

NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SUMMER PARTY 2001



Monday 2 July 2001
at 7.30 pm in
St James's Norlands Church
St. James's Gardens, W11

All Norland residents are welcome

Please join us, after the meeting, for food and wine

There is no charge!

Come and meet your neighbours

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Your Executive Committee has had another busy year. Again the focus has been on encouraging membership, the consideration of planning applications and environmental matters, along with organising our Annual Lecture.

I am pleased to report that membership numbers have remained stable, with a number of new life members, and now stand at around 230.

Planning applications have been regularly reviewed and appropriate comments made in an endeavour to uphold and preserve the unique character of our Conservation Area. A major redevelopment, that of Rose House (1-12 Penzance Street) would in its currently proposed design be visually detrimental to the area. Thanks to the efforts of the Society, this is now the subject of discussion between Octavia Hill Trust, its architects, the Borough Council and the Society in an attempt to arrive at a solution, reasonably satisfactory to all parties. This type of approach, all too rare, is to be applauded.

Traffic problems, especially concerning volume and speed, remain with little indication as to their resolution. Extensive lobbying of the council regarding the situation affecting Norland Square has not succeeded in moving matters forward.

The Annual Lecture again upheld the high standards of this event. A large audience was enthralled with Robin Price's account of his travels to and the history of the Mount Athos area and we extend our appreciation to him.

Our web site appears to be under utilised. Please take the time to log on, offer input if you can and let us have comments or suggestions regarding its format and utility.

I would also like to draw your attention to the article regarding Gift Aid Declaration which will benefit the Society at not cost to yourselves, and hope you will be able to support this initiative. We propose to implement this arrangement with the 2002 subscription

renewals.

I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee for their time and efforts in guiding the Society during the year and in particular for their support to me. We could not have achieved what we have without this united effort. Opportunities for new committee members do occur and if you are interested please let me know.

Finally my appreciation to all the contributors to this annual newsletter and to Councillor David Campion for again undertaking its production in his usual dedicated way.

Anthony Perry
Chairman
May 2001

PLANNING 2000-2001

Planning applications have again been regularly reviewed and objections made where proposals were considered inappropriate.

In the usual rash of fenestration and rear extension applications we note with pleasure that the RBK&C Planning Committee has often supported your Society's views, including the longstanding issue of 170 Holland Park Avenue (window replacements with timber, not plastic, sashes); also 22 Royal Crescent (proposed originally for a greatly enlarged garage with play room above, now heavily reduced); 22 Penzance Street (rear extension, refused); 2 St Ann's Road (conversion and garage workshop to studio house, withdrawn); 2 Swancombe Road (i.e. the old organ factory, considerably revised; however, over-enthusiastic exterior colours remain a problem).

Rose House (1-12 Penzance Street), belonging to Octavia Hill Housing Trust, has received (despite our objection) planning permission for demolition and rebuilding in three rather than the present two storeys; its final design however is likely to be subject to discussion between the Trust, its architects, the Borough Council, and your Society, so that we can hope to arrive at a solution reasonably satisfactory to all parties.

A proposal for extending Seal House (34 Potters Lane) is, in the view of your Society, an over development of the site; it has nevertheless been given planning permission.

We have heard nothing further of proposals to alter or develop 20 Penzance Place.

We have nominated 44 & 48 Queensdale Road, on the site of the former Star Public House, for a 2001 Environment Award, as a prime example of a tactful, and indeed a highly acceptable development in the Conservation Area.

It is well worth recording that in recent years the majority of planning proposals reveal high quality architectural understanding of the nature of this Conservation Area. It is a great, if usually unexpected pleasure, that so many doorways are properly restored, railings and their footings returned to their original design, windows and their details returned to harmonious balance. This degree of architectural tact and awareness is exactly what this Society aims to achieve, and we are grateful to owners and architects alike for their sensitivity to the standards proper to this unique area.

All members will be aware of the advance of the work on St James Norland Church, very much our local centre-piece. A glistening and restored church at the head of Addison Avenue will be a joy to behold. Funds are still needed, and should be addressed to the St James Norland Appeal at the Parish Office, 95 Sirdar Road, London W11 4EQ (tel. 020 7221 3548).

Robin Price

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL REORGANISES

The Council will be changing to the Leader and Cabinet form of local government on 19th July 2001 when the traditional committee system for decision making comes to an end for functions other than quasi-judicial ones such as planning and licencing.

David Campion

THE TRAVAILS OF TRAFFIC IN THE NORLAND AREA

Two years ago when I became chairman of the Norland Square Garden and Residents Committee there was unanimity at our AGM that I should "take up the cudgels" and try and get something done about the volume and speed of traffic in the Norland area. Traffic "calming" measures appeared all around, why were our rat runs not being attended to?

