



THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

September 2011

Dear Member

I am sure you do not need me to remind you that the summer of 2011 has been a rather unsettling one. It really did seem as if we suffered dislocations in every facet of our lives – economic, political, financial and societal. Watching the tragic scenes in our cities sparked off by the events in Tottenham could only have been a timely reminder of how lucky we all are to be able to enjoy the peace and relative harmony here in Knightsbridge.

However, we must not forget that we do still have our own issues and difficulties. As you will be reading in the following pages, your Executive Committee have been working harder than ever to ensure that problems are solved and that we are as prepared as we can be to meet the challenges ahead.

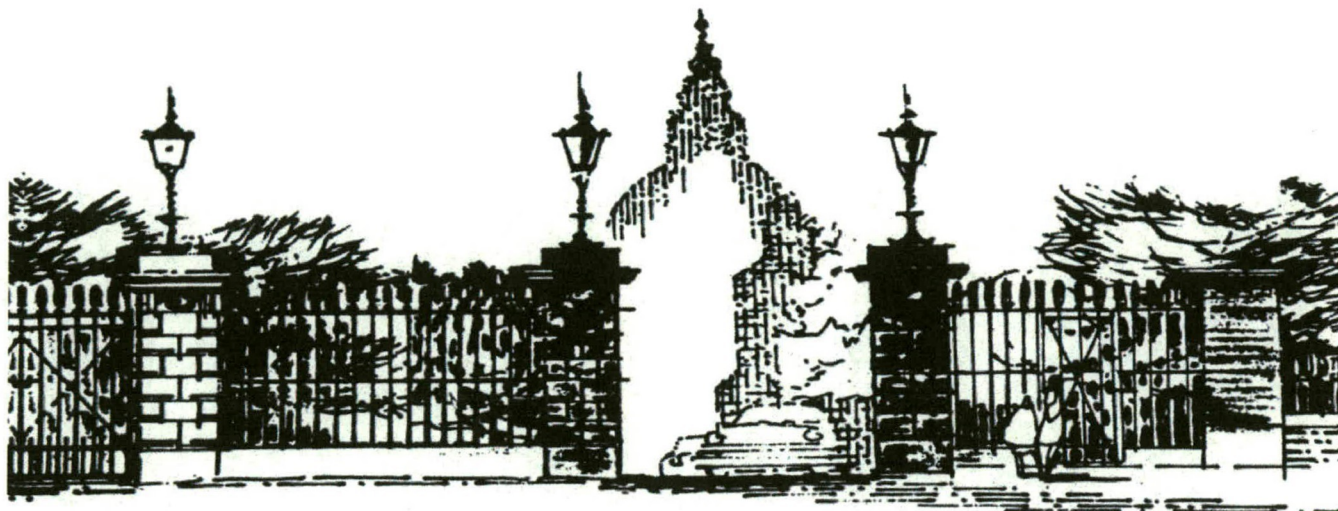
I am happy to be able to tell you that our new website is now live at www.knightsbridgeassociation.com. Technology can never replace people but it is a useful tool. This website in particular is easy to use, especially for those of us who do not take naturally to modern gizmos.

Please do take a moment to have a look at it and more importantly, to register your membership there. The instructions are provided on the site and are straightforward. The few minutes you spend doing it will help us greatly to minimise the amount of time our dedicated volunteers waste on administration, allowing them to dedicate their efforts to the real work that needs to be done.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Olympics 2012 - Olympic Route Network

Next summer there will be extensive temporary road changes in our area. In 2005 the Government, as part of the contract to hold the Games in London, agreed to an Olympic Route Network and Paralympic Route Network (ORN/PRN). These routes will be used by athletes, officials, media and others working on the Games who are required to go to and from competition areas. Further restrictions will be needed for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations between 2nd and 5th June. Transport for London (TfL)



President: The Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Yoshi Nishio, *Vice-Chairmen:* Edward Davies-Gilbert, Carol Seymour-Newton,

Hon. Treasurer: Phyllis Lusher.

