering, but I did everything else.

“After a couple of years, I started cataloguing for our Chelsea galleries,” which the company had bought in 1958. “They were the secondary rooms in Lots Road for lots that weren’t of good enough quality to sell in Knightsbridge. There was a furniture sale every Tuesday, and a picture sale once a fortnight. That kept the standard up in Knightsbridge. We didn’t want to sell Edwardian furniture or more recent stuff in Knightsbridge when the dealers in Knightsbridge and Chelsea wanted Georgian pieces. And all the pictures under about £50 went down there too, though even that was quite a lot for picture then.”

By the time he was 28, Nicholas Bonham was the senior auctioneer and his sister, Eve, had joined the firm, working both as an auctioneer, as well as looking after advertising and PR. And their brother Toby “dipped in and out of the auction business” too.

Of course, not everything had been plain sailing. Within a year or two of its opening, Westminster Council slapped a compulsory purchase order on the new building. “They were very sorry, they said, but that particular area needed a fire station, and that’s where they’d decided to build it,” says Nicholas. “My father spent two or three years fighting that

case. It was for that reason that he started the Knightsbridge Association. He got together all the residents of note – a lot of posh people and legal eagles – and they used to meet at Bonhams. And they managed to quash it.”

Nicholas Bonham, who became chairman and managing director, went on to build the company’s specialist teams, including the Valuations Department headed by Knightsbridge long-term resident Diddi Malek. Nicholas was the last member of the family to work for the company in 2000 when it was acquired by Brooks, which had been founded in 1989 by Robert Brooks, a former director of Christie’s. A year later Bonhams & Brooks, as it had become, merged with Phillips Son & Neale to form a new company, named Bonhams, and its headquarters shifted to what had been the Phillips saleroom at 101 Bond Street, where it remains.

The following year it acquired the west-coast US auction house Butterfields and began to expand internationally, and by 2003, it had more than 600 staff and was holding 700 sales a year. But the following year, after 38 years with the company during which the business had changed almost beyond recognition, Nicholas resigned from the board. And though the

Bonham family continue to own the Knightsbridge premises, they are no longer connected with its operation.

“For the first years I worked at Bonhams, I never saw an item go for more than £1,000,” he recalls. “In those days we were very pleased if we sold something for £500.” Last year, in contrast, the most expensive lot it sold was a 1955 Porsche for \$4.185 million, one of 33 items (out of a total of 317,042) that sold for more than \$1m apiece, driving the company to total revenues of \$1 billion.

The Knightsbridge saleroom still holds about 80 auctions a year taking in some 18,000 lots, and if the really big-ticket items don’t tend to be sold there, it nevertheless sees some of the more recherché ones: an Hermès Birkin handbag that actually belonged to Jane Birkin (£119,000), for example; a sledge used on Shackleton’s 1907 Antarctic Expedition (£143,750); a sword presented by George III to the captain of HMS Defiance in recognition of his “meritorious services” at the Battle of Trafalgar (£150,250); various documents from the early 1960s relating to John Lennon’s application for residency in Hamburg in order to play at the Star Club (£137,750).

Indeed its sales now embrace an extraordinary diversity of luxury and collectables, from arms, armour and antique firearms to books, vintage travel posters and wristwatches, by way of rock, pop and film memorabilia. But, just as it was when it moved to Montpelier Street, it remains a treasure trove of fine art and furniture too. You may even, on occasion, find carpets.

*Shackleton’s 1907 sledge
sold for £143,750*



MONUMENTS, STATUES and MEMORIALS of HYDE PARK (South)

Nigel Cox

This article provides a short account of the main statues, monuments and memorials in the southern part of Hyde Park. It is set out in the order that they might be encountered during a walk through the park, starting at Hyde Park Corner. (We hope to include an article on the Park's other monuments in next year's review. Kensington Gardens were covered in the Annual Review of 2019.)

APSLEY GATE



Enter Hyde Park near the north entrance to the Hyde Park Corner Underground station, through the great stone gateway, Apsley Gate.

