

Old Chiswick Protection Society

Spring 2023 Newsletter

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

A PARTY: TUESDAY 4 JULY 2023, 6.30 to 8.30 pm

Please join us for our Annual OCPS Summer Party at Eynham House, Chiswick Mall, by kind invitation of Sir Alan Munro.

There is no charge, but contributions of canapés and wine would be welcome. Please let our Secretary know what you would like to bring by emailing her at: patricialangley@me.com

Message from the Chair

Spring is finally here, so we can leave behind something of a winter of discontent in the conservation area. Happily, this has been, for now at least, resolved in favour of the conservation area, with plans to segregate the brewery being rejected by Hounslow Council. The brewery has been a physical and functional part of the community for hundreds of years. May this continue for many more!

OCPS, along with many other organisations that have an interest in the health of the river, officially opposed Thames Water's preposterous proposal to remove a million litres of water every day from the Thames and replace it with treated wastewater. While we await the outcome, our critical work on the eyot continues unabated, contributing to the conservation and character of this stretch of the Thames.



Photo: Sir Alan Munro, Sun on a frosty morning

Looking ahead to the summer, here are some dates for your calendars:

Sunday June 11 National Garden Scheme. Last year this group raised the highest amount in London, making a £6000 contribution towards the £3.1 million raised nationwide for nursing and health charities.

Friday June 16 – Sunday June 18 Artists at Home.

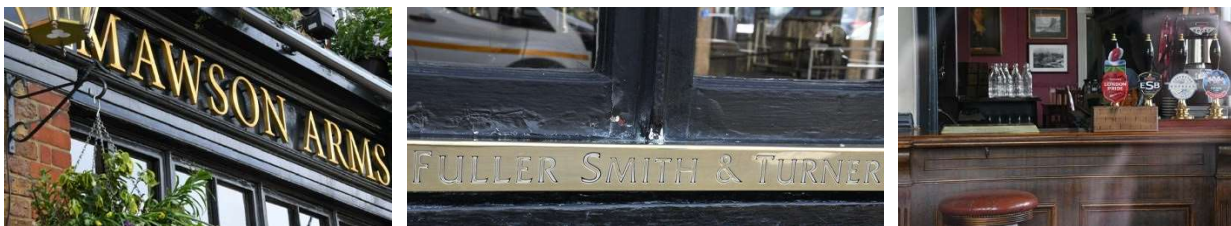
Tuesday July 4 This year's OCPS Annual Summer Party at Eynham House.

Message from the President

The brewing of beer in Old Chiswick has a long history. From at least the time of Oliver Cromwell, the proximity of the Thames has meant that brewing and brewers have formed an essential part of the character of the area. The first large brewhouse operated from Bedford House on Chiswick Mall.

Another was housed nearby at the cottage of Thomas Urlin, the father-in-law of Thomas Mawson. Mawson in the early 1700s inherited the cottage brewhouse and then bought up the Bedford House brewery. The Mawson Arms, now sadly empty and boarded up, marks the spot of his Mawson brewery. In 1816, John Fuller acquired the brewery and gave it its Griffin name. But the business struggled until, in 1845, John Fuller's son came to its rescue and, along with Henry Smith and John Turner, turned the fortunes of the business around. The brewery thrived and its buildings evolved, taking up much of the land behind Bedford House and its neighbours, where beer-making had begun.

The life of the successful brewery became inextricably linked with the life of Old Chiswick. The heady aroma of roasted barley (still so evocative) permeated the area. Brewery owners and managers occupied the large houses which bordered the site. Large brewery buildings to accommodate the brewing process were constructed, storage facilities and offices filled the available area behind the older grand riverside houses and occupied the fine Georgian terrace which now bears Mawson's name. Workers and residents frequented the Mawson Arms, which became the community's pub. The brewery thus formed an integral and integrated part of the area. It was central to its people's comings and goings. When the Old Chiswick Conservation Area was created, there was no doubt but that the brewery, its buildings, its smells and its people so firmly formed part of the character of the area that it should be included within the boundary of the area of special importance.



Photos: Russell Harris, KC

This physical and functional interrelationship between brewery and community is reflected in the fact that a full public right of way exists from Chiswick Lane South over the open courtyard of the brewery to the Mall houses beyond. In addition, and further underscoring the interdependence of brewery and surrounds, private rights of way which allow access to the Mall houses at all times (but which are especially and critically important when the river floods) were formalised by a deed of covenant.

So, the recent application to separate the brewery from its Conservation Area by the erection of modern functional gates obstructing these public and private rights of way was unwelcome. It was uncharacteristic of the open symbiotic relationship between brewery and people which has existed for centuries. Inexplicably, OCPS was not consulted on the application. With reluctance, we objected to our neighbour's application which, on its face, extraordinarily chose neither to recognise nor to safeguard the public or private rights of way.

Thankfully, the gates application has been refused and the existence of the public and private rights of way has been accepted by the local authority: a small but important victory for history in the oldest part of Chiswick. Let's drink a beer to that.

OCPS is now doing all it can to restore relationships with the brewery. It will always be a hugely important part of the character and significance of our area and we want to work constructively with its owners to ensure that centuries of neighbourly co-existence might once more prevail.

Chiswick Eyot and *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* by WB Yeats

The centenary this year of the award of the literary Nobel Prize to the Irish writer William Butler Yeats has brought forth a recognition that much of his work was written during the early part of his life, when he lived from 1878 with his family in Bedford Park, London's new garden suburb designed by Norman Shaw. The development attracted residents from a creative and liberally minded community, of which the Yeats family were members. His sister Susan worked on embroidery designs with May Morris, the daughter of William Morris, in his Arts and Crafts workshop at nearby Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith. Another sister, Elizabeth, taught art at Chiswick High School in Bedford Park.

