

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

March 2009

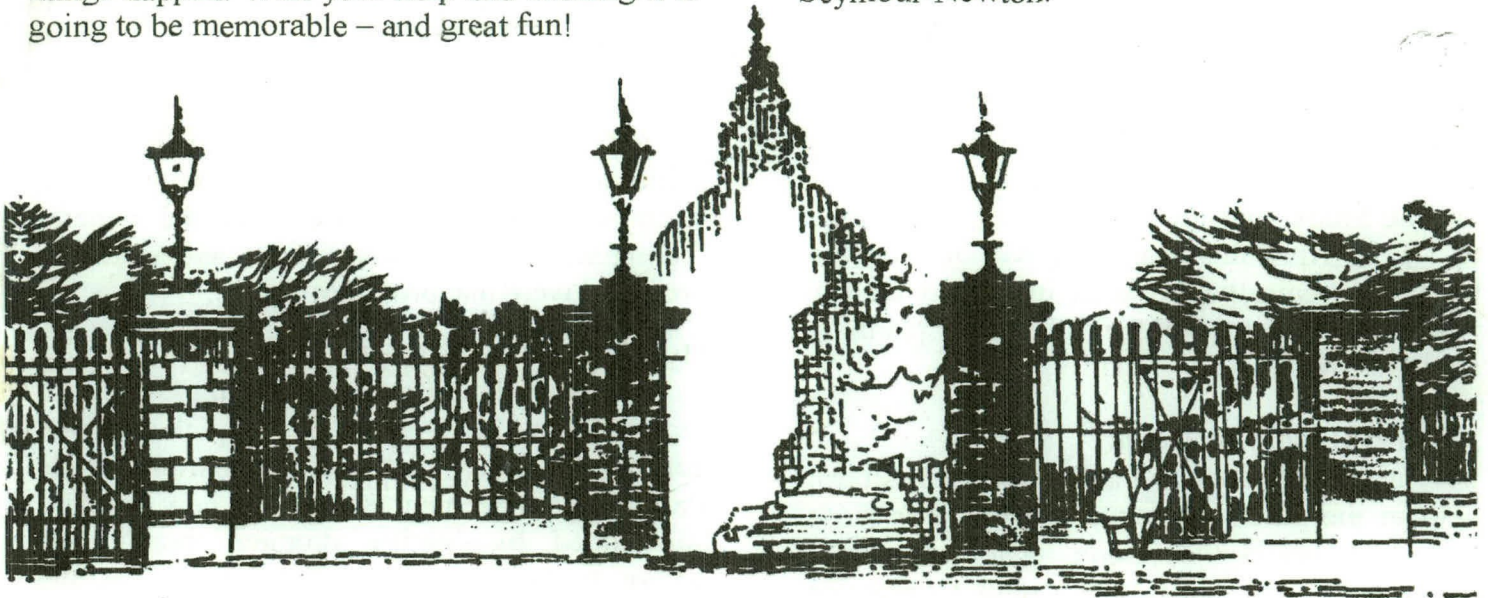
Dear Member,

With this Newsletter you will find a flyer announcing that in 2011 the Knightsbridge Association will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Naturally we are proud of everything KA has achieved for the locality over the last half-a-century – though as relative ‘new boy’ I can hardly take any credit myself! But as well as looking backwards - and giving KA’s many hardworking committee members over the years a well-earned pat on the back – we are also extremely keen to look forwards. So please read the flyer, and send us your personal ideas for improving this wonderful neighbourhood we all share and love. KA has set up a small 50th Anniversary Working Group, chaired by Simon Birkett, which will bring forward plans for the anniversary, and make things happen. With your help and backing it is going to be memorable – and great fun!

Planning and Conservation

There has been a sharp decrease in the number of planning applications referred to us for comment. This is probably a result of the credit crunch, and it is a welcome reduction in our workload at a time when the Councils will be sending us a number of important Supplementary Planning Documents, in draft, for comment. These cover such vital subjects as Subterranean Development, Heritage, Views and Tall Buildings, Public Art, Signs and Advertisements, Retail Policies, Entertainment including cafes, restaurants and late night entertainment, and Planning Obligations.

If any members who have an interest in any of these subjects are willing to comment on one or more of these drafts their help will be greatly appreciated – volunteers please contact Carol Seymour-Newton.



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:* Phyllis Lusher.

Exhibition Road Project

Councillor Daniel Moylan, who has been closely involved in this project since its inception, has been appointed Deputy Chairman of Transport for London and has resigned from chairmanship of the Community Involvement Group dealing with the planning of the project. In January 2009 the Mayor of London announced that TfL would contribute an additional £10m towards the project in addition to the £3.3m already made available. A press statement announced that this contribution would enable a start to be made with completion of the section south of Imperial College Road by the end of 2011.

