



## Old Chiswick Protection Society

### Summer 2012 Newsletter

#### Chairman's message

It has been a very busy period for the OCPS. Highlights include persuading stakeholders that the historic pollarding of the Eyot ought to continue. Our next aim is to extend the boundaries of the Conservation Area to include the Eyot, which was inexplicably excluded on first designation.

The improvement in the physical condition of the York stone pavements is pleasing, as well as the sensitive replacement of lamps in the Conservation Area. The underpasses are also looking better and are set to improve. The committee is rightfully proud of its living oral history project, which seeks to ensure the memories and voices of the area do not slip from memory.

Because of our disappointment at the result of Chiswick Lodge, we need to be at the heart of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for the area to ensure that future developments are properly scrutinised at all levels to harmonise with the character and appearance of the area. In the past OCPS has been able to punch well above its weight, but we need to increase our membership so that we are a stronger and more representative organisation. Remember we seek to protect the whole of the Conservation Area, which runs from British Passage in the east to St Mary's Convent in the west, from the river in the south, to the A4 in the north. Proper representation from all parts of the area is essential.

To this end, if you are not yet a member, please join and have your say on what shapes one of the UK's oldest Conservation Areas. If you are a member already, invite your neighbours to join us: the more of us there are the stronger will be our voice.

#### Wild flower planting on Hogarth triangle

Once again wildflower expert Brita von Shoenaich, supported by the OCPS, has turned the small triangle of land on the Hogarth roundabout into a truly beautiful wildflower meadow.

Transport for London (TfL), which gave us the initial permission to plant the triangle last year, has been so pleased with the results that it hopes to fund it next year.

Pictures of the triangle have appeared in the national press as part of the *Chelsea Fringe*; most notably Brita has received a letter from Prince Charles himself (stuck at the roundabout!) saying, *what a real joy it was to spot your inspired planting scheme*.

Next year, we hope to extend the scheme to the central roundabout itself.

#### Dock parking in Chiswick Mall

The Borough has agreed to include the two cobbled dock sites along the Mall – the ferry slipway at the foot of Church Street and the drawdock at Chiswick Lane within the Chiswick Mall Controlled Parking Zone thanks to the help of one of our local councillors. Recent changes to traffic regulations have enabled this to be done without the unsightly yellow lines. Suitable signs prohibiting parking on these lands above mean high water level are currently being prepared by Hounslow and should be installed shortly. Now all we have to hope for is enforcement!

#### Subways

Members may remember that TfL renovated our three subways in 2008 following the lead of the OCPS. Dilapidated wall tiling was replaced with painted surfaces, mirrors, notices, renewed lighting, and CCTV cameras were fitted in the Chiswick Lane underpass. After four years of wear and tear we are again in touch with TfL for necessary maintenance and repair.



The focus is on structure rather than aesthetics and we are promised that the critical safety defects we reported will be repaired quickly and a new disability-compliant double handrail installed in the Chiswick Lane subway. Less important repairs are being reviewed regularly and we will be kept informed.

We will soon have CCTV cameras installed in the subway at Netheravon Road South as well, thanks to our Councillor John Todd who found the funding.

### Traffic and Roads

The long tailbacks from the Hammersmith Flyover over the past six months caused many complaints from our members and residents who as always were the most affected. In the best of times we have many traffic problems. We had taken this up with TfL who were unable to help in the short term. TfL are hoping to gain acceptance for a “non-compliant” solution in regard to the roundabout, but this will not be ready until after the Olympic Games. Meanwhile we have requested some re-timing of the traffic lights to achieve a similar result.

### Thames Tideway Tunnel

The final public consultation into the location of the shafts critical to the construction of the tunnel took place last December. Thames Water has now published its report and as expected, there will be no change in the plans previously reported: the



tunnel will be driven under the Thames to pass 30 metres below Miller’s Court on its way under the A4 and Netheravon Road to the Acton Storm Water Tanks.

Work started on the eastern end of this vast tunnel in late February. It took 60 trucks to deliver the crane that lowered the boring machine down the shaft into the ground. Since then this machine has been moving steadily eastwards at the rate of 17 metres a day. We expect it will be passing under The Mall sometime in 2020 but with little evidence on the surface.

### King Street Regeneration Scheme

As you will all know by now, Boris Johnson delayed the Town Hall scheme by telling H&F Council that the GLA would not be able to approve it in its present form.

