

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

June 2005

Dear Member,

Coming hard on the heels of its predecessor, I wondered whether there would be much to say in this Newsletter. How wrong I was! Recent weeks have seen a torrent of activity, and once again there is far more to report than can be covered here in any depth. But if you want to know more about anything mentioned below, do please contact us. After the March Newsletter we received messages of support and encouragement which were very welcome – but enquiries of all kinds are equally welcome. The Knightsbridge Association thrives on interacting with its members.

Law and Order

Few subjects are of greater concern to Knightsbridge residents – to people throughout Britain – than the control of crime. Yet the truth is that crime has been falling in Britain for over a decade – and indeed crime within our neighbourhood is less rife than most of us imagine. Sensational media headlines scare us into thinking crime is far more prevalent than it really is – causing many, in particular the elderly, to live in heightened fear.

In any event, there is no room for complacency. There has recently been a spate of petty, and not so petty, crime in the locality, reminding us that we must all be constantly vigilant. The mugging of City financier Nicola Horlick was one of three local muggings, almost certainly carried out by the same hoodlums. The police have posted extra officers into the area, but their investigations have made little headway.

Another common local crime is the theft of expensive wheels from cars at night. When this happened to me I learned the hard way that self-locking wheel nuts are worth every penny they cost.

And despite the warning in the last Newsletter, a conman is still 'selling' KA membership door-to-door for cash. Please do beware - and warn your friends, KA never asks for subscriptions in cash.

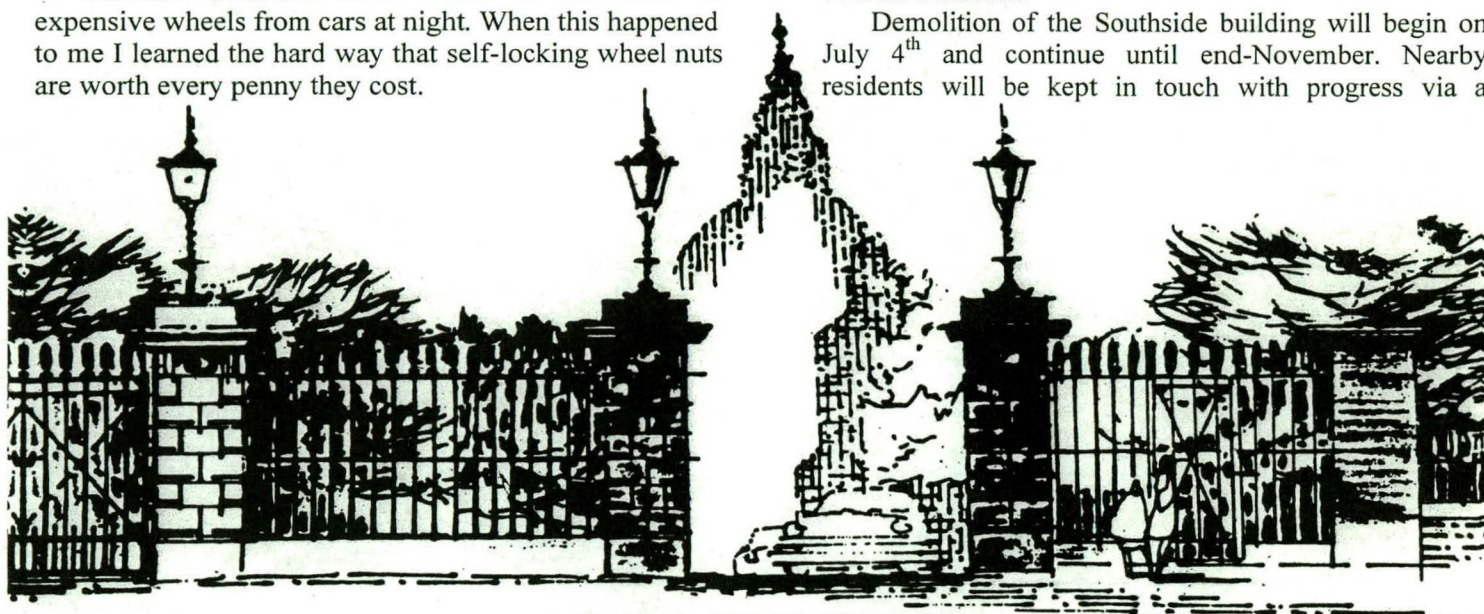
The City Council, based on recent arrests and success in the disruption of terrorist activity, has lowered its assessment of the terrorist threat; however police activity will continue unabated.

Returning to my opening paragraph, do contact KA about your concerns on security, so that we can raise them with the Police. The more we know, the more we can do.

