

# THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

September 2006

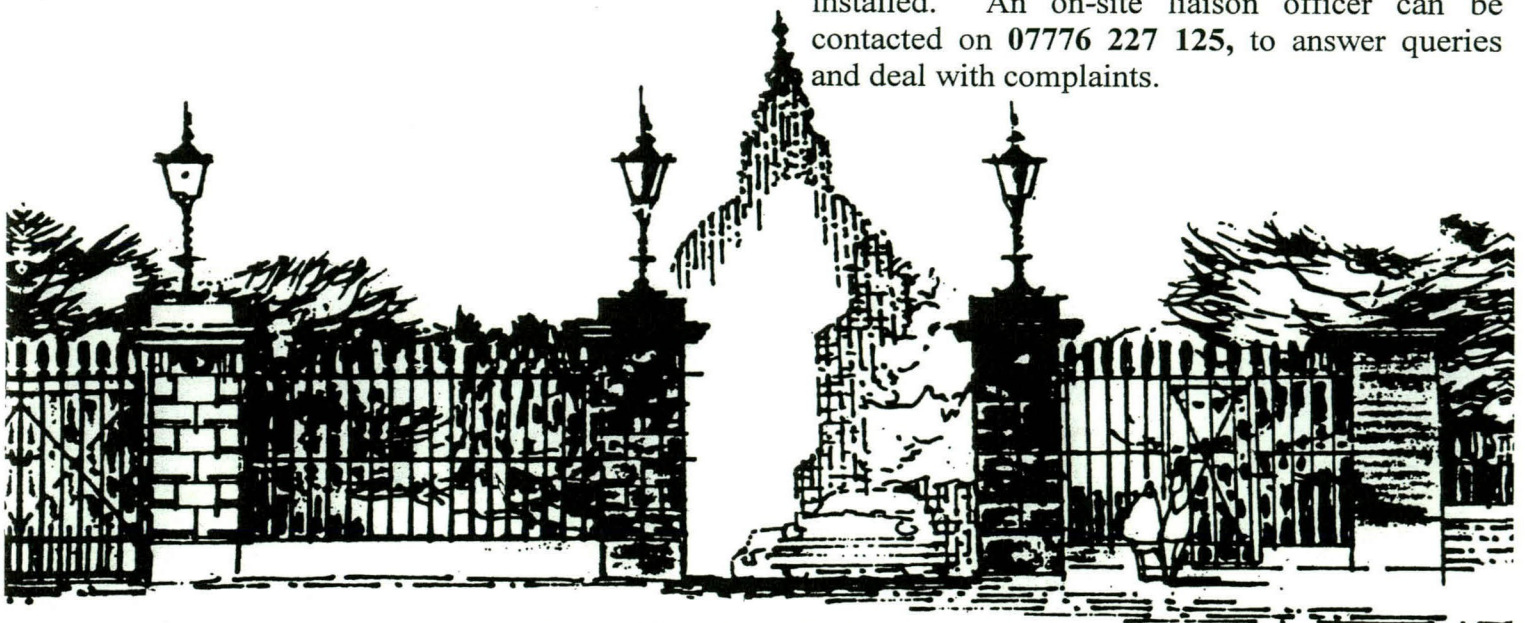
Dear Member,

Riffling through the Association's archives, it quickly becomes apparent that during our 46 years' existence we have often brought about – or helped bring about – significant neighbourhood improvements. To give just a few examples: we contributed to the railing restorations in Ennismore Gardens and Montpelier Square; we promoted the raised pavement in Brompton Road; we ensured cobbles were retained in several attractive Mews; we got old street lights retained, and converted properly from gas to electricity. Similar work goes on to this day – but we are always looking for more opportunities to enhance the locality. So if you have any ideas for improvements which would make Knightsbridge a still better neighbourhood to live in, do please contact us. If you have a good idea, we want to hear from you!

Meanwhile we continue to protect this wonderful area in every way we can.