Since the consultation there have been some programming issues which have required a further trial period. The proposal for the lights to be left on until after midnight has not met with universal approval.

158-166 Brompton Road

During a three-day hearing in July the Appeal regarding 158-166 Brompton Road was heard by the Planning Inspectorate. The KA supported RBKC's rejection of this revised scheme on the grounds of height, bulk and overshadowing houses in Cheval Place. Avril Cox, Planning Committee member, put the KA's case to the Inspector. At the time of going to press the Inspector's decision hasn't been published.

Planning Application Fees

As is well known, central government is cutting local authority grants. This, coupled with the limited revenue Councils receive from planning applicants, means that the service the planning departments will be able to provide will have to be radically reduced. The KA has written to Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, asking him to consider allowing Councils to charge a fee for planning applications that reflects the true costs involved. Planning departments would then be self-financing and they could continue to offer a competent service.

Localism Bill and Subterranean development

For some time the KA has been concerned about subterranean developments and their impact on neighbouring properties during construction. We are extremely grateful to Dr James Thompson, chairman, Considerate Basement Development Group, for all the work he is doing regarding basement developments. He has written a comprehensive letter on the matter to the Secretary of State, which we fully support. Baroness Gardner tabled amendments to the Localism Bill in the House of Lords, regarding better controls over the excavation and construction of new basements under residential properties. In addition, the Planning Committee has commissioned Adam Hilton, a former senior planning policy officer for WCC, to draw up a definitive KA Position Paper on subterranean developments. It will formalise the Association's policy and will cover: planning requirements, enhanced party wall agreements, construction practices, bond and compensation procedures, noise abatement and parking. Do look out for the final version on the website.

LAW AND ORDER

Brompton Road

An unprecedented number of Middle Eastern visitors escaping the troubled atmosphere of evolution and revolution in their own countries descended on

Knightsbridge this summer to enjoy the freedom, cooler weather, and shopping. Massive crowds roamed the pavements on Brompton Road, filling the shisha cafés, and groups of noisy and unruly teenagers prowled the nearby residential streets, standing on corners and in alleys, sitting on doorsteps causing distress and intimidating residents. Virtually overnight these tourists claimed priority on the streets over the local community and Knightsbridge became a stress area attracting all sorts of anti-social behaviour including illegal trading, begging, prostitution and criminal damage.

Pedicabs

Pedicab operators illegally positioned themselves outside cafés, blocking pavements and playing loud amplified music. Many were spotted carrying small children without adults and were often clearly overloaded. One was even seen riding down the Brompton Road carrying a very large Alsatian dog. In a clear acknowledgement of the recurring problem, earlier this year WCC, Knightsbridge & Belgravia Fund awarded us a small amount of money to fund a specialist police unit to conduct Pedicab control and enforcement operations over the summer period. Although we are grateful for this funding and a few pedicabs were taken off the roads and Fixed Penalty Notices issued, within minutes of these operations finishing the riders returned and it was business as usual. Earlier this year some operators did concede to minimal self-regulation with WCC but the situation remains unacceptable. The KA will continue to lobby forcefully for legislation to regulate these dangerous vehicles.

Super Car Menace

The police held traffic operations to check high performance cars for lack of insurance and other offences. As in previous years, a number of expensive boys' toys 'catwalk cruising' in Knightsbridge this year had illegal registration plates with unreadable numbers, rendering these vehicles effectively untraceable. Many of these drivers apparently dismiss parking restrictions as not applying to them and more obviously, speeding and other fines are so low that they are merely part of the cost of an evening out. If the council were to clamp these cars they would have to pay for all their tickets as well as the release fee. Many of the cars were imported, usually through Heathrow, without anyone checking that they were adequately insured to be driven on our roads or had legal plates. Some had dark tints on all the windows, which is illegal, so the drivers were fined and instructed to remove the tinting immediately, which they found highly embarrassing. Residents in certain streets continued to suffer again this summer as the

has recently launched a limited consultation on the ORN for central London. This includes maps on their website at www.tfl.gov.uk/ORN.