This classical screen stands just west of Apsley House, the 1st Duke of Wellington's London house from 1817 to his death in 1852. It is the finest entrance to the Park, part of a programme of improvements undertaken by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests from 1823. It was designed by Decimus Burton,

then just 25, and built between 1826 and 1829. The friezes by John Henning were copied from those brought from the Parthenon in Athens to the British Museum – the Elgin Marbles.

Burton also designed the lodge house on the west side, now a pleasant café, and Wellington Arch, which originally stood directly across from the gateway on the other side of Piccadilly but which in 1883, to improve traffic circulation,

was moved to its present position in the centre of the Hyde Park Corner roundabout.

Now turn left and walk westwards along South Carriage Drive. Just past the café is a kiosk sometimes manned by volunteers from the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens or the Friends of the Royal Parks.

A little way along, on the north side of South Carriage Drive (and south-west of a plaque on the railings of

Rotten Row recalling its history as King William III's road from Whitehall to Kensington Palace), is the Horse Guards Memorial.

HORSE GUARDS MEMORIAL

This simple slate plaque, backed by a low hedge and fronted by low fencing, commemorates the four soldiers and seven horses



killed here on 20 July 1982, when an IRA car bomb was detonated as The Queen's Life Guard, formed that day from The Blues and Royals, walked along the road towards Horse Guards Parade for the morning guard change. Several other soldiers and horses were badly injured, as were passing civilians. One horse, Sefton, won public attention by his near miraculous recovery from his wounds. On the same morning another IRA bomb in Regent's Park took the lives of seven other soldiers, members of the Royal Green Jackets.

An appeal for a relief fund for victims and their families received much local support, including a contribution from the Knightsbridge Association.

In October 1987, Gilbert "Danny" McNamee was convicted of making the Hyde

Park bomb and jailed for 25 years. However he served only 12 years before being released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. In 2013, John Downey was also charged with murder in relation to the atrocity, but his trial collapsed on a technicality.

Today, whenever the Household Cavalry pass the spot, they pay their respects by bringing their

swords down from the slope to the carry and turning "eyes left" or "eyes right". Marching bands cease playing as they approach, only resuming once they have passed.

Continue west along South Carriage Drive to Albert Gate, on the south side of the road.

ALBERT GATE STAGS

The stags on the gate piers, a reminder that Hyde Park was formerly a Royal hunting ground, were originally on the vanished Ranger's House in Green Park, brought here when Thomas Cubitt built Albert Gate in the 1840s, together with the two tall houses beyond, now occupied by the French and Kuwaiti Embassies. They were originally considered absurdly tall and unlettable: they were dubbed "Scylla and Charybdis".



On the north side of the road to the right of the track and past the Santander bicycle stand is a horses' drinking trough, which originally stood on Victoria Embankment, but which was presented to the Household Cavalry in 1985 in memory of the horses killed and injured in 1982.

Opposite the trough by the railings (below a tulip tree, which usually flowers in late-May) are two low stone markers, showing the historic boundary between the parishes of St Margaret's, Westminster (SMW) and St George's, Hanover Square (SGHS).

Continue a few yards west to the Mountbatten Copse.

MOUNTBATTEN COPSE

A plaque records that the flowering trees were planted by The Prince of Wales (now King Charles) in 1981, two years after the murder by IRA terrorists of Earl Mountbatten of Burma (1900-1979). The Copse and plaque seem to have been funded by the Royal Thames Yacht Club on Knightsbridge, whose modern building overlooks the Park at this point. The Prince of Wales, like Mountbatten before him, was Commodore of the Club.

Continue a little way west, past the gardens of the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel to the gardens of the One Hyde Park apartments.

SEARCH FOR ENLIGHTENMENT



Here is a recent statue, showing two hollowed-out heads and mysteriously named "Search for Enlightenment" (Some have thought "Mindlessness" might be a better title.) The sculptor was Simon Gudgeon (who was also responsible for the Isis/Ibis statue by the Serpentine, mentioned below). The statue was installed in 2012 (apparently after a period on display near Tate Britain) to mark the first anniversary of One Hyde Park. A smaller version was given to the late Duke of Edinburgh to mark his 90th birthday. His reaction is not recorded.