Imperial College: Some Success

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that I had raised with WCC Leader Simon Milton KA members' disquiet about his Council's willingness to hear personal presentations from developers, but not from local residents. Happily Councillor Milton accepted my argument, and so in April the KA planning consultant personally presented our case regarding the Section 106 Agreement relating to Imperial College's Princes Gardens redevelopment. It now seems clear that our proposals have made their mark. The College's responsibility for controlling students' and other residents' behaviour, both in and out of term time, will be set out in the Agreement in detail. Thanks go particularly to Edward Davies-Gilbert and his sub-committee, who have handled these protracted negotiations with consummate skill.

Demolition of the Southside building will begin on July 4th and continue until end-November. Nearby residents will be kept in touch with progress via a



President: Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge
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suitably titled 'Demolition Newsletter'. During demolition and redevelopment there will be a small standing liaison committee which will meet at regular intervals. Local residents will be invited to meet the demolition contractors on June 29th. Details will be circulated shortly.

Hyde Park: Some Concerns

South Carriage Drive remains closed, but is on course to re-open by the end of June – however there will be other road closures, associated with events, throughout the summer. The Diana Memorial has been re-opened but the increased cost of upkeep will be borne by the Park. This is a major issue, because the number and nature of commercial events in the Park partly results from the Government's refusal to fund the Royal Parks fairly. To raise cash, this year there will be nine major commercial events in Hyde Park, including Bob Geldof's mammoth Live 8 concert on July 2nd, which is planned to last for no less than 16 hours, plus setting up and rehearsal time! The KA accepts that these concerts and other events meet a public demand and recognises that they make some financial contribution to the maintenance of the Royal Parks - but they need to be very tightly regulated.

Worse, suggestions that the Notting Hill Carnival might overspill into Hyde Park have raised their unacceptable head once again. KA will oppose any such development vigorously.

On a happier note, the new Chief Executive of Royal Parks, Mark Camley, who has already taken up his post, has accepted our invitation to speak at the KA AGM on December 12th – an important date for your diary. KA members will have a privileged opportunity to hear his ideas and plans for the Parks – and simultaneously we will have an early opportunity to let him know how we feel we can contribute to the Parks' future wellbeing.

Traffic Consultations

Most KA members will by now have received two traffic consultation documents – one from WCC (020 7798 1960) about the Montpelier and Trevor Squares Barrier Scheme, the other from Transport for London (0800 028 5470) about the Congestion Charge extension. With regard to the Barrier Scheme, we feel we should leave it to residents to make their views known via the WCC consultation. Our Planning and Environment Committee will be meeting to discuss the Congestion Charge extension, but our initial reaction is that the Mayor simply has not made a good case for extending the charging zone.

Miscellany

***Harrods** - never standing still, the store is planning a new French-style restaurant opening onto Hans Road, and a new convenience and food shop opposite the main store on Brompton Road. On the basis of the plans we have seen, subject to further information on hours of opening, we have no objection to the former, and will positively welcome the latter...

***Bowater House** – new owners Candy & Candy have appointed top architect Richard Rogers to produce

new designs. We will shortly be meeting with Candy & Candy. Word has it that they want an 'iconic' design, but as to what that means, your guess is as good as ours...

***Exhibition Road Project** – still unfunded, this has been delayed until a decision is made about London hosting the 2012 Olympics. If the answer is Yes, Lottery funding may be forthcoming, and there will be a consultation this autumn, in which KA will be closely involved. If it is No, there may still be some changes but on a much lesser scale...

***Money Matters** – for those of you not on Standing Orders it is time to renew your KA membership; reminders were sent out in April so please send in your subscriptions if you have not already done so. Under Christine Gilbertson's capable stewardship our finances remain strong, and in good order. In response to our recent flyer Robert Crichton has generously agreed to take over as Honorary Auditor, for which we are extremely grateful.

Social Events

Maria D'Amario left in high style at a splendid dinner at the Royal Institution on May 25th and we are exceptionally fortunate that her place as Social Events Chairman has been taken by Lillemor Gardiner, who is already doing a wonderful job, and who will be aided in her role by Lorraine Buckland. Please note that the next social event will be at Bonhams on October 17th, when members will be invited by Bonhams to be their guests for wine and canapés at an auction preview, for no charge. This will be followed in November by an unusual evening at the V&A. Details of both to follow.

Garden Squares Weekend – June 11th/12th – when over 100 private and public gardens in London open their gates to the public. Tickets priced at £5 (children under 12 free) give entry to as many gardens as you can visit. Local gardens, **open only on Sunday 12th**, include Ennismore Gardens, Rutland Gate lower garden & Thurloe Square. Tickets on sale at the gardens on the day. For further information ring 020 8347 3230 or log on to www.opensquares.org

With best wishes – and thanks for reading.



Winston Fletcher

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