TfL's plans give a sense of the chaos ahead of us. In essence, the plan – for 18 hours a day and an uncertain period – is to trap Londoners in local streets or force us all down a single lane (or two if you are lucky) with buses and taxis. Roads will be closed; most turns onto the main roads will be banned; streets will be reversed; parking and loading bays will be suspended; bus lanes and stops will be changed; and countless pedestrian crossings will be closed. Barriers will run down the middle of many major roads. Of course, these may just be 'Big Scare' tactics used to manage the expectations of residents if they use their cars in the city. Either way, we need a great deal more information.

A recent survey by the Freight Transport Association confirmed that only a third of the industry claimed to be 'adequately prepared' with over 40% 'not at all prepared'. The highly regarded Commission for Sustainable London 2012 shares the concerns of others and is taking a look at the Olympic Route Network. Hopefully they will knock heads together. Otherwise, the turmoil we saw during the 'London-Surrey Cycle Classic' in mid-August will be nothing compared to the problems ahead.

You can submit your views online at: tfl.gov.uk/ORN or by email at ORNandPRNengagement@tfl.gov.uk or call 0845 305 1234 from 08.00 to 20.00 Monday to Friday. The consultation closes on 14 September.

Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens Olympics 2012

The KA has responded to Live Nation's Consultation regarding the Events in Hyde Park during next year's Olympics. With crowds of between 50,000 and 80,000 expected daily, we identified 8 areas of concern following this year's poorly managed concerts. A copy of our letter was sent to a number of elected representatives and so far we have had encouraging replies from: Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor; Victoria Borwick, RBKC Cllr and GLA member; and Councillors from WCC. All appear keen to reduce the impact these events will cause local residents. In July Mark Field MP spoke in a Westminster Hall debate on the future of the Royal Parks and he was able to incorporate the points raised in our letter to Live Nation in his speech. He highlighted the problems we are likely to encounter without a proper management plan in place, not only for next year but, for the future.

Upcoming Events in the Parks

- 10 Sept** Proms in the Park – Hyde Park
- 11 Sept** Annual women only 5km run – Hyde Park
- 11 Sept** Radio 2 Live – Hyde Park
- 19 Sept** London Fashion Week
Kensington Gardens
- 9 Oct** Half Marathon – Hyde Park
- 17 Nov-3 Jan** Winter Wonderland – Hyde Park

Excessive noise **MUST** be reported to the Council at the time: **020 7641 2000** or email: environmentalactionline@westminster.gov.uk
(Parks Noise number: 07791 492400)

Brompton Road

Appalled by the deteriorating situation in Brompton Road, the KA arranged a midnight meeting between councillors and officers from both RBKC and WCC so they could see for themselves how: cafés are flouting the regulations with tables and chairs spread all over the pavement, remaining open way beyond their licensed hours; pedicabs illegally parking on the pavement and taking customers through residential areas with music blaring; and litter being strewn all over the streets. A further meeting in September has been set up by WCC leader Colin Barrow with Nick Paget-Brown, deputy leader RBKC and councillors and officers from both Councils to discuss the problems and to try to achieve conformity in the licensing and operation of the premises. See also under Law and Order.

Bulgari Hotel and Residences

The scaffold dismantling continues to the west, south and east and south-west elevations to the 3rd floor. The developers have asked for an extension of working hours in order to aid the timely completion of the project. The KA has supported the application to extend working hours from 08.00 to 20.00 on weekdays and 08.00 to 17.00 on Saturdays. Only quiet works may be carried out between 18.00 and 20.00 on weekdays and 13.00 and 17.00 on Saturdays. The extended hours are being trialled for one month until early September and may be continued thereafter.