Continue west to the next gate, Edinburgh Gate.

This was originally created, a little further west, in 1958 as part of an office development called Bowater House development. Bowater House was demolished in 2006 and the Gate moved as part of the new One Hyde Park apartment building. It includes a canopy over the road leading from South Carriage Drive to Knightsbridge. Here is the Rush of Green statue.

RUSH OF GREEN STATUE

This statue was first erected in 1961, at the Gate's original site. It was designed by Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) shortly before his death. (Almost forty years earlier Epstein had designed the Hudson Memorial, mentioned below.)

It shows an unclothed family and their dog rushing eagerly from the city into the park, urged on



by a pipe-paying Pan in a sort of Bacchic rout. Some have praised its "almost reckless sense of energy", but it put the writer Ian Nairn in mind of "an incestuous family fleeing into Hyde Park from the Vice Squad".

From here one can head straight north for the Serpentine footbridge and the other monuments listed further below.

Alternatively first make a westerly loop. Continue west, passing Park Close on the south of the road; the children's playground and riding ring to the north; then on the south the gate to Hyde Park Barracks or Knightsbridge Barracks

The pediment over the gate, sculpted by Thomas Earp, was recycled from the 1870s' barracks. The wall plaques are the British Horse Society's Equestrian Hall of Fame, launched in 2005.

Continue west past the wicket (pedestrian) gate at Rutland Gate; and Prince of Wales Gate. Just after them, set into the path at the edge of the playing fields, is a plaque commemorating the Great Exhibition of 1851.

GREAT EXHIBITION PLAQUE



The plaque was erected in 2011 by the 1851 Exhibition Committee to mark the site of the entrance to the Crystal Palace, where the Great Exhibition was held in 1851. Four other plaques in the pavements mark the corners of the Palace, which measured 1848 feet by 108. After the Exhibition it was moved to Sydenham in south London, but it burnt down in 1936.

Another nearby reminder of the Exhibition are the cast iron Coalbrookdale Gates gates made for its entrance from Rotten Row, which were moved in 1871 to the other side of West Carriage Drive as an entrance to Albert Memorial Road (which originally formed part of Hyde Park). Prince Albert had been a great champion of the Exhibition. The gates were damaged by a bomb during the Second World War.

From here walk north across the grass (or take a slightly less direct route by the paths) to the Diana Memorial Fountain.

DIANA MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

On 6 July 2004 Queen Elizabeth II opened this unusual memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997), mother of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex.

The fountain contains 545 pieces of Cornish granite - each shaped by computer-controlled machinery and pieced together using traditional skills. The design aims to reflect Diana's life: water flows from the highest point in two directions, cascading, swirling and bubbling before meeting in a calm pool at the bottom. The water, drawn from London's water table, is constantly refreshed. The Memorial also aims to symbolise Diana's "quality and openness".

The Fountain had a difficult start with plumbing problems, some injuries of children climbing and the rapid erosion of the grass surrounding it. However repairs were successful and the immediately surrounding grass was replaced with a hard surface.

Just northwest of the Diana Memorial Fountain, near the Serpentine, is a large bronze sculpture

SERENITY



The sculpture represents the Egyptian goddess of motherhood, Isis, who could take the form of a bird (apparently here an ibis). It was designed by Simon Gudgeon and installed in 2009, the first new stone sculpture in Hyde Park for 50

years. It was donated by the Halcyon Gallery to help raise funds for the Park's "LookOut" educational centre. At the base of the sculpture are 1,000 plaques, dedicated to supporters of the appeal.

Now walk eastwards beside the Serpentine to the Lido Pavilion Café, whose outside wall carries two Memorial Plaques.

JO COOPER MEMORIAL

This 1931 plaque, on the wall between the Café doors, commemorates Captain Jack Cooper, of the Royal Flying Corps, who was killed in 1916 during the First World War at the age of 20. His father, Mr D'Arcy Cooper, paid for the construction of the Lido as a tribute to him.