The Hammersmith Society had asked the Council cabinet for a round-table meeting with local groups to discuss ways in which the scheme could be changed to gain wide support from residents. This request was refused. With the application in limbo, the Hammersmith Society tells us it seems sensible to hold fire until something happens before reminding the public of the issues, the scale, and the likely damage of over-development.

### Work on Chiswick Eyot

#### Pollarding



In the last newsletter we reported that the February 2011 experiment of only pollarding a proportion of the osiers (willows) would not be repeated and that, from now on, all the osiers would be pollarded annually in order to maintain the Eyot as a historic withy bed. This year, because of the reduced pollarding in 2011, there was more growth than usual and the job had to be completed by professional tree surgeons. However, an enthusiastic band of volunteers turned up on a wonderfully warm and sunny Sunday in February to collect the withies and tie them up in bundles. Tripods were prepared to hold the gathered withies with lengths of string to tie them up. About 100 ‘faggots’ were made, stacked and ready to be used to stabilise the banks of the Eyot.

## Stabilising the banks

Thames21 are collaborating with OCPS in this large and long-term project. The plan is to build up defences against erosion along the north-facing bank of the Eyot. The materials are the withies created by the pollarding, thus minimising any environmental impact. A trial revetment was put in place in February, which involved driving wooden stakes into the bank, weaving withies through them to form a barrier, piling bundles of withies behind these barriers to trap mud, and, finally, fixing the bundles in place. The results are encouraging: mud is being retained and the bank is beginning rebuild itself. Work was suspended while birds were nesting on the Eyot, but now that nesting season is over, Thames21 are drawing up a plan to extend the revetment along the bank. Over the summer Thames21, with the OCPS, will be organising days for volunteers to come and help with the work. It's a slightly muddy but very satisfying and rewarding. If you would like to help, please get in touch with Thérèse Bennett on [t.fobin@talktalk.net](mailto:t.fobin@talktalk.net) or 020 8994 6753 and we will let you know when work is planned. Thames21 are also continuing to remove litter and Himalayan balsam from the Eyot; for information visit their website [www.thames21.org.uk](http://www.thames21.org.uk)

## Oral History of Old Chiswick

We have begun to record local residents' memories of Old Chiswick and we know of other people with stories to tell whom we will be recording over the summer. If you have memories to share and haven't yet been in touch, do contact Thérèse Bennett as above.

Here are edited extracts of two people remembering Chiswick before – or in some cases during – the building of the A4.

### *Gwyneth Cole – the 1950s*

I can remember when I first moved into Hammersmith Terrace, the police coming along and saying “Danger of flooding, get out of the basements”. And I remember my husband and I looking out of the window and seeing that the whole of the Mall was drowned and on the Eyot were only little willow spikes. You couldn't see any ground at all; just one long sheet of smooth water right across, including the towpath the other side...

Further down Hammersmith Terrace lived A.P. Herbert. He had a boat called the *Water Gypsy*. One day he called over the walls “Gwyneth, would you like to come down the river on the Water Gypsy?” So I said, “Yes, thank you very much”. We got half way down towards Hammersmith when his two granddaughters waved at him from the wall; he stopped and picked them up and we went on down to the Houses of Parliament and anchored there to have lunch. We decided to have a swim. It's an extraordinary idea, but we did. I had my swimming things with me but neither of the girls did, so they asked if they could borrow mine after I came in, and I said, “Yes, of course”. So I got in and was swimming around – and there were these two children swimming around and I thought ‘What have they got on?’ Well they hadn't got anything on and when they climbed out naked, APH said “and in front of the House”. I've never forgotten that...

When they were building the A4, the road was up and everybody got stuck and they started coming along Hammersmith Terrace. Everybody in the Terrace got very fed up about this because we had masses of cars just pouring through there all the time in order to avoid the traffic. One of the enterprising girls who lived on the Terrace decided that we should all park our cars across the road so that they couldn't pass, and of course there was chaos because there were people hung up in the main road not being able to move – stopping all the traffic right up into Hammersmith.

### *Alice Nissen – the 1950s*

The houses on the Mall were not painted nicely, the gardens were unkempt, there were very few trees, and it was quite bare, dull and scruffy, it was a kind of industrial hinterland. It was somewhat off the beaten track in terms of Chiswick. The High Road was the main centre of Chiswick, with a lot of little houses, which were multi-occupied around it. When I was at Notting Hill and Ealing School, I was rather ashamed to say I came from Chiswick because Chiswick was a down-market place...