One Hyde Park – 100 Knightsbridge

The long awaited consultation on the proposed lighting that forms the building's public art scheme was held in June. The lighting scheme designed by James Turrell will highlight the four blocks on the Knightsbridge side and light-wash the underside of the canopy leading to Edinburgh Gate. The intention is that the lights will change colour and shading slowly by a controlled, computerised programme.

nightly display of supercars cruised the circuit late at night revving their engines

In response to the concerns of residents affected, our Safer Neighbourhood Teams have leafleted problem cars asking them to show more consideration for the areas they are visiting. In addition, some officers voluntarily changed their shift patterns and worked later in the evenings to combat the unusual level of anti-social behaviour we were experiencing. The KA and residents alike are extremely grateful for their efforts.

In the past we had had some dreadful incidents here in Knightsbridge involving foreign drivers who, after having been involved in accidents, have attempted to leave the scene and the country very swiftly. The KA will continue to lobby for strict enforcement of adequate insurance cover for all forms of transport using our roads even if they are cars only visiting our country for a short time.

Policing

Earlier this year the Law and Order Committee wrote to Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor responsible for Policing, asking him to resist the reduction in the numbers of Safer Neighbourhood police on our streets. The Home Secretary is still to push ahead with the largest shake-up in policing for 50 years but in view of the recent widespread lawlessness and disorder thousands of extra police are to be trained in riot tactics. We received a letter from Tim Godwin, Acting Commissioner, thanking all of us who have shown such immense support for the police when London was faced with unprecedented violence and criminality. Around the clock your officers are on our streets and in the community, working to keep us safe. Over 2,000 people have been charged with rioting and looting in many London boroughs but thankfully Knightsbridge was not directly affected.

New non-emergency number: Police forces across England and Wales are rolling out **101** as the new police non-emergency number. This is the number you need to call your local police when it's less urgent than 999.

KA EVENTS:

13th Dec AGM and 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

6 pm Concert Hall, Royal College of Music.

22nd Sep Tour and lunch at Hyde Park Barracks. No further booking, but if you haven't applied and would like to be on the wait list for cancellations, please email Rachael on rachael.stearns@btinternet.com or telephone her on 07710 584 651

OTHER EVENTS

14-18 Sept: 20/21 British Art Fair, Royal College of Art: Leading dealers selling work by the great artists of the 20th century – including Bacon, Frink, Hepworth and Hockney and a large selection of contemporary work. Free entry for members – email info@britishartfair.co.uk or tel: 020 8742 1611 quoting “*The Knightsbridge Association*”.

Friends of Imperial College Lectures

Explore science, technology and medicine through lectures, visits and social events. Lectures are open to non-members and our aim is to make science enjoyable and informative in a way that the non-specialist can understand. For more information visit our website www.friendsofimperial.org.uk where you can book for events or phone 01243 573993. All lectures at 7pm at Imperial College.

18 Oct: “The extended mind” Dr Rupert Sheldrake. *Our minds seem to extend out beyond our brains both through attention and intention.*

8 Nov: “Celebrating chemistry - past, present and future” Prof David Phillips (President of Royal Society of Chemistry) *How chemistry has helped us to understand our world and where new knowledge is leading us.*

So, as ever, a great deal has been achieved by a small group of true stalwarts. I don't want to sound like a broken record but I cannot conclude my thoughts without mentioning how much more could be done if every member contributed more actively. Give your views on the Members Forum on our new website. Ask two of your neighbours to join the KA. Host an event for your fellow members. It all adds up.

Having spent almost a year in post, I have been struck by the sheer strength of feeling among our members that Knightsbridge is truly a special place that they love. We are all of us merely the current residents of this historic area, and together we share a responsibility to preserve, and hopefully enhance, its qualities. The KA has done this for half a century. Please: get involved and encourage others to do so. It is your community.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM and 50th Anniversary Celebrations in December.

Yoshi Nishio

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