LANSBURY MEMORIAL PLAQUE

This plaque further east was unveiled in 1953 by Clement Attlee, Labour Prime Minister from 1945-1951. It commemorates another Labour Party politician, George Lansbury (1859-1940), who established the Lido in 1930 when First Commissioner of Works. Men had long bathed in the Serpentine, but the Lido met the Sunlight League's request for facilities for mixed bathing and sun-bathing.

Continue eastwards along the Serpentine. This walk along the Serpentine is part of the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Walk.

DIANA PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL WALK

One of the 90 plaques marking the Walk is set into the path. The Walk extends seven miles, through Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, The Green Park and St James's Park. The aluminium plaques are by the sculptor, Alec Peever. Like the Memorial Playground in Kensington Gardens it opened on 30 June 2000, the day before Diana would have been 39. The Walk aims to celebrate her affection for the open spaces by her former home at Kensington Palace.

Continue to the footbridge and turn left over it. A little way along on the left, overlooking the Serpentine, is the Queen Caroline Memorial.

QUEEN CAROLINE MEMORIAL



This plinth-mounted urn was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II in 1990 to commemorate the wife of King George II, for whom the Serpentine in Hyde Park and Long Water in Kensington Gardens were created from the old Westbourne stream between 1726 and 1730. When Queen Caroline died in 1727 the King was embarrassed to discover that the huge costs of landscaping Kensington Gardens and the Serpentine had come from the Government rather than her private funds.

The urn was damaged by vandals a few years ago but then restored.

Continue over the bridge. Near its end, on the right-hand side, is a pillar with a plaque commemorating the Abbey Spring.

ABBEY SPRING MONUMENT

The pillar was erected in 1868 or 1870. The plaque (right) records



that Westminster Abbey long enjoyed the rights to a supply of water from a spring at this point. A second plaque, on the rear of the pillar, has disappeared in recent years; it recorded that a conduit house stood here until the spring was cut off by drainage in 1861 (linked to the building of the section of the Metropolitan Line underground from Knightsbridge to Hyde Park Corner).

Now turn right onto Serpentine Road, then take the first path down to the right. The fenced-in Dell lies to the right (west) (it contains a magnificent magnolia tree, in bloom in late-March, as well as a huge Cornish granite stone, all

that remains of a drinking fountain installed in 1862). To the east of the path, just past a turning to the left, is the Holocaust Memorial.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

This, Britain's first memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, is a quiet garden of boulders surrounded by silver birch trees. It was constructed in 1983 for the Board of British Jews. The design was by Richard Seifert and Derek Lovejoy and Partners. The largest boulder is inscribed with a text from the Book of Lamentations:

"For these I weep. Streams of tears flow from my eyes because of the destruction of my people."

The birches include some unusual varieties, including Swedish, Chinese or Himalayan (red barked), Korean (costata), river and monarch birch.

A larger Holocaust memorial is now planned beside the Palace of Westminster.

Take the path to the north of this memorial eastwards into the Rose Garden. Towards the eastern end, past a fine Chinese Mahogany tree (*toona sinensis*), with a circular bench around it, is the Huntress Fountain.



THE HUNTRESS FOUNTAIN

The fountain was installed in 1906 in the former Grass Garden, a little distance back from the present site, to which it was relocated following restoration in 1966. It shows a bronze figure of Diana, the goddess of hunting, shooting an arrow.

The statue is the work of Countess Feodora Gleichen, the first woman member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. (This is the only work by a woman sculptor in Hyde Park; Kensington Gardens has Princess Louise's statue of Queen Victoria.)

The statue was donated by Sir Walter and Lady Palmer, for whose garden it was originally constructed. Sir Walter (1858-1910) was a biscuit manufacturer (Huntley & Palmer) and Member of Parliament.

The fountain was restored earlier this year [2023]

Further east in the Rose Garden, at the centre of a circle of rose trees, is the Boy and Dolphin Fountain.

