

NCS NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Norland Conservation Society

Jubilee Issue June 2002



The Norland Conservation Area is designated by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 as being an area particularly worthy of preservation or enhancement.

Many of the buildings within the area are officially listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Others are not listed but are an important part in maintaining the visual and architectural quality of the area as a whole.

Founded in 1969, much of the success of the Norland Conservation Society has become invisible. Gone are the dilapidated homes, fences and street furniture, replaced by a neighbourhood whose architectural and cultural charm has been very much enhanced.

The key to the effectiveness of the Society in the community is a solid core of membership.

The Society needs members to continue its work and to maintain the integrity of the area.

What is the role of the Society?

It encourages and supports the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, it represents the views of members and presents a concerted force for them in dealings with the local authority, government departments, other bodies and applicants for planning permission.

Examples of matters on which the Society regularly makes representations on behalf of members include:

- Planning, including unauthorised developments or use of premises and detrimental planning applications. The NCS receives from the Council early and direct notification of all planning applications affecting the area.
- Tree applications
- Planning Enforcement matters
- Grants towards restoration and improvement.
- Traffic routes and flows, including rat-run problems.
- Repairs to roads and pavement.
- Design and siting of street furniture.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SUMMER PARTY 2002

Monday 8 July 2002
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*

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 Merrick Cockell
(Leader of the Council)
7. Any Other Business

To join the Society please contact the Membership Secretary at 20 St Ann's Villas, London W11 using the form on the back page of this Newsletter.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Your Executive Committee has had another busy and productive year though I must highlight an area of concern.

We have a problem with membership numbers this year to date. As our Membership Secretary notes, renewals are well down. If you have not renewed, for any reason, but intended to do so, please take time to do so now. You can use the form on the last page of this Newsletter.

A broad and substantial membership establishes our credibility with local authorities, a situation we have rightly been proud of in the past, and one we do not want to lose.

Planning applications have been regularly reviewed and appropriate comments made in an endeavor to uphold and preserve the unique character of our Conservation Area. In all, some seventy applications were considered during the year, demonstrating the considerable activity in our small area.

I should also like to draw your attention to two other important planning initiatives outlined in this newsletter which could impact upon us in the future - Infrastructure, Frameworks and Policies, a government initiative and Jargon or Justice?, a RBK&C initiative.

In February, five members of the Committee met with Mr Mark Raisbeck, RBK&C Chief Traffic Engineer, to discuss our traffic problems and present our case for measures to minimize traffic volumes and speeds in the area.

The group walked around parts of the Conservation Area for over an hour demonstrating to Mr Raisbeck areas of major concern. The next step will be to select, with the RBK&C, moni-

toring positions on selected roads and then with this data decide how best to deal with the issues.

The Annual Lecture was a great success. The 'Restoration of Historic Gardens' was interesting, well illustrated and delivered with great enthusiasm by Letta Jones MA and we thank her for her efforts.

I wish to draw your attention to our website which is at:

www.norlandsociety.org.uk

as this still appears to be under utilised.

Please take the time to log on, offer input if you can and let us have comments regarding its format and utility.

My thanks to 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 all express our appreciation to our long serving Treasurer, Ian Hodgson, who stepped down in March. Both Ian and his wife Mao, a former Committee Member, long to be remembered for her splendid AGM sandwiches, served the NCS well. They go off to live in Italy and we wish them a very happy life there. We are fortunate to have Martin Short to take over the Treasurer's mantle.

Finally, we hope that you will like the new style of our newsletter. We think it represents an exciting step forward but very much welcome your comments.

My appreciation to all the contributors and particularly to Councillor David Campion for promoting the new format and undertaking its production in his usual dedicated manner.

Anthony Perry
Chairman

PLANNING 2001-2002

Some seventy planning applications have been reviewed, and objections or comments made where the proposals were questionable.

Applications have ranged from near total redevelopment, as at 104-6 Holland Park Avenue or 116 Princesdale Road, to inappropriate and light-excluding extensions as at 31 Royal Crescent or on a lesser scale 14 Addison Avenue (at rear), to change of use at 84-89 Holland Park Avenue to new shopfronts, substitution of wooden sash windows for plastic windows (never the same appearance whatever the claims of the suppliers), to extensions ? sideways, rearwards or upwards, and garden extensions.

We are glad to note that the Council has often supported our objections and either refused the applications, had them modified or granted them conditionally. We are grateful for their support.