Our Transport and Environment Committee is monitoring the road usage aspects of the project (see below). Meanwhile a sample of the patterned granite paving – not cobbles – has been laid in Imperial College Road near the parking control office and is available for inspection.

South Kensington Station

Step Free Access

Despite strong representations from Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP and the Directors of the three nearby Museums, as well as many of the local amenity societies, the Mayor of London has decided to defer the improvements to the station which were to include step free access to the District Line platforms. We deeply regret this decision.

Development plans

Following consultation with local amenity societies TfL has finalised its brief for a 'Massing and Feasibility' Study for the development of the station and surrounding area. After consultation with English Heritage, a firm of architects has been appointed to carry out the Study, and the report is to be submitted to TfL by April this year. This will be followed by further consultation with interested bodies. Any development will be subject to planning approval from RBKC.

Natural History Museum

Once again London Fashion Week has been held in the gardens of the Museum. For those who feel this is the wrong location, there is good news – an RBKC Planning Committee paper dated 16th January stated 'the Fashion Week to be held in February 2009 will be the last to be held at the Museum'.

Led by the Kensington Society, we and other amenity societies are pressing RBKC to develop a clear and consistent policy on the erection of temporary structures for commercial use on open spaces associated with listed buildings, of which the Natural History Museum is a prime example.

Normandie Hotel

Plans for a new hotel on this site were described in detail in our Annual Report. Amended plans were submitted to WCC in January which made three changes:

- Reduction of the basement footprint by pulling the north wall back from under Knightsbridge.
- Moving the car parking from the basement to the car park attached to the flats at 199 Knightsbridge.
- Removal of the two vehicle lifts to be replaced by a loading bay at ground level with access from Raphael Street.

The planning application was approved by WCC's Planning Committee on 19th February subject to a number of conditions which included:

- A financial contribution towards highway and environmental improvements.
- A management strategy for the servicing of the hotel.
- A management plan for events, especially regarding the Ballroom (to be closed nightly at 23.30 except for 50 days per year when extended to 24.00).

158-166 Brompton Road

In the Annual Report we commented on revised proposals for the redevelopment of this property, which was the subject of a public exhibition in November. This site is within the Brompton conservation area and the general feeling was that the height, scale and materials proposed were inappropriate.

Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

The Royal Parks are seeking funds to replace the 'Look Out Centre', their main education facility for schools visiting Hyde Park. The replacement would be a new building surrounded by 'nature dipping' ponds and nature trails. The proposals are still at the planning stage, and we have called for as much surrounding planting as possible without interfering with the primary purpose of the structure.

Peter Pan Theatre

The Peter Pan marquee theatre in Kensington Gardens, with seating for 950, and to which we objected on several grounds, was given planning approval in December 2007. Current plans are for it to be in operation from 25th May-31st August 2009, with construction commencing on 1st May and removal by 27th September.

Park Events

16th May: Moonwalk – overnight walking marathon starting and finishing in Hyde Park

25th May-31st August: Peter Pan Theatre - as above.

Transport and Environment

Scotch House Corner

The roadworks at Scotch House Corner are now largely complete, except for the right turn from Knightsbridge into Brompton Road and a possible pedestrian crossing over Sloane Street. Edinburgh Gate is now due to re-open by August 2009 – and we will press to keep the ‘no right turn’ southbound from Edinburgh Gate that was in place previously. We must also watch and worry about the forecast rat-running to and from the southwest of the newly positioned Edinburgh Gate. This would be an unacceptable consequence of the Gate being moved.

Exhibition Road

As mentioned above, Mayor Johnson has confirmed £10 million of financial support from TfL for the improvement of Exhibition Road. The one-way traffic system around South Kensington tube station is now being unravelled, and this should be completed with a final switch to two-way traffic by June 2009. Regarding the larger project, north of Cromwell Road, we remain concerned about the displacement of traffic to other local roads as the capacity of Exhibition Road is reduced substantially over the next three years. We are also focusing on: traffic and civic design work for the roundabout being considered for the junction with Prince Consort Road; the location for school and visitor coaches (which we consider will work best as currently, on the north side of Cromwell Road); and other traffic layout matters. RBKC has encouraged a constructive dialogue, and we seem to be making good progress with them.

