



Old Chiswick Protection Society

The Old Chiswick Protection Society exists to preserve and enhance the amenities of this riverside conservation area.

Autumn 2015 Newsletter

Join us in two forthcoming events

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on **Monday 23rd November** in Fuller's Hock Cellar. Whether or not you are already a member, do come to our AGM and learn more about our work. Fuller's are kindly providing a buffet and drinks from 7.15pm. The Meeting begins at 8pm. Please see the last page of this Newsletter for the full Notice.

Chiswick Eyot

One of the activities we regularly organise, together with the charity Thames21, is work on the Eyot. The next event will be on the morning of **Friday 30th October**. See the last page of this Newsletter for more details.

Chairman's message

In the last newsletter I explained that Hounslow Council were minded to replace our existing street columns and street lights. The columns, lights and the ramshackle glow they give are an important part of the character of our Conservation Area. As you will see from elsewhere in this newsletter, there has been a good deal of discussion about this over the summer. A final decision has yet to be made but it seems as though the Council has listened to our submissions. Hopefully, an acceptable solution is at hand. Thank you if you lobbied for this result.

But the next issue is upon us. As you might know, the Council is requiring all households in the borough to have large plastic wheelie bins to assist with refuse collection. The difficulty with these bins in Conservation Areas is that not all households are able to store them off the street.

This means that in practice, Conservation Areas are littered with large plastic bins left on the street for the entire week. Historic England has identified the impact of such bins as unsightly and significantly harmful to areas such as Old Chiswick, where the combination of historic buildings and street furniture is a key element of 'significance'. A further issue arises for bins left on the Mall. The tide will pick them up and move them along the road and into the river.



OCPS is seeking to avoid such harm being occasioned in Old Chiswick and is in dialogue with the Council. Individual householders can help too, though. If you have nowhere to keep a wheelie bin other than on the road, you are entitled to ask to do without one by saying so in response to a form which will be sent around soon. Of course, each household must make up its own mind as to what it does and many considerations will be in play. But please have in mind the impact of a litter of big plastic bins in our historic area and opt not to leave a bin on the street permanently if you are at all able.

Website and email address

The OCPS website is updated regularly. It is full of information on the history of Old Chiswick as well as on current events, and it has many useful links. Do have a look at it: <http://www.ocps.btck.co.uk>

The OCPS can be reached at oldchiswick@googlemail.com

Street lights in the conservation area

As reported in the Spring Newsletter, OCPS was very concerned about Hounslow Borough Council's plans for street lighting in Old Chiswick. You can read about the history of our street lights on our website – look for the link under About Old Chiswick, OCPS publications/resources.

Since that Newsletter in May, the Chairman has been communicating with LBH by email, continuing to stress the extremely sensitive nature of this Conservation Area and its special needs. The Bedford Park Society commissioned a report from Atelier Ten, lighting designers, who put forward possible alternatives to the LED lights proposed by Hounslow Highways to LBH in February. A shorter lamppost with one of the light sources recommended by Atelier Ten was put on display in Woodstock Road in June. OCPS asked another lighting designer, Mary Rushton-Beales, to give a view on this and on the Atelier Ten Report on our behalf. We learnt that LBH was taking the numerous comments from all the affected community groups extremely seriously, amongst other things commissioning their own report into alternative light sources. It is understood that LBH has come to a decision about all the 'heritage' lighting in the borough, which we look forward to hearing about.

Traffic and roads

Homefield Park South improvements

We have been following up the works referred to in the spring 2015 edition of our newsletter. We are told that, as a result of unexpectedly high costs, some of the requested works will be deferred. However the following improvements are due to start now: tarmac resurfacing of the pathway, repairs to brickwork, resetting of railings, renewal of gate, and repairs and painting of railings onto Chiswick Lane South. We are told that the rest of our requested works will be deferred to stage 2. We await more information.

Street repairs

LBH merit a pat on the back for the prompt attention they give to any points we raise via their efficient website 'complaints and queries' service on street repairs, cleaning and lighting matters in our Conservation Area.

The Mall is due to be resurfaced with tarmac during next spring.

Hogarth Triangle

For the last five years OCPS has supported Transport for London in maintaining the triangle on the Hogarth Roundabout. The objective has been to create a wildflower area; in years past we have had great success. Brita von Shoenach, the noted wildflower expert who kindly gives her services to us, speaks of her disappointment at the failure to germinate this year, especially after the soil had been improved for the first time ever. At the optimum time for sowing it was extremely windy, which contributed to the lack of success. She also says the compost contained weeds, including a wild mustard which came up all over the main roundabout as well. This has now set seed, which is a problem for next year. Brita has suggested strimming the area, removing debris, rotavating in February, letting the weeds germinate, spraying them off in late March/early April and sowing a week later. Phil Hurst of TfL informs us that the triangle has now been cut down and sprayed off. The Society will keep in touch with him on progress.

Planning

Once again, very few planning applications have been made in the conservation area over the past few months.

Although not in the conservation area, an application has been made to change the use of the northern side of Axis house on the Hogarth Roundabout from offices to a 162-bedroom hotel. However, apart from some minor decorations to the outside and the addition of some planting, very little will change in terms of its appearance. The change in use is expected to generate less traffic than when the building was used as an office.

Over a year ago, the residents of Riverside Lodge applied to have a balcony installed overlooking Chiswick Mall and the river. This was granted and work has commenced.

English Heritage have assessed Lamb Brewery and decided not to list it.