Rose House (1-12 Penzance Street), referred to in last year's report, has now received planning permission after some cosmetic modifications, following our consultation, to its uninspired façade. We wish sincerely that developers would take on board our desire for excellence in architecture. This is a near-prime site and it has not, in our opinion, received the respect or finesse that it deserves. A year of opportunity lost!

Now that St James's Norland Church has emerged in all its reinstated and cleanly glory, I think that we would agree that all the work and the vast expenditure was well worthwhile. It is now a fully worthy centrepiece in our Conservation Area.

Robin Price
Executive Committee Member

ANNUAL LECTURE 2002

The Restoration of Historic Gardens

This year's annual lecture was given by Letta Jones MA on Wednesday, 20 March 2002 at the Ukrainian Social Club.

Introducing her talk, Letta Jones raised the question of why we restore our historic gardens and then went on to explain and illustrate the different approaches to bringing them back to life and the research and resources need to do it.

From time immemorial, going back as far as the founding of Pompeii, the garden has been considered as important as the house itself; in fact sometimes the two were designed to complement one another.

This was the case at Kenwood, where Humphry Repton's landscaping of the grounds was designed to complement Robert Adam's remodelled house in the eighteenth century.

House and garden, therefore, need to be considered as a unit when undertaking restoration, as was the case with the gardens at Ham House.

There often arises, too, the question of what period to restore to, when a garden has been changed over the years, bearing in mind that any intervention will change the appearance of the site.

The historic gardens which have come down to us were, first and foremost, due to the inspiration of their often aristocratic owners, but their actual realisation was the work of a host of people, ranging from architects, garden designers, estate managers and, of course, an army of gardeners.

Broadly speaking, the approaches to bringing gardens

'back to life' are:
restoration,
reconstruction
re-creation.

Restoration occurs where sufficient information exists to return a garden to its original condition, as with the gardens of Fulham Palace and the nineteenth century Italian garden at Holland House.

Reconstruction is carried out where plans, engravings or foundations exist in sufficient detail to enable reinstatement. At the Roman Palace of Fishbourne, built in AD 10, it was possible to trace the original ground plan of the box hedges and so to re-establish them.

But the prime example is the privy garden at Hampton Court which, after removal of the Victorian garden, was reconstructed on the basis of engravings and archaeological remains which showed the patterns of the seventeenth century parterres. The statues were also reinstated.

Re-creation, or pastiche, is resorted to where there is no existing example and where it is in the public interest to create one. At Singleton's Weald and Downland Museum, in West Sussex, a medieval Yeomans vegeta-

ble garden has been created as part of a living museum.

In order to achieve authenticity and historical accuracy, detailed and painstaking research is needed to establish dates of ownership, boundaries, plant species of the period (some of which may no longer exist) and even the character of the adjoining landscape. Fortunately, sources of information have now much improved and there is access to title deeds, bank archives, family diaries, oral history and garden literature among others.

This work requires, first, that the public will do it, for which there has been a change in attitude over the years, helped by the foundation of the Garden History Society in the 1950s and, second, the availability of funding from a variety of sources, including the National Lottery.

In the course of her illustrated talk Letta Jones gave us an authoritative and engrossing account of the love and care, skills and knowledge which went into the creation of our historic gardens and of the steps that we are now taking to preserve them for posterity.

Kathleen H Hall

Executive Committee Member



AN EXTRACT OF GOLD

As this is the Queen's Jubilee year, I wanted to write a poem with a skein of gold. My poetic skills to not run to anything good enough so instead I have selected some gold from the following:

These verses, from the Victorian poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, touched a more rural theme than we are used to but nevertheless:

I like the calm of the early fields, The ducks asleep by the lake,
The quiet hour which nature yields, Before mankind is awake.
I like these things, and I like to ride, When all the world is in bed
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide, And the golden sun
grows red.

I covet not a wider range, Than these dear manors give,
I take my pleasures without change, And as I lived I live.

I leave my neighbours to their thought; My choice it is, and pride
On my own lands to find my sport, In my own fields to ride.

Then these verses from Wilfrid Thorley's "Buttercups"

There must be fairy miners, Just underneath the mould
Such wondrous quaint designers, Who live in caves of gold.

They take the shining metals, And beat them into shreds:
And mould them into petals, To make the flowers' heads.

Sometimes they melt the flowers, To tiny pearls like beans,
And store them up in bowers, For ladies and for Queens.