### Bowater House (to be renamed Number 1 Hyde Park)

Demolition is going according to plan, and the contractors are dealing with the diversion of utility services and the realignment of the pavements as part of the new road layout which should be completed by the spring of 2007. The Royal Parks have been asked to allow contractors' trucks to use South Carriage Drive, but have not yet made a decision. The new Edinburgh Gate, at the west end of the site, is scheduled to be opened in spring 2007, following which the existing gate will be closed. However, it will be necessary to close this access to the Park for about two weeks in September, to demolish the 'bridge' which currently spans the roadway. The Bowater House entrance to the tube station was scheduled to close at the end of August and will remain closed until completion of the project. Temporary service diversions should be completed by the end of September when the new gas main has been installed. An on-site liaison officer can be contacted on 07776 227 125, to answer queries and deal with complaints.



President: The Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge  
Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Winston Fletcher, Vice Chairmen: Michael Wright CMG RIBA FRICS, Edward Davies-Gilbert  
Hon. Secretary: Carol Seymour-Newton, Hon. Treasurer: Christine Gilbertson

## Imperial College

In the last newsletter we referred to a new Aeronautical Engineering building planned for the corner of Exhibition Road below the Tanaka Building, but no architects have yet been appointed.

However good progress continues to be made on the new **Southside** residential halls in **Princes Gardens**, and landscaping and planting of the garden should be completed this autumn. **The Sports Centre** is now open to local residents on a restricted basis – many KA members have taken up membership and are greatly impressed by the facilities.

Repairs to **Weeks Hall** should be completed in September.

## The Natural History Museum

Work has started on the Darwin Centre Phase Two; this is the new home for the Museum's wonderful Plant and Insect Collection, which has been illustrated in recent KA Annual Reports. In late September, London Fashion Week returns to the Museum grounds. This year both east and west gardens will be covered with marquees and tents.

## Royal Parks Events

The Hyde Park summer concerts season has been in full swing, and as usual the blast from some of them has caused unacceptable distress to those who live around the Park's perimeter. Depending on the atmospherics, the blare can be heard from as far afield as Regent's Park and Sloane Square. To be forced to endure the noise, especially on hot summer nights when windows need to be open, is utterly unacceptable. The decibel level agreed between the promoters and WCC is too high and simply must be reduced. If you are experiencing objectionable noise from any source – park concerts, noisy neighbours, whatever – you should ring the WCC 24-hour noise line: **7641 2000**. (The RBKC noise line is: **8.30am– 5pm - 7361 3002; 5pm– 8.30am - 7361 3484**). Even if you have to leave a message, your complaint will be logged and dealt with.

### **Forthcoming Events in Hyde Park**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept – Fun Run** - Full road closure for half-day (re-opening estimated 2pm).

**9<sup>th</sup> Sept – Proms in the Park** - North Carriage Drive closed.

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct - Fun Run** - Full road closure for half-day (re-opening estimated 2pm).

**26<sup>th</sup> Dec–7<sup>th</sup> Jan: Funfair on North Carriage Drive** - North Carriage Drive closed.

## Exhibition Road Project

Towards the end of August RBKC announced that the Exhibition Road Project consortium had failed in its bid for Lottery funding. Members of the consortium (RBKC, WCC and the Mayor of London) are pursuing alternative sources of funding. The closure of the lower half of Exhibition Road on the evening of Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August, in connection with a function, gives a foretaste of what may happen if this project materialises.

## South Kensington Station

London Underground have come up with no new proposals since the development permission granted in 1999 lapsed in 2004. Meanwhile, in a recent comment on the development potential of the site, RBKC wrote "It is acknowledged that due to the listing of the building, any development on the site would have to be small scale." We greatly welcome this change in attitude.