Many letters later I am as frustrated as my predecessors. Bedford Gardens now has (rather low) sleeping policemen, and they didn't even ask for them. Numerous residents have written in support. The Council did a survey and the rubber wires were cut; six months later they repeated the exercise and we were told that since there had been no accidents we would have to wait until there were, and that traffic in Queensdale Road was not going faster than heretofore (as one of my alert colleagues pointed out, every car and lorry slowed at the sign of the rubber strips thinking they were speed traps).

Although this is a local government issue we have tried to engage the support of our MP in the light of the Council's refusal to help. My conclusion is that I hope that all residents in the area will continue to pressurise the Council into doing something BEFORE there is an awful accident.

Please write expressing your continued concern to: Mr Craig Wilson BSc, MSc, CEng, MICE, FIHT, Director of Transportation & Highways, The Town Hall, Horton Street, London, W8 7NX.

David Potter

BOROUGH TRAFFIC SCHEMES

As a result of long experience the Council recognises that, in general, pushing traffic out of one area, to help its residents, merely increases traffic in adjacent areas, upsetting other residents. This is the primary reason now why few such schemes get approval.

David Campion

ANNUAL POEM
NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

St James' Church is in Norland,
Without famous London city.
Addison Avenue, long and wide
Abuts its walls on the southern side,
A pleasanter spot you never espied.
But here begins my ditty -
Just over 30 years ago
You should see the townfolk suffer so
From delapidations
'twas a pity!

Houses!

There were crumbling bricks and crooked doors,
Unpainted woodwork and splitting floors,
Boarded up windows, without any panes
And water that wouldn't flow in the drains,
Broken gutters and unkempt trees
"This area certainly does not please".

The Council Mayor and Corporation
Sat, and without hesitation
Said "Something simply, must be done,
Living here is not much fun".
And even as the council sat
Came at the door a rat-tat-tat,
And there amidst the councils' stares
Stood the answer to their prayers.

He was not too tall and not too thin,
With a handsome face and a charming grin.
"If you listen to me, and please don't shout,
I think you'll find that I can help you out".
"A group of people led by me,
Will form a New Society."

And so the Mayor and Corporation
Listened without hesitation

To this man's interpretation.
And after minor consultation
Heeded well his explanation,
About the Norland Conservation.

His little band of members grew
In every street was someone who
Would represent the locals, and
With alterations lend a hand.

But that was thirty years ago,
And all their work just goes to show.
The NCS keeps looking out,
"So any problems give a shout
to the local Council who,
heed what we say and what we do."

So if you spot an alteration,
That doesn't meet with regulation,
Tell the Norland Conservation
Who'll tell the local Corporation.
With love and care and some attention
The NCS is worth a mention.

Veronica Scott

ANNUAL LECTURE 2001

Retsina for breakfast: the restoration of Mt Athos

This year's annual lecture was given by Robin Price, past chairman of the Society, on 30 March. Mount Athos - the Holy Mountain to give it its correct Greek name - rises 6500 feet from a narrow 30 mile-long peninsula jutting out from Macedonia in north east Greece. In order to explain its long tradition as a place of pilgrimage, Robin first outlined the history of Eastern monasticism from the time of the first Christian emperors and of the Eastern and Western Christian traditions, the Orthodox and the Catholic.

Mt Athos was first mentioned in the 9th century when Peter the Athonite established himself there and lived the life of a hermit for fifty years. The number of hermits increased and gradually

small communities or 'lavras' were set up, and from then on the monastic and eremitic way of life existed side by side, the hermits living in the rocky caves and the monks living in monasteries or in the forests by the sea.

The three major early foundations were the Great Lavra, built by Athanasios the Athonite in 963 AD, Vatopedi, built around 980 AD, and Iveron with its churches and chapels and other buildings grouped around a massive tower. Most of the monasteries were fortified with defensive towers and even had their own cannons up to the 19th century. Indeed, such defences were essential, as the monasteries were rich repositories of printed books, manuscripts, relics and other rich and monastic treasures. Even so Mt Athos suffered numerous depredations over the centuries by pirates, Crusaders, Turks and Catalans, to mention only a few. Eventually, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a long decline in the monastic life, heavy taxation and other factors led by the mid 20th century to the decay of many of the buildings.

Always a theocracy, since the 1920s Mt Athos has been under the sovereignty of Greece, but is administered internally by the monasteries through a Council of 20 representatives, one from each of the twenty Ruling Monasteries. Visitors, all of whom are regarded as pilgrims, must first obtain an authorisation from the Bureau of the Holy Mountain. No women are permitted on the peninsula. The number of monks, which declined to around 1100 in 1971, has steadily risen and now exceeds 2000 with the influx of young vigorous and dedicated monks, in their twenties, thirties and forties. Many have brought with them skills which have contributed to the regeneration of Mt Athos, such as the building of roads, timber extraction and restoration of the monasteries; the latter has been funded by the European Community, by the monasteries themselves, and by private donors.