And still a tiny fan turns, Above a forge of gold;
To keep with fairy lantern, The world from growing old.

This one verse by Christopher Marlowe seems very apt:

A gown made of the finest wool, Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair lined slippers for the cold, With buckles of the purest gold.

And finally this from J.Hampton Gurney's well known hymn:

Fair waved the golden corn, In England's pleasant land,
When full of joy, each shining morn, Goes forth the reaper-Band.

Veronica Scott

Executive Committee Member

TRAFFIC

Whilst having only lived in the Norland Conservation Area for a little over three years I have been most impressed that the traffic concerns within the area have united so many of those living in the location to act collectively and individually by lobbying the Council to take some action to ensure that our streets

remain safe for our children and residents.

I am, however, equally disappointed that these calls have yet to yield any action by the Council but I am pleased to say that there has been some constructive contact over the past months.

So what is the issue? Basically it boils down to the fact that

we have too many vehicles going too fast along our roads and that most are using the entry roads that face Holland Park Avenue as a means for getting to the north of St Anne's Villa's via a variety of short cuts.

We suffer from the fact that Queensdale Road, St James's Gardens, Princedale Road and Portland Road offer long, straight and wide alternatives to Holland Park Avenue and frustrated motorists see these avenues as an open invitation to release their stress whilst increasing ours. There has also been a large increase in the number of families with young children that have recently arrived in the area and this dimension also needs to be taken into account in our discussions.

Many years back, action was taken by the Council to block off Clarendon Cross due to local pressure and a bad accident record. This prevented through traffic and had the effect of instantly pushing heavy goods vehicles back onto Holland Park Avenue. We are hoping that the Council will be able to come up with a similar solution to our traffic issues.

We are constantly reminded that there is some reluctance to put in traffic management schemes as improving one location may then have a negative side effect in adjoining areas. This should not deter us from finding a solution however, but we should be aware that any plan will be heavily scrutinised.

Recently, the Norland Conservation Society Committee members had a good meeting with officers from the Council where we presented our case for some traffic calming measures. The next step in the process will be to select monitoring positions along certain roads within the Ward and with this data decide how best to deal with the issue. *(continued on Page 8)*

Infrastructure, Frameworks and Policies

Since change, whether useful or not, is creature of life to all governments, DTLR has unloaded since last December two papers on the planning process, both manifestly developer-led.

The first, *Major Infrastructure Projects*, deals with airports and runways, ports, trunk roads, rail schemes, power stations and reservoirs, and the like.

It is not seen as affecting the Royal Borough, so I shall ignore it, except to say that the proposals place enormous over-riding powers in the hands of government, with very little review. So much for democracy!

The second, *Delivering Fundamental Change*, could affect the Royal Borough.

In seeking, very properly to clear up planning anomalies and delays and to streamline and integrate some planning powers, its proposed *Local Development Frameworks* and their *Core Policies* are unlikely to draw the same protection to Conservation Areas as the existing stringent policies developed so carefully within the current UDP and *Conservation Area Policy Statements*. Indeed, the new proposals are far too generalised not to attract the greed of developers.

Fortunately, the Royal Borough is likely to continue with the recently revised UDP, as permitted under the proposals, until the next proposals and their working become clearer. The Kensington Society is in touch with the Council over this and will keep a close eye on developments. One wonders when government will run out of words to express structure. Scaffolds next, perhaps?

Robin Price
Executive Committee Member

Jargon or Justice?

In what we must hope is a praiseworthy and practical attempt to re-think communities and to ensure that no-one will be disadvantaged by the area in which they live, government has made the receipt of certain local government money dependent upon setting up Local Strategic Partnerships.

These Local Strategic Partnerships are intended to co-ordinate Council, Council services, amenity and other citizens' groups, voluntary aid bodies, individual residents and the like, to set up agreed long-term strategies for optimising the social and built environment.

From such Partnerships (ours is called the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership) will derive the *Community Strategy* and the *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, the last of which will focus directly on what needs to be done, and how to do it in the most effective way.

Your committee has already been represented by two of its members at an initial explanatory meeting for North Kensington, leading to the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership.

We learned much from it, not the least that the Council intends fully to engage local residents in all that is proposed and all that is done.

This is surely right, and an excellent and proper way to create more fully responsive and vibrant communities.

We have, of course, to remain fully aware that it is not a charitable remit to be other than an amenity society with a particular interest in planning, but through that planning we can sometimes mediate, quite properly, a social concern.