College House is bang in the middle of what was to be a road leading to a bridge across the river. It started to be built just before the First World War but I suppose it must have been planned a lot earlier because Thames Bank and Field House were built with their front doors at the side, and in the yard between their front doors, if you dig in the gravel, you come to the edge of the pavement on each side. Thames Bank, where I grew up, was built in about 1880, so they must have planned this road bridge, which was to go across the river, jumping onto the island...

When they started building the A4, they dug very deep trenches across the line that the new road would take. Every 50 yards there'd be a trench about 5 feet across. I was big enough then and quite athletic, and I loved playing horses going to school, and we'd gallop and jump over these huge ditches. There certainly was no health and safety, no fences or ‘keep off’ or anything like that, and we children, we just used them as a playground and we'd go to school as racehorses racing ditches rather than fences. I loved that.

## Introduction to Heathrow operations

Heathrow has 2 main runways; both oriented east-west, and named after compass points along the approach path for the aircraft. One is used for landing and the other for take-offs.

If you are a landing aircraft approaching from the east, which is true for 70% to 80% of the flights, due to the prevailing winds, you would either arrive on the southernmost runway, which is called 27L (270 degrees on the compass and on the left of the aircraft) and approach along a track south of the river, or the northern runway, which brings the flight path closest to us, and is designated 27R.

When the wind direction is from the east, about 30% of the time, the aircraft land on the same runways but approach from the west, over Windsor, and the runway designations using the same logic, switch to 09R and 09L respectively.

There are approximately 650 landings a day at Heathrow, with the main peak coming between about 0600 and 0800 every morning, followed by a smaller peak around 1800-2000. Normal flight arrivals commence at 0430 and cease at 2300 although a restricted number are able to land outside those times in exceptional circumstances.

### *Noise relief*

In order to relieve noise nuisance, Heathrow has operated a runway alternation plan for many years. The intention is to relieve constant noise by swapping over the runways used for landing on each of 3 time periods every day-night-time, 2330-0600, 0600-1500, and 1500 to the last arrival.

This plan can be viewed on the website [noise.heathrowairport.com](http://noise.heathrowairport.com) under quick link runway alternation 2012. We are affected most during the periods when 27R is the landing runway, although we can still hear aircraft arriving on 27L, they're just a bit quieter.

### *Congestion relief*

In addition, in order to relieve the morning peak, the airport has been operating a *Tactically-Enhanced Arrivals Mode (TEAM)* for some time now. Mainly from 0600-0800, this allows some arrivals on the departure-dedicated runway. Therefore, even if 27L is the designated landing runway from 0600-1500, aircraft landing on 27R, in between takeoffs, could sometimes disturb us.

### *The current operational trial*

The trial, which started on the 1<sup>st</sup> November and ran to the 29<sup>th</sup> February, recommences for 2 months in July/August to test the summer season response, and further allows additional arrivals over and above TEAM requirements on the departure runway, for significant operational reasons.

In summary our OCPS area noise nuisance only increases when 27L is the landing runway, and where there are additional arrivals on 27R above those we experienced pre-trial. This appears to have averaged about 12 extra arrivals in an operating day, mainly during the morning and afternoon peaks, during the aforementioned winter season trial.

### **OCPS Books on Old Chiswick**

The books on the history of Old Chiswick and the Thornycroft Works continue to make a steady sale to the benefit of the Society. Copies are on sale at Chiswick Library, Chiswick House, Waterstones and other locations or can be obtained from Rosemarie Clifton at Brampton House, Church Street.

### **New committee member of OCPS**

Penny Barltrop submitted the article on aircraft noise; she joined the committee last year as our Neighbourhood Watch representative; but in her previous life was most recently Engineering Project Manager for Terminal 5 at Heathrow.

### **Names and addresses of OCPS officers**

Sir Alan Munro, President, Eynham House, Chiswick Mall  
Russell Harris, Chairman, Riverside House, Chiswick Mall  
James Stitt, Treasurer, 8 Eyot Green  
Alice Nissen, Secretary, College House, Chiswick Mall  
Newsletter Editors: Liza Bray and Cliff Clifton, OCPS committee members  
Planning Sub Committee chairman: Robbie Gill  
River Sub Committee chairman: Jane Nissen  
Traffic and Roads Sub Committee chairman: Sir Alan Munro  
Thames Tideway Tunnel Sub Committee chairman: Tony Taylor

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