Subscription rates

Our records are unclear as to when the subscription to OCPS was last increased. Many years ago it was fixed at its current level of £5. The Committee have now decided that it should increase to £15 each member. The background to this rise is increased expenditure under two heads.

The first is Chiswick Eyot. Over many years members gathered on a Sunday morning in January or February to prune the willows. Not all of them could be reached safely so even in those days professional assistance was required. More recently, the willows have been pruned professionally. OCPS members then bundled the trimmed withies, which were used to strengthen the Eyot's banks.

The second is the printing of the OCPS newsletter. Formerly, a member printed it free of charge. This no longer applies so we have to use commercial printers.

Over the past six years subscriptions and donations from members have averaged almost £1500 a year. This is less than the annual cost of pollarding Chiswick Eyot – let alone the expenditure on the newsletters. The OCPS Committee therefore believes that the finances of the Society must be put on a more realistic foundation.

As always, donations in addition to subscriptions are most gratefully received. Please do remember to use Gift Aid (if you are a UK taxpayer) when paying subscriptions and donations as this significantly increases the value to OCPS without any cost whatever to its members.

Chiswick Eyot

Himalayan Balsam

We are still awaiting news from the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) about the results of their trials with the rust fungus that may prove to be the answer to our problems with Himalayan Balsam. We're hoping it will prove effective and safe and that we will be able to use it on the Eyot very soon.

Chinese Mitten Crab

There's good and bad news on this invader, which is burrowing into the banks on both sides of the Eyot. The bad news is that recent research has shown that the crabs don't just make single holes, as we thought, but great labyrinths. No wonder big chunks are falling off the reed beds. We're waiting for advice from the Natural History Museum and the River Restoration Centre. The possibly better news is that the Environment Agency is finding fewer Mitten Crabs here than in the past – but it may be too soon to draw any conclusions from this.



River health

We were present recently when the Environment Agency were doing some fishing in the river, just off the Eyot. As well as small dace, bass, sticklebacks and shrimps, they caught this sizeable bream. Everything was measured and weighed and returned to the river.

High astronomical tides

The Port of London Authority has sent out a Notice to Mariners on the Thames, warning of High Astronomical Tides: 27 – 30 October 2015; 25 – 27 December 2015; 11 – 14 January 2016.

<http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Tide-Tables>

Port of London Authority towpath tree works 2016

During the last few years the Society has cooperated with the PLA on the maintenance of the trees which line the towpath on the south side of the Thames from Hammersmith to Barnes, particularly in replanting where trees have had to be felled. We have received details of the works the PLA are planning this winter, selected – as last year – according to 3 main criteria: the health of the tree and/or risk to users of the towpath, improvements to navigational safety of river users, maintenance of the structural integrity of the revetment wall. All the work will be to trees growing in the river revetment; none is opposite the river frontage in our Conservation Area. The most relevant ones are opposite Chiswick Pier. We have forwarded this information to residents in Corney Reach. The PLA will undertake these works in January/February 2016, after completing an environmental assessment. Notices will be placed in affected areas.

Thames tideway tunnel

Bazalgette Tunnel Ltd has received its licence from Ofwat, the construction and financing contracts for the West, Central and East sections have now been awarded and building will start next year on this 7-year project. The good news is that strong competition for both finance and construction has driven down costs below previous estimates. Consequently Thames Water now say that, subject to inflation, current annual household bills will remain at their existing level at least until 2020 and thereafter the increase will be £20 to £25, substantially less than the £70 to £80 previously predicted.

Neighbourhood watch

We have infrequent vehicle break-ins due to the vigilance of Neighbourhood Watch Members; those that occur tend to be vehicles belonging to visitors to the area. All crime figures are down from this time last year except for an increase in door-to-door begging and potential scams, so please don't open the door to strangers or casual sellers, whether for charity or any other reason, to be safe.

Books on Old Chiswick

The books published by the OCPS on the history of Old Chiswick and on the Thornycroft Works are on sale at Hogarth House as well as at Bookcase and Waterstones in Chiswick High Road. They can also be obtained from Rosemarie Clifton, Brampton House, Church Street.

Names and addresses of officers

Sir Alan Munro, *President*, Eynham House, Chiswick Mall; Mr Russell Harris, *Chairman*, Morton House, Chiswick Mall; Mr James Stitt, *Treasurer*, 8 Eyot Green, Chiswick; Mrs Patricia Langley, *Secretary*, Riverside House, Chiswick Mall

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 23rd November 2015

7.15 for 8pm

Hock Cellar, Fuller's Brewery

The following Executive Committee members are retiring by rotation and have expressed their willingness to serve again: Mr Graham Clifton, Mr Russell Harris, Mrs Sophie Sainty

The following have been co-opted onto the Executive Committee since the last AGM and are therefore due to be elected: Mr Simon Yardley, Mrs Lesley Gatenby

If you have any nominations for the Executive Committee, please tell the Secretary 1 week before the AGM.

Chiswick Eyot, Chiswick Mall, W4 2PW

Friday 30th October 2015

9.30am – 12.30pm

Come and help us clean up the Eyot, or work on the bank defences using cut withies (willow branches). We'll meet on the draw-dock at the end of Chiswick Lane at 9.30am. Wear long sleeves and trousers – no other kit is necessary as Thames21 will supply wellies, gloves, goggles and any necessary tools. Expect it to be muddy – and we do have to stress that it is at your own risk.