But, to be honest, though we want it to work, will it? Too often government has simply shifted the pieces on the board, created rosy (but flatulent) mission statements - and been extraordinarily and even fraudulently short on outcome. We hope it will work, we shall do our best to make it work - but will it be, after all, yet another Initiative, Framework, or Strategy? Jargon, or, this once perhaps, Justice?

Robin Price
Executive Committee Member

St James's Gardens

The church of St. James, Norlands, by Lewis Vuilliamy, with its newly cleaned exterior of white Suffolk bricks and restored stonework looks almost as pristine as it did at its consecration on 17 July 1845.



Inspired by its gleaming appearance, I decided to find out about the original people living in the square around it when it was first built. So I went to Local Studies Library, Kensington, to do some research on the early residents of St. James's Gardens and the Conservation Area, and the history of our particular house.

The original fine name of St. James's Square was changed to

St James's Gardens in July 1939. The houses in the square had all been renumbered on 7th December 1877: our house, which was numbered 46 became 52.

The Survey of London, vol. XXXVII Northern Kensington 1973 gives an excellent short history of Norland, with the plans and elevations of the houses of the whole area, with details of railings and cornices. The elevations the older series of houses in St. James's Gardens were designed by the architect John Barnett, and built between 1847-1851. Focussing on our house, there was a notification to the District Surveyor of the erection of houses on the south side of the square (numbered 47-54) dated December 1850. The builders of this section were David Nicholson Senior and Junior of Wandsworth under contract to the St James's Square Benefit Building Society.

According to the Survey, the householders in the Conservation Area followed a general pattern of lawyers, naval and army captains, merchants, businessmen. However, certain differences can be detected between the streets, squares and crescents.

In Addison Avenue, apart from



stockbrokers and 3 merchants, there were a gunmaker, a furrier, a horse dealer, a victualler in the Norland Arms, a fruiterer (was he as expensive as Michanicou?), an omnibus proprietor (we need him now to make up for the dearth of No. 94 buses!).

In 1851, Royal Crescent still had a dozen houses empty - and apart from the usual lawyers, stockbrokers, there were 2 clergymen "without cure" (presumably without a church, perhaps retired?)

Norland Square sounded wealthier and even exotic with a Russian diplomat and an American author with seven servants.

In St James's Gardens, the number of servants was considerably smaller: people struggled along with one or at the most two servants per house. One poor Professor of Music and his wife, at 28 St James's Gardens, in 1861, had 7 children (ranging from twelve years down to 2 months old) and only one servant! Hard work with all that carrying of water and coal, making up fires, etc.

Focussing on St James's Square, according to the Census Books for 1851, no one was listed as living in our house by that early date - it was not yet inhabited.

The occupations of other resi-

dents in the square were more heterogeneous: they included a military agent, a boatmaker, a civil engineer, a coal merchant, a wool merchant, an ironmonger, a stone merchant, a wine merchant, a military contractor, a clergyman "not having care of souls", and an artist/painter, as well as solicitors and accountants.

St James's Gardens was also very family minded - lots of nephews, nieces, family visitors and sisters were listed as staying in the houses when the census was taken. The servants' names were also listed in the Census with one or two servants per house.

By the time of the next census (in 1861), the occupations of house-owners in the square had changed slightly. The services were more in evidence; and there were many more "fundholder" women (of independent means), and one "lady". The list included an army captain, a retired commander and a captain in the R.N., a Rear-Admiral, a photographer, a muslim agent, a wholesale stationer, a Wesleyan missionary, a senior clerk at Somerset House (he was rather "posh" at No. 1 St James's Gardens with many servants and a governess).

In 1861, I was delighted to find a young family living in our house, maybe its earliest inhabitants. The head of household was James Seymour - an ironmaster (manufacturer of iron) from Poole, Dorset and his wife and 3 children - Kate aged 6, Edward, 5 and Fanny 4 with a young servant of 19 from Bury St Edmunds. I was pleased because our own family has that arrangement of children with two daughters and a son called Edward in the middle.

The Post Office London directories for Kensington, Notting Hill (on microfilm) date only from 1870s for our square.

These reflected what the Survey of London had observed that there were many female heads of household in St. James's Square. I noticed that Mrs. Radermacher was Head of Household of our house in 1876, Mrs Sinclair Bligh in 1882 and 1884, while Elizabeth Davis was the owner in 1891. Pursuing the idea that there was a preponderance of female heads of household, I went through the Census Books (again on micro-film) for 1891, and found that there were altogether seventeen widows or women of "own" or "independent means" (otherwise described as "fundholders") who were owners of 17 out of the 54 houses in the square. This seemed an enormous proportion of women owners which was surprising considering the date of 1891.