## Brompton Estates

Implementation of the 'Brompton Quarter' plan is proceeding apace. A new restaurant on the corner of Egerton Terrace, christened Brompton Quarter Cafe, opened in August; both Oddbins and Cargo have closed. An application to convert the jewellers, Jas Hardy & Co., to restaurant use, to which we objected, has been withdrawn. KA has continued to object to some of the planning applications, as well as licensing applications (see under Licensing below)

## Miscellany

**Normandie Hotel:** Demolition of the existing building is scheduled to start towards the end of the year.....**55-91 Knightsbridge (opposite Parkside flats):** The brickwork and stone dressings of this Edwardian building, which was listed in 1982 due to KA's efforts, are now buried beneath London grime. A clean up would greatly enhance Knightsbridge, and draw attention to the quality of these fine buildings. Answering a KA letter, the owners have indicated that they plan to upgrade, restore and repair the building. Good news.....**31-32 Rutland Gate:** Following years of complaints from local residents, and pressure from the KA and WCC, these virtually derelict houses, owned by the Sudanese Embassy, are being repaired. KA has been told repairs to the outside will be made this year, and it is hoped to repair the interior next year....**Rutland Gate Wall:** The highways division of WCC had to obtain planning

permission to rebuild the wall they had demolished due to its instability. This explains the long delay between demolition and re-instatement.....**Ennismore Gardens Mews Arch:** Repairs have been further delayed pending the insurer's response to the Council's quotation.

### **Licensing**

Haandi Restaurant, on Brompton Road, has continued to use a back entrance on Cheval Place which has caused considerable late night disturbance to nearby residents. KA supported the imposition of a licence condition that Cheval Place should not be used as an exit after 11 pm. Haandi lodged an appeal but then withdrew it following local opposition. We are currently cooperating with RBKC to log breaches of the restaurant's licence.

We are also supporting the Brompton Association in their attempts to limit the impact of several new licence applications at 223-5, 233 and 235 Brompton Road.

### **Transport Committee**

This new committee under Simon Birkett's chairmanship is now picking up speed. Key issues include: air quality; the short and long term traffic impact of the Bowater House re-development; the Exhibition Road Project; problems caused by South Carriage Drive closures; various matters on parking, lines, lanes and turns; noise from the London Underground; and through traffic problems.

#### **Air quality**

With its remit including air quality, the KA responded to the national consultation organised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We sought 12 commitments from Defra to improve air quality. Gratifyingly, 17 similar organisations across Central London saw and supported our position, and most sought the same 12 commitments in respect of their own areas.

Key issues are:

1. Local air pollution is much worse than most of us realised. In Brompton Road, annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels are two and a half times World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended levels, and rise towards Hyde Park Corner. Maximum hourly recommended levels for nitrogen dioxide are exceeded, on average, daily. It is possible that levels of particulate matter are also very high.

2. The EC currently requires WHO recommended levels of air quality to be met by 1 January 2010 (and earlier for particulate matter for which legally binding limits have been in place since 2005). The EC is rationalising several EU Directives down to one, and there is a risk that three, five or even ten year postponements might be allowed. We believe no postponements are acceptable in areas of high population density.

Please go to the BBC Action Network to see our Campaign for Clean Air website at [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/G1956](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/G1956)

### **Forums**

WCC has transferred KA from the Central Area Forum to the South Area Forum. Meetings take place three times a year when our representatives join other amenity associations to discuss topics of mutual concern. The meetings are usually chaired by a WCC Cabinet member.

#### **Westminster Amenity Societies Forum**

This forum, organised by the societies and chaired by one of its members, discusses matters of mutual interest. The September meeting will discuss Air Quality, and will be chaired by KA's Simon Birkett.

### **Crime and Security**

The new Knightsbridge and Belgravia Safer Neighbourhoods team, in conjunction with the WCC Civic Watch initiative, was launched on 13<sup>th</sup> July at Bonhams. The Safer Neighbourhoods team consists of the police dedicated to our local area.

Civic Watch is a partnership between:

- Westminster City Council
- The Metropolitan Police Service Safer Neighbourhoods Team
- CityWest Homes
- London Fire Brigade
- Members of the local community and businesses
- Ward councillors

Civic Watch will hold regular local briefings to discuss relevant issues and potential resolutions, and will analyse all the information collected about our local area so trends can be spotted. It will aim to reduce crime and resolve problems highlighted by local people and businesses.

