

Old Chiswick Protection Society

Winter 2011 Newsletter

Chairman's message

It's been another busy year for OCPS. Three matters merit special attention.

First the redevelopment of Chiswick Lodge: it's fair to say that the development has had a mixed reception. The bulk and mass of the development is much reduced from the previous hospital use. The rhythm and proportions of the building reflect the surrounding buildings in the Conservation Area. But for many, the choice of materials and the details of the fenestration are disappointing.

Under current planning law, OCPS has no influence over the details at this late stage but important changes are afoot. OCPS is seeking through the provisions of the Localism Act to establish a Neighbourhood Plan for Old Chiswick which would make it much more difficult for buildings to fail to respect the character of the area, even in terms of small scale design.

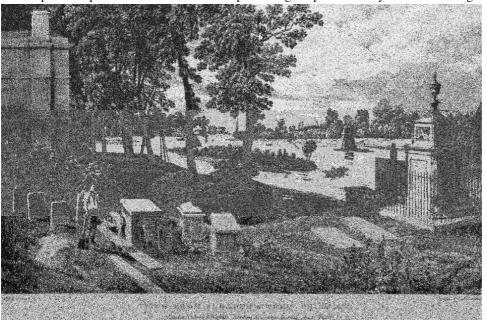
Second, the potential for Old Chiswick to play a large part in the construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel has been successfully avoided. The TTT sub committee has tenaciously followed every twist and turn of the project including the identification of sites at Homefields South, Chiswick Lodge and on the Eyot as potential construction sites for the tunnel. The long-term disruption brought by the selection of one of these sites would have been unbearable and very harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The Committee's clear understanding and presentation of the issues was a factor, which led Thames Water to select other locations outside of Old Chiswick for this work.

Third, the River sub-committee has successfully argued for the restoration of the pattern of annual pollarding of withies on the Eyot. This is reported in full elsewhere in this letter but it is important for us all to appreciate the historic importance of the Eyot as a piece of living history. This juxtaposition of historic townscape and historic landscape is unique on the Thames. Annual pollarding keeps it that way as well as being an important community

event.

Next year's challenges are likely to include the potential for a third runway (again) and/or alternate running of runways at Heathrow, the removal of unlawful parking from the slipway and drawdock and the very important job of stabilising the banks of the Eyot against erosion.

Anyone wishing to join us in this important work, please contact the Chairman or any of the committee members.



Low trees on the Chiswick Eyot (1823)

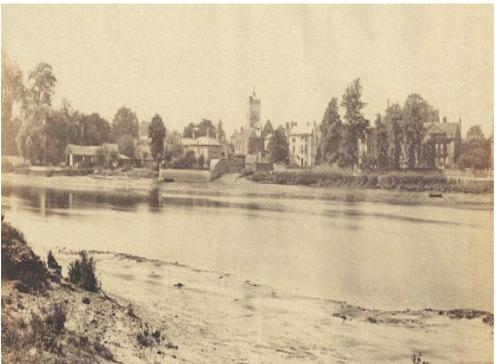
Chiswick Eyot: an historic withy bed (osier holt)

Over the summer we have been researching the historical appearance and use of the Eyot. As is well known, the willows (osiers) on Chiswick Eyot have been used at least since 1800 as a source of 'withies' (flexible willow branches) for the weaving of baskets. In the past to produce withies, osiers were often 'coppiced', that is the new growth was cut back to about one foot each year, creating a 'stool', which was left to re-grow.

From looking at numerous engravings, photographs and paintings going back to the mid 19th century, it can be clearly seen that almost the entire Eyot was covered with low growth.

For 60 years, the OCPS has been instrumental in the survival of the withy bed by cutting them annually. The Society has used the alternative historical technique of 'pollarding' whereby the trunk of the osier is left to grow to about 4 feet and then the withies cut each year from this point. This had maintained the compact, low growth of the Eyot with which passers-by are so familiar.

What has also become apparent from research is that although withy beds were common along rivers in England, Chiswick Eyot is one of the few historic beds remaining and the only one on the Thames. As a result, it can be seen that it is a very important historical resource both in terms of appearance and use. The importance is reinforced by the



fact that the Eyot sits adjacent to the Old Chiswick Conservation Area, one of the first Conservation Areas to be designated in England and one of the country's richest such areas in terms of historical assets.

If you would like a copy of the document we have produced about the Historical Significance of the Eyot and how this can be maintained, Jane Nissen would be happy to email you a copy (jane@nissen.demon.c o.uk).

Very low growth on Eyot with Chiswick Mall behind (1850s-1870s)

Caring for the Eyot

There is much to do to ensure the longevity of the Eyot: OCPS is collaborating with Thames 21 to make this happen. Both organisations agree its significance as an historic withy bed is of central importance in this work. The OCPS will lead on maintaining the unique look and use of the island by pollarding all the osiers annually as we have done in the past. The experiment of February 2011 to pollard only a third per year led to loss in historical significance and will not be repeated.

We are also working with Thames 21 to find funding for bank stabilisation. As they are leading on this issue as well that of improving biodiversity, please keep an eye on their very active web-site (www.thames21.org.uk).