The Electoral Roll for 1891 did not list any Parliamentary Electors for our house. Why not? Of course - in 1891 women did not have the vote. However, the Electoral Roll for 1908 listed many female parochial electors - women were allowed to vote on Parish affairs.

The very nice Librarian who was helping me suggested that perhaps these female "heads of household" were owners of houses of Ill-Repute. In defence of St James's Gardens, this could not be the case: Charles Booth's 1898-99 Descriptive Map of London Poverty (which colours in the streets according to the composition and class of their inhabitants) classified St James's Gardens with the colour "Red": that is as "well to do, middle class, with 1 - 2 servants" (the second category down in the hierarchy). There were definitely no "Madams" in St. James's Gardens!

By the time of the Census of 1891, it seems our own house had gone down a little in the world. Elisabeth Davis, Head of Household, was listed as a " Boarding

House Keeper" and her father who lived in the house was a "Paragraph writer" (what can this have been?). She took in "boarders". I noticed that in 1898 (according to the Electoral Roll) there were 6 men renting furnished rooms in the square. Some were paying 15 shillings per week, others £20 per annum.

However, the church was in no way going down in the world. In the 1880s, there were attached to the church of St James, Norlands, a vicar, and the impressive number of 7 curates. Would Hugh Rayment Pickard be envious? - or not?

Catherine Wilson
Executive Committee Member
(I am very grateful to the Council's Local Studies Library for its help).

THE NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY WEB SITE

A large number of local societies across the country now have their own websites which are used as a means for providing information both for their own members and also anyone else who may wish to find out about their roles in society.

The Norland Society is no exception and has attempted to follow this trend.

The advantages of a website are that it can be updated with new content as required so that members do not have to wait for the next formal issue of a Newsletter which may only come quarterly or annually.

Perhaps, more importantly, a website provides a useful means for recording information for historical purposes which is readily available and perhaps more so than within the filed archives of an organisation.

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. You will need a copy of the Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer to display the latest Newsletters.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2001 - 2002

Chairman:	Anthony Perry	10 Penzance Place
HonTreasurer:	Martin Short	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

MEMBERSHIP

Since January when we sent out our annual membership renewal slips and our invitation for new members to join the Society, there has been a stream of responses. The net result is that many of our regular members have renewed their subscriptions and a few new members have joined. Thank you all for your support. It is most important that we seek as broad a membership as possible so that our dealings with local authorities can be truly effective.

Our credibility is at stake and our voice becomes weaker without your support through membership of the Society.

Notwithstanding the responses we have received, our membership is far below that of previous years and that which we feel is optimal. And we're not sure why. Maybe some of our old customers have upped-sticks and moved; maybe you are a new resident and missed our membership letters in January; maybe the renewal slip is buried under a pile of paper waiting for attention. Whatever the reason, it is not too late.

The Gift Aid Declaration introduced this year, which allows a tax return to the Society on subscriptions, has been reasonably well taken up by members. We would like to encourage all our Members to subscribe in this way.

Just complete the form on this page (or a copy of it if you wish to retain this Newsletter intact) and either forward it to the Membership Secretary or bring it with you to the AGM.

Rosemary Bauccio
Membership Secretary

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4 St Johns Terrace, London W10

Membership Year 2002

Rates for 2002 are:

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

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

Tel/E-mail:.....

Please complete and return this form or a copy of it with your cheque to your Street Representative or to the Membership Secretary, 20 St. Ann's Villas London W11 4RS

GIFT AID DECLARATION

To help us to gain maximum benefit from changes made within the UK tax system we would encourage you to complete the following if you are an eligible UK tax payer.

Name & Address of donor:.....

.....

Signature:.....

(continued from Page 4)

The development of the White City complex over the next few years and the implementation of the congestion charges that may come into effect next year will certainly effect traffic volumes and therefore a survey undertaken soon will allow us to establish a meaningful benchmark for future traffic growth.

In the meantime I would be

happy to share with you further details of our discussions with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and would very much encourage all of you to write to Mr Mark Raisbeck, Chief Traffic Engineer, The Town Hall, Horton Street with your thoughts.

Martin Short
Executive Committee Member