BOY AND DOLPHIN FOUNTAIN

This fountain was made in 1860 by the pre-Raphaelite sculptor Alexander Munro (1825-1871). A plaque on the railings nearby, put up in 2005, tells how the artist's model for the boy was the son of a friend, and, while he was sitting for the sculpture, another friend, Charles Dodgson, asked the long-haired boy if he would not like his own head to be exchanged for a marble one, obviating tedious hair-combing etc. Two years later Dodgson took his taste for nonsense further, starting to write the book that would be published in 1865 as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* under the pen-name, Lewis Carroll. (The model for the dolphin is not known.)

The fountain originally stood on the east side of Hyde Park, in a Victorian sunken garden which was demolished when Park Lane was widened in 1960. (This is now the site of the Joy of Life fountain mentioned below.) After a period in The Regent's Park, the fountain was moved here in 1995.

Now turn north and up to Serpentine Road, where, on the north side stands another cavalry memorial.

CAVALRY MEMORIAL

This Memorial shows England's patron saint, Saint George, slaying the dragon. It was erected in 1924, by the cavalry regiments of the British Empire, dedicated to their thousands of members killed in the First World War. It was later also dedicated to those who fell in the Second World War and on active service thereafter.

The architect was Sir John James Burnet and the sculptor Captain Adrian Jones, a former army veterinary surgeon. (Jones' other work includes the fine 1912 quadriga on top of Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner. This had been empty since the removal in 1883 of a giant equestrian figure of the Duke of Wellington which had stood there from 1846 and is now at Aldershot.)

The bronze statue was cast from enemy guns captured by the cavalry during the War. The horse is based on an engraving by Albrecht Durer. The dragon, representing tyranny, has upturned moustaches like those worn by the Kaiser and German officers. St George's armour is partly based on a bronze effigy of 1454. A frieze around the base shows horsemen parading in a variety of uniforms (and in what some cavalymen considered an unrealistic and unmilitary formation).

The Cavalry Memorial originally stood near Stanhope Gate by the eastern railings of Hyde Park, opposite today's Dorchester Hotel. It was moved to its present site in 1961 when Park Lane was widened to the west, absorbing the former East Carriage Drive for the northbound carriageway. A Portland stone classical backdrop which previously stood behind the Memorial, screening it from the road, was not reinstated. It had carried a bronze plaque, listing the 150 cavalry units of the British Empire, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India, which served in the War and the names of four British cavalymen who were made Field Marshals. The plaque now sits on a granite screen behind the Memorial.





QUEEN MOTHER MEMORIAL GATES

These highly decorated stainless steel gates commemorate the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (1900-2002). They were unveiled by her daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, in 1993. The work was funded by public subscription.

The central screen, designed by David Wynne, unites the lion of England with the unicorn of Scotland. The gates were designed by Giuseppe Lund to be "feminine and fresh with the charm of an English garden". However *Crafts* magazine described the gates as: "appalling ... a music hall joke, a pantomime dame and a seaside postcard rolled in to one. Vulgar, ugly, philistine and decadent, they are an appropriate embellishment of a country in decline".

The then arts minister, Lord St John of Fawsley (formerly Norman St John Stevas), countered that they were:

"full of joy, strength and courage, like the personage in whose honour they have been created".

As well as Remembrance Sunday commemorations, an annual service takes place here on the second Sunday in May – Cavalry Sunday – when the Combined Cavalry Old Comrades' Association – retired members of cavalry regiments – parade wearing bowler hats (also known as Coke hats) and with tightly furred umbrellas.

BANDSTAND

Although not a Monument or Memorial, the Bandstand, (see p.13), by the Cavalry Memorial, deserves mention as one of the oldest in Britain. It was built in 1869 for Kensington Gardens, but was moved here in 1886. At one time band concerts were held here three times a week. Queen Victoria had given permission in 1855 for concerts to be held in Kensington Gardens, but this was for a time

rescinded, following objections from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who considered it would be unseemly.

The 1935 film of "Top Hat" starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers includes a song, "Isn't it a Lovely Day to be Caught in the Rain", set on this bandstand (but in fact filmed in a Hollywood studio).

Continue east on Serpentine Road. Ahead, at the entrance to the Park from (New) Park Lane are the Queen Mother Memorial Gates, while on the north side of the road is the statue of Achilles.