**The City Guardians** are also coming to Knightsbridge. Based at Imperial College they are teams of local wardens who will regularly patrol our streets. They will help ensure the local environment is clean and safe, and will report

litter, graffiti and suchlike to WCC. Though they are not enforcement officers, their presence will act as a visible deterrent. They will wear yellow high visibility waistcoats with 'Westminster City Guardians' on the back, and black baseball caps with the Westminster crest in yellow.

**Ladies' Personal Safety Evening: Wednesday September 27th 6.30pm – 7.45pm at Bonhams.**

Come and beat up the Police! PC David Pullan, the Belgravia Crime Prevention Officer, will talk about personal safety, and there will be a hands-on self defence session at which we will be shown what to do in various situations. Phone Madeline Elsdon on 7589 4006 to reserve your free place.

**Message in a Bottle**

This is a new WCC scheme for those aged over 60 who live alone, or have an illness or disability, to keep their personal and medical details in a small plastic container in their fridge, where it can easily be found in an emergency. Two green crosses are provided – one to stick on the inside of your front door to alert the emergency services, and one for the front of your fridge. Pick up a free pack at the next AGM or contact the Senior Passport Line at WCC on 7641 1444

**Social Events**

**Bonhams Private View and Reception – Monday September 18th 2006:** Bonhams are again generously hosting a Private View and Reception for us this year. Members will already have received their invitations to view Japanese pictures and prints and other Asian works of art, European furniture, ceramics, clocks, watches and barometers. **For security reasons, only those who RSVP will be admitted.**

**Reform Club Dinner – Wednesday October 25th:** a black tie dinner in this great historic clubhouse, with an address on the history of the Club by its former Chairman, Roger Billis. Details and an application form are enclosed with this newsletter. Places are limited, so please apply early.

**AGM – Tuesday December 12th:** In the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road. Reception at 6pm, meeting starts 6.45pm. Sir Simon Milton, Leader of the WCC, has accepted our invitation to be our guest speaker.

**Other Events**

**20/21 British Art Fair - Royal College of Art – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September:** KA members have once again been offered

complimentary tickets. This Fair is considered the market leader for Modern British art, and also has a good selection of contemporary art. It is supported by most leading UK dealers. For free tickets, ring Gay Hutson on 8742 1611, or e-mail: [organisers@artfairs.demon.co.uk](mailto:organisers@artfairs.demon.co.uk)

**The 100<sup>th</sup> Chelsea Antiques Fair:** Chelsea Old Town Hall, September 15<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. First day 2-8pm, then 10.30-6pm (5pm Sundays).

Free entry to Knightsbridge Association members. Further details can be obtained from [www.penman-fairs.co.uk](http://www.penman-fairs.co.uk) or: 0870 350 2442

**V&A Evening Lecture: Monday November 20<sup>th</sup>:**

KA members are invited to this private talk at the V&A, at which royal expert Robert Golden will paint an intimate and fascinating portrait of the royal family, the institution of the monarchy, and the numerous ceremonial events – from Coronations to State visits, from Weddings and Funerals to Garden parties, and the host of other events which are so vital to the monarchy's role.

His talk will be illustrated with outstanding and precious documents that are rarely seen, which have been acquired by leading collector Jim Hanson.

Lecture: 7pm - 8pm. Wine reception and book signing with Robert Golden: 8pm - 8.45pm.

Tickets £15.00, available direct from the V&A on 7942 2271, or email [memberships@vam.ac.uk](mailto:memberships@vam.ac.uk), quoting 'The Knightsbridge Association' when booking.

**KA Website**

Thanks to Tony Ralston's continuing efforts, you can now Google our website – just type in Knightsbridge Association and up it will pop!

As you can see, it has been a very busy time for the members of our committees, all of whom I would like to thank for the enormous amount of time they put in to KA work – and at the same time to thank you, for reading.

With best wishes



Winston Fletcher  
Chairman

**The Knightsbridge Association**  
6 Montpelier Street, London SW7 1EZ  
[www.knightsbridgeassoc.org.uk](http://www.knightsbridgeassoc.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7823 9103  
Registered with The Civic Trust