T21 will lead on the vital work of helping to stabilise the perimeter of the island much damaged in recent times by the Chinese mitten crab and to maintain, as far as possible, the biodiversity of the island mainly by removing Himalayan balsam (a non-native invasive species) and by removing plastic litter and piled-up plant debris.

You are warmly invited to help pollard the osiers on Sunday 26th February 2012; details to follow

Planning

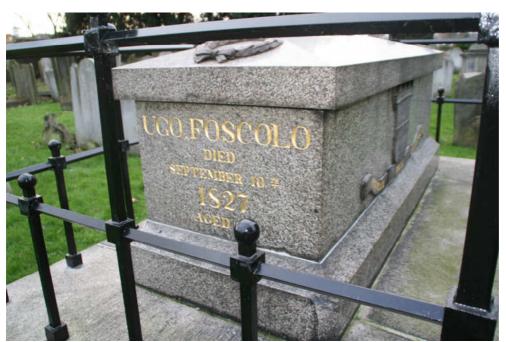
The proposed addition of a small kitchen and toilets to St Nicholas Church is a sensitive issue for some. The aim is to provide modest facilities that will benefit all who visit the church. Plans have been submitted to the DAC (Diocesan

Advisory Council) and negotiations are currently taking place. It is proposed to extend the current boiler room with access directly from the church. There is a considerable amount of consultation still required in order to balance both amenities of the church with its architectural importance. OCPS are in consultation with both the church and their architects.

St Denys House has been granted planning permission to provide a larger meeting room and flat. This had gone through extensive consultation with sensitive modifications to ensure that it will not adversely affect the residents of Church Street or indeed the overall aspect of church environment. At the last OCPS meeting, the implications on traffic were discussed extensively and the majority opinion was that the impact would be minimal.

As all of you are probably aware, the King Street Redevelopment Scheme has been withdrawn for the present. The council will work with the GLA on an independent rigorous assessment of the project, but the planning application remains live.

Donations for local restoration projects



OCPS was one of the major sponsors for the restoration of Ugo Foscolo's tomb in St Nicholas' churchyard. A much-loved romantic poet and writer, he died in 1827 at Turnham Green and was buried here, though forty-five years later his body was repatriated to Florence. Early this September, the refurbished tomb with freshened inscriptions and new iron railings was unveiled in front of a crowd of about eighty including a large number of Italians of all ages, as well as the

Mayor, neighbours, parishioners, councillors, historians and at least one retired vicar. The Italian Ambassador was unable to be present but there was an Italian MEP and other dignitaries. After the speeches and the presentation of a book (a copy of which was donated to the Society), there were refreshments in the church

Hogarth House was closed in September 2008 for refurbishment when a fire in the building caused further damage, which required raising additional funds. OCPS was able to sponsor the Hogarth House Trust, which spearheaded the works. On Tuesday 9th November, the house was reopened to the public. New research returned the paintwork to some of the original colours; information is attractively presented and one learns not only of the Hogarth family but also of other inhabitants of the house. It is well worth a visit.

Thames Tideway Tunnel

A light at the end of the tunnel? Following their public consultation last spring, Thames Water has at last published a set of drawings that give definition to their proposed route. The massive machine boring its way under the Thames will travel 30 metres below Miller's Court, crossing under the A4 on its way to the Storm Water Tanks at Acton. The project requires an approval for the location of the 'drive shaft' (where the machine is lowered into the ground) on the north foreshore near Wandsworth Bridge. No doubt this will be hotly debated following the second stage public consultation that ends in February.

How will this affect us? Thames Water wants to inspect the condition of property over or near the route as a precaution in case there might be slight subsidence during construction otherwise there will be nothing apparent on the surface near us.

Will it happen? The scheme has momentum. The findings of the enquiry into a cheaper, less intrusive alternative commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham have been largely discredited by TW. An amalgamation of 15 river charities is lobbying for an early start and the final proposals will be announced soon after the second stage consultation is completed.

What will it cost and who pays? The original cost estimates, which would have resulted in a £47 annual additional charge to households, have now risen to £4.1bn at 2011 prices, with a possible extra bill to households of over £70.

Wild flower planting on Hogarth triangle

As reported in the summer newsletter, the Society, led by wildflower expert Brita von Shoenaich, obtained permission from Transport for London (TfL) to plant the Hogarth Triangle with wildflowers. The project flourished and for a time the triangle was a beautiful sight. Then disaster ensued: due to a lack of communication, contractors for TfL strimmed a strip around the wild flower meadow, which destroyed a significant amount of the planting. Later in the season Thames Water dug up a large portion of the meadow to repair a water main.

In 2012 our plan is that things will run more smoothly. TfL has once again given permission for us to plant the triangle. A large number of bulbs have been acquired which will extend the flowering season. A small sign is to be placed on the triangle, commemorating the co-operative efforts of both the Old Chiswick Protection Society and TfL. We hope that in the forthcoming Olympic year, our wildflower meadow will be one of West London's more notable attractions.