STATUE OF ACHILLES



This mighty bronze statue (18 feet high) was erected in honour of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, in 1822, seven years after his victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. This was the first statue in the Park and is today still the largest figure there.

The cost of £10,000 (perhaps £1 million today) was raised by public subscription "by the women of England" led by Lavinia, Countess of Spencer (great-great-great-grandmother of Diana Princess of Wales). It is dedicated to "Arthur, Duke of Wellington and his brave companions". The sculptor, Sir Richard Westmacott RA, shows the legendary Greek warrior

Achilles in martial pose with sword and shield. By his right thigh stands his armour (rather resembling a decapitated foe)

Achilles was famed in Greek myth (and the Iliad) for slaying the Trojan hero Hector outside the walls of Troy. He was later killed by the Trojan king, Paris, by an arrow through his heel, the one vulnerable part of his body. Some of Wellington's contemporaries may have thought Achilles' fate at the hands of "Paris" an unfortunate omen or reminder of a continuing French threat, but he was to die peacefully in his bed 30 years after the statue was erected.

The statue's face resembles Wellington's, but Westmacott chose not to base the body on the then 53-year old Wellington, but on one of the Roman figures of horse-tamers at Monte Cavallo (the Quirinal Hill). (Napoleon was embarrassed by the youthful and athletic qualities of the nude statue which Canova made of him in 1806 and refused to exhibit it. But after his defeat the French King gave it to the Prince Regent, later King George IV, who passed it on to Wellington: it may still be seen today in Apsley House: Wellington seems to have been more philosophical about displaying an anachronistic image.)

The statue was cast from French cannon taken at the Battles of Salamanca, Vittoria, Toulouse and Waterloo. The figure looks towards Apsley House, It was too large to be brought through the Gates into the Park, so a hole had to be made in the wall which then surrounded it.

This was apparently the first London public monument to show an "undraped" (ie nude) man. Quite soon after it was inaugurated, in a gesture to early-Victorian sensitivities, a fig leaf was added. This has twice fallen victim to vandals (1870 and 1961) and twice been reinstated.

This concludes the walk. Should refreshment now be required, the nearest options are the Lodge at Apsley Gate or the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen (back west along Serpentine Road, just beyond the footbridge).

Main Sources:

Pictures: Olivia Cox

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Royal Parks website (royalparks.org.uk)

Secret London and Lost London websites



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MEET ALAN KNIGHTSBRIDGE'S ICONIC EAV RIDER

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"It's a beautiful area. You get residents, tourists, students, lots of different faces. With Harrods just around the corner, I spot a few V.I.P.s now and then."

Since last year, he's been in charge of one of the new zero-emissions EAV (electrically assisted vehicle) bikes, part of Veolia Westminster's new electric fleet.

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"I've seen it all here."

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KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1961, over the past 60 years the Knightsbridge Association has established itself firmly as one of the most prominent residents' organisations in the capital. With a cosmopolitan membership representing a wide range of interests in a globally renowned area encompassing some of the world's most famous cultural and historic institutions, the KA is truly at the heart of what many consider to be one of the foremost cities of the 21st century.

PLEASE JOIN US!

We are consulted on everything from individual planning applications in Knightsbridge to the framing of national planning policy.

As an entirely voluntary and non-profit group with no political affiliations, we are able to act solely for the benefit of our members, always striving to preserve and enhance the character and amenity of this magical corner of our bustling city.

We liaise constantly with our two councils, Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, as well as the Greater London Authority, the Metropolitan Police, national government departments and English Heritage.



The Knightsbridge Association ❖ www.knightsbridgeassociation.com ❖ Info@knightsbridgeassociation.com



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FOR THE LONG TERM



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Transforming The Knightsbridge Estate into a luxury destination to shop, eat, work and live.

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Major improvements to the public realm have also been delivered, including widened pavements on Brompton Road and Sloane Street and a new entrance to Knightsbridge tube station. Works are ongoing to provide the much needed step-free access to the platforms from the pedestrian walkway Hooper's Court.

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