Air Quality

The European Commission started legal action against the UK at the end of January over dangerous airborne particles. The UK has been in breach of these laws since 2005, and has missed the deadline set by the Commission for applying for a time extension to comply with these standards. The Campaign for Clean Air in London, which operates under the auspices of KA, is pressing the government and the Mayor to introduce one or more additional inner low emission zones (LEZs) and other measures to improve air quality across London. Some 40 German cities will have inner LEZs by the end of 2009 to comply with the same health based laws. A recent article in the Sunday Times reported that the ‘UK tops the league for toxic traffic fumes’ in Europe. This is simply unacceptable, and we will keep up the pressure for improvements.

Law and Order

Knightsbridge and Belgravia Ward

‘Safer Neighbourhoods’ involves the police working with partners and residents to solve neighbourhood issues. Members of the L&O Committee have therefore been asking residents in Knightsbridge to let us know what they think the police should be tackling as priorities in the area.

Members of the Ward Panel conducted surveys in their areas and, based on the statistics available and verbal reports regarding the wishes of the people and organisations they represent, the Ward Panel members voted that the top policing priorities for the coming quarter should be Residential Burglary, Opportunist Theft and Prevention of Theft from Businesses.

We welcome the new Met Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson, who has said that protecting London and the nation from terrorists will be his top priority. More locally in Westminster South, Detective Superintendent Simon Ovens’ policy is to get more police out on the streets, making arrests and aiming to defeat predictions that the recession will lead to more burglaries and thefts.

Brompton Ward

In the Brompton Ward the Safer Neighbourhood Team is under considerable local pressure to deal with the Romanian beggars. Businesses feel the beggars affect their trade and residents know the beggars affect their quality of life. A rigorous approach has been instigated and an arrest is always made when an

offence has been seen, but the time involved is considerable. Often the women require an interpreter and some have children (normally babies) needing to be taken into police protection. On average, it takes an officer no less than five to seven hours to process a Romanian female prisoner.

In addition to Begging, the top Policing Priorities for the Brompton Ward are Street Drinking, and Youth Engagement, particularly at the Lycée Francais. The team is also focusing on Motor Vehicle Crime and Residential Burglary.

Set Up a Watch

Charles Franklyn, RBKC Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, has asked if anyone in the Brompton Ward is willing to set up a Watch? It could be for an area, street, block of flats or just one house. Please contact him for details on 020 8246 0822 or charles.franklyn@rbkc.gov.uk

In the Park

The Winter Wonderland presented few problems as the Hyde Park venue was fenced this year. Increased security was also provided by the organisers and only nine crimes were reported over the six weeks. The event was extremely successful with up to 100,000 people attending on some days.

Meet The Police

All Safer Neighbourhood Teams, including the Parks Team, will be holding monthly surgeries in their Wards, advertised locally, so people can meet the police informally. Do go and talk to them about your concerns.

Tax Returns Website Fraud

A local resident has reported internet fraudsters have set up a fake version of the UK's Revenue and Customs website. If you file your tax return on-line, be extra cautious before doing so.

Look After Your Cards

Card fraud has reached record levels, with London the country's card fraud capital. Many victims are online-based, others have their card cloned at a cash point or chip and pin device. The police card fraud unit has been very successful, but the increase in card fraud is not abating. You are not immune - watch out!

In an EMERGENCY call 999. For a NON-EMERGENCY call 020 7730 1212 and

ask for the Control Room at either Belgravia or Chelsea Police Station.

Social Events

Monday 16th March – An Evening That Will Refresh The Parts Other Evenings Can't Reach: Lecture at RCA by KA chairman on the history of British advertising.

Thursday 23rd April – Afternoon Tour of the Ismaili Centre, plus tea.

Details have been circulated to members.

Wednesday 27th May – Black Tie Dinner at Mosimann's Club, Halkin Street.

Thursday 24th September – Afternoon Tour of Clarence House, plus tea.

Details of these two events will be sent out in due course.

AGM – will be on Thursday December 10th, and members will be pleased to hear we will be returning to the wonderfully refurbished Royal College of Music.

Two Fairs with Free Entry

Chelsea Antiques Fair: 25-29 March – Members are invited to the Fair at Chelsea Old Town Hall. Open Wed 2.00-8.00, Thurs-Sat 10.30-6.00, Sunday 10.30-5.00

Chelsea Art Fair: 23-26 April - Members are invited to the Fair at Chelsea Old Town Hall.

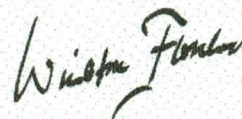
Open Thurs 11.00-9.00, Fri/Sat 11.00-7.00, Sunday 11.00-5.00.

Details of both are on www.penman-fairs.co.uk

Members gain free entry for 2 at both Fairs by showing this Newsletter.

Thank you all, as always, for reading, and for your constant help and support – and remember to get those 50th Anniversary ideas coming in!

With best wishes



Winston Fletcher, Chairman

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