Yeats formed a close attachment to Chiswick during his years here. One lasting feature of this period is the little-known literary connection between Chiswick Eyot and one of the best-loved of his lyrical poems, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, written in 1888 during his time in Bedford Park. In his early novel *John Sherman*, Yeats has his central character declare:

He was set dreaming a whole day by walking down one Sunday morning to the border of the Thames – a few hundred yards from his house – and looking at the osier-covered Chiswick Eyot. It made him remember an old day-dream of his. The source of the river that passed his garden at home was a certain wood-bordered and island lake, whither in childhood he had often gone blackberry-gathering. At the further end was a little islet called Inniscrewin. Its rocky centre, covered with many bushes, rose some forty feet above the lake. Often when life and its difficulties had seemed to him like the lessons of some elder boy given to a younger by mistake, it had seemed good to dream of going away to that islet...

The stream he recalled ran past his mother's native home in County Sligo, to which Yeats returned and to a life of active support for the cause of Irish nationalism.

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Thames Water

Thames Water has published a draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024, which looks at tackling future water shortages and boosting drinking water supply as the population grows and the risk of drought caused by climate change increases. The company estimates it will need an extra one billion litres of water a day for customers by 2075.

The first scheme to be introduced under the proposals, by 2031, would be the Teddington scheme. Millions of litres a day would be taken from the Thames between Teddington Weir and Hampton Court and be transferred via an underground tunnel to the Lee Valley reservoirs. Treated wastewater would be pumped back into the river from Mogden sewage works to replace the water abstracted.

Thames Water says the scheme would not have a negative impact on water quality in the river or on river life. DEFRA and the Environment Agency would monitor and police this. In their response, the OCPS Committee expressed doubts as to the effectiveness of these organisations, following years of fines not changing Thames Water's behaviour.

A consultation on the draft plan ended on 21 March. OCPS's response was circulated to members, with a link for individuals to respond directly to Thames Water. We await more information, which has been requested from LBH. Meanwhile, the Environment Agency has ordered Thames Water to do more to fix its daily leakage of 630 million litres of water before it takes water from the Thames.

Chiswick Eyot

The annual willow pollarding was done in November and volunteers came out to bundle the withies and then use them to build up the defences around the eyot. It's a constant battle to stop the erosion, so if ever you see our poster up showing dates when we'll be working on the eyot, do please put your wellies on and come and join us.

Hogarth Triangle

Our proposal as outlined in the autumn newsletter for an ambitious plan to replant the triangle has had to be reconsidered in the light of the summer drought and financial constraints within TfL. We are now hoping that after the splendid spring display of daffodils has died back, TfL will maintain the triangle and keep down the orache weed by a combination of mowing and strimming.

Arboretum in Cemetery

OCPS and St Nicholas Church are working with Hounslow Council to develop the arboretum in the Old Chiswick Burial Ground. Eighteen trees were planted recently, bringing the total to over 50 trees established over three years. Looking to the future, the Council requires a radar survey to be completed so that appropriate areas for planting can be identified. A wild area is being created, which will not be strimmed as previously.

Watering may become a major concern as we approach summer as access to water in the cemetery is hampered by unsuitable tap fittings and low flow if we want to use hosepipes. We have asked LBH to look into the supply of hosepipes and review with its maintenance team on frequency of visits with a bowser. However, volunteers are vital during dry spells to ensure trees do not suffer damage or die as a result. If you are able,

please consider yourself as part of the community to help with this during dry spells. *It would help if you could bring your own watering can or bucket.*



Photo: Penny Barltrop

Flood Gates

The 1972 flood gates along Chiswick Mall seem to be inconsistently managed and maintained. Gates in front of some private houses have been updated, some have been maintained, some are closed before a high tide by the Environment Agency while others are not. OCPS will look into this.

Neighbourhood Watch

If a crime is in progress, or someone is in danger, call 999. But we might wonder about calling in hostile door-to-door opportunists, for example, or would-be perpetrators of thefts from motor vehicles, when we know that they will be gone when (or even if) the first responders arrive. If 101 is busy, or the wait is very long, online reporting is good for recording an incident that has happened. To report a crime you have been a victim of, or have witnessed, go online to met.police.uk. As well as the obvious, the reporting categories include anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and hate crimes.

Whilst it is helpful to share incidents and sightings on social media to alert neighbours, it is important to report them to the police. Every report adds to the statistics, providing an accurate picture of crimes or potential crimes in our local area, and thereby justifying more police resources.

Books on Old Chiswick

In 1982, for the Silver Jubilee, OCPS published Humphrey Arthure's *Life and Work in Old Chiswick*, an excellent history of the conservation area, now in its third edition. This and his history of the Thornycroft Works (*Thornycroft – shipbuilding and motor works in Chiswick*) are available from Bookcase in Chiswick High Road and from Rosemarie Clifton, Brampton House, Church Street.

OCPS Officers

President Emeritus Sir Alan Munro, Eynham House, Chiswick Mall; *President* Mr Russell Harris KC, Morton House, Chiswick Mall; *Chair* Mrs Stephanie Camu, Cedar House, Chiswick Mall; *Treasurer* Mr Eric Leung, Concord Court, Chiswick Gate; *Secretary* Mrs Patricia Langley, Riverside House, Chiswick Mall

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