Despite the inevitable changes which have occurred over the past ten years and which are still occurring, the monastic life is still a tough one with fasting for much of the year, which can mean only one meagre meal a day - no meat, fish or oil. The normal pattern of eight hours of work and eight hours of prayer starts with the Offices and Liturgy followed by breakfast, often including retsina

(hence the title of the talk). It is a regime which most people would find exceptionally taxing. As Robin's slides showed, the peninsula is still a largely unspoiled Mediterranean landscape consisting of a mixture of woodland, rugged paths and sweet smelling maquis where nightingales can be heard and where many still find a meditative and creative peace. This talk provided a rare and fascinating insight into a place few of us will ever have the opportunity to visit.

Kathleen E Hall

MEMBERSHIP

Each year we make a plea to all our neighbours to support the Society. We have many long-term members and extend an open invitation to encourage new members. It is the strong support of our membership that enables the Society to be influential within the community. But, we are in danger of losing our creditability in our dealings with the local authorities unless the current membership level is increased. Without a membership profile that says that you support our efforts, our voice will not be heard.

Encouragingly, we have had a good response from new members this year both as annual members and as Life Members. Predictably, many annual members have renewed their subscriptions promptly and we wish to thank you all for your response and support. However, there are quite a number of members whose subscriptions have not yet been renewed this year, resulting in an apparent decrease in the membership rolls. Hopefully, this is simply an oversight and is easily rectified.

To join the Society, please contact the Membership Secretary, Rosemary Bauccio, 20 St Ann's Villas or come to the AGM where we will be happy to enrol you.

Minimum Membership rates:

	Annual	Concessions	Life
Single	£ 5.00	£3.00	£50.00
Couple	£10.00	£5.00	£80.00

We look forward to your support.

Rosemary Bauccio

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND GIFT AID

Recent government legislation means that the NCS can reclaim the tax on your subscription paid since 6 April 2000. This means that every pound of your annual subscription is worth an extra 28p to us, thus increasing the value of your subscription.

This is good news for the NCS, and the way that it works means that the process will take up just two minutes of your time. If you pay UK income or capital gains tax, all that you need to do is to agree - just once - that we can reclaim the tax on your subscription fees. You can do this by completing a Gift Aid Declaration.

Almost everyone pays enough tax to qualify, whether it is on a salary, pension, bank account interest or investment income. Employees and self-employed members are already entitled to claim basic rate tax relief on their subscriptions. However, they may elect to forgo that basic rate relief and complete the form. Alternatively, if they pay tax at the higher rate, they may choose to submit the form and can continue to claim tax relief for themselves (but a tax credit should only be claimed on the difference between basic and higher rates of tax).

The NCS hopes to implement this opportunity commencing in January 2002 when a Gift Aid Declaration Form will be sent with the annual subscription renewal requests. Life members who have joined since 6 April 2000 will be similarly circulated.

Ian Hodgson

THE BOROUGH'S STREETScape REVIEW

In June 2000 the Council commissioned Colin J Davis & Associates to undertake a review of the streetscape in the Borough along the lines of the English Heritage "Streets for All - A Guide to the Management of London's Streets" document of which he was the author. The RBK&C Review will set out design criteria covering street junctions, paving, street signs, etc. No new traffic schemes will be approved until the new design criteria have been adopted.

David Campion

THE NORLAND SOCIETY WEB SITE

Those with an interest in obtaining further information about the Norland Conservation Society, and who have access to the Internet, can have a look at our website at:

www.norlandsociety.org.uk

This contains copies of the current and previous Newsletters as a source of historical information.



THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Early in 2001 RBK&C completed the redesign of its Internet site which has since been accredited with one of the first Internet Crystal Marks by the Plain English Campaign. The site is accessible, as before, on www.rbkc.gov.uk, and now includes information on planning applications, planning decisions, listed buildings, conservations areas and other interesting historical information about places in the Borough as well as the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

David Campion

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 2nd July 2001
St James's Norlands Church
7.30 pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
and Adoption of Annual Accounts
4. Membership
5. Election of Executive Committee
6. Guest Speaker - Cllr Adrian FitzGerald
(Chairman, RBK&C Highways & Traffic Committee)
7. Any Other Business

COMMITTEE

2000 - 2001

Chairman:	Anthony Perry	10 Penzance Place
HonTreasurer:	Ian Hodgson	122 Portland Road
HonSecretary:	Bee Hopkins	43 Norland Square
Membership:	Rosemary Bauccio	20 St Ann's Villas
Planning:	Robin Price	Flat 2, 5/7 Princedale Road
Environment:	Kathleen Hall	6 Taverners Close
Members:	Marie-Lou Bakker	54 Princedale Road
	David Campion	12/13 Pembridge Crescent
	Kate Dobbs	13 Portland Road
	Amanda Frame	23 St James's Gardens
	Julie Mills	42 Portland Road
	John Murlis	41 Royal Crescent
	Michael/Lisa Newsom Davis	11c Queensdale Road
	Simon Orr-Ewing	5/29 St James's Gardens
	Veronica Scott	24 Addison Avenue
	Catherine Wilson	52 St James's Gardens

Newsletter edited by Tony Perry and composed by David Campion using Adobe PageMaker 6