Memories of Old Chiswick

Thérèse Bennett has begun to gather memories of Old Chiswick. She has now heard from nine people who have lived here for many years, or who did live here since moved but have memories of Old Chiswick before the A4 was built. She has also gathered some written reminiscences. If you have been in touch with her, she will contact you soon about recording your recollections. The OCPS has acquired a digital recorder for this purpose. If you haven't contacted her yet and have memories of life here before the A4, or if you know of someone else who might have recollections to share, please get in touch with Thérèse Bennett by email at t.tobin@talktalk.net or by phone on 020 8994 6753.

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, Waterstones and WH Smith or can be obtained from Rosemarie Clifton at Brampton House, Church Street.

Neighbourhood Watch

Since the last newsletter, we have seen a change in our police Safer Neighbourhood's team. PCSO Ike Ebosie remains with us and two neighbouring wards have been combined under one sergeant, Amanda Valiant. Response to reported crimes continue to be reported as excellent by our members, and actions of members have prevented some thefts in the area.

The council, police and locals have worked together to make the south side of the church a safer place at night. Thanks to all neighbours who have participated in patrolling the area in the evenings and picking up rubbish.

Keep vigilant in the run-up to the festive period. Please contact Penny Barltrop on 0780 794 4696 if you wish to join Neighbourhood Watch.

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

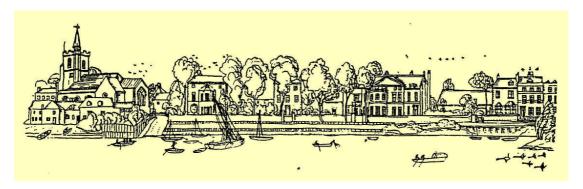
Alice Nissen, Secretary, College House, Chiswick Mall

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

The OCPS can be reached at oldchiswick@googlemail.com



Old Chiswick Protection Society

Winter 2011 Newsletter

Chairman's message

It's been another busy year for OCPS. Three matters merit special attention.

First the redevelopment of Chiswick Lodge: it's fair to say that the development has had a mixed reception. The bulk and mass of the development is much reduced from the previous hospital use. The rhythm and proportions of the building reflect the surrounding buildings in the Conservation Area. But for many, the choice of materials and the details of the fenestration are disappointing.

Under current planning law, OCPS has no influence over the details at this late stage but important changes are afoot. OCPS is seeking through the provisions of the Localism Act to establish a Neighbourhood Plan for Old Chiswick which would make it much more difficult for buildings to fail to respect the character of the area, even in terms of small scale design.

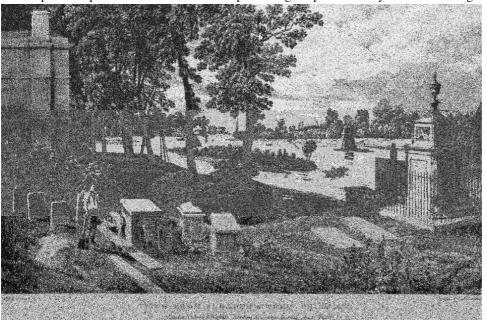
Second, the potential for Old Chiswick to play a large part in the construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel has been successfully avoided. The TTT sub committee has tenaciously followed every twist and turn of the project including the identification of sites at Homefields South, Chiswick Lodge and on the Eyot as potential construction sites for the tunnel. The long-term disruption brought by the selection of one of these sites would have been unbearable and very harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The Committee's clear understanding and presentation of the issues was a factor, which led Thames Water to select other locations outside of Old Chiswick for this work.

Third, the River sub-committee has successfully argued for the restoration of the pattern of annual pollarding of withies on the Eyot. This is reported in full elsewhere in this letter but it is important for us all to appreciate the historic importance of the Eyot as a piece of living history. This juxtaposition of historic townscape and historic landscape is unique on the Thames. Annual pollarding keeps it that way as well as being an important community

event.

Next year's challenges are likely to include the potential for a third runway (again) and/or alternate running of runways at Heathrow, the removal of unlawful parking from the slipway and drawdock and the very important job of stabilising the banks of the Eyot against erosion.

Anyone wishing to join us in this important work, please contact the Chairman or any of the committee members.



Low trees on the Chiswick Eyot (1823)

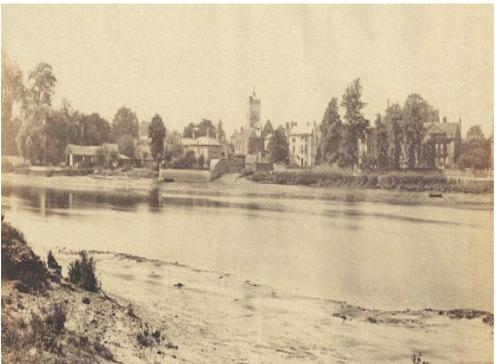
Chiswick Eyot: an historic withy bed (osier holt)

Over the summer we have been researching the historical appearance and use of the Eyot. As is well known, the willows (osiers) on Chiswick Eyot have been used at least since 1800 as a source of 'withies' (flexible willow branches) for the weaving of baskets. In the past to produce withies, osiers were often 'coppiced', that is the new growth was cut back to about one foot each year, creating a 'stool', which was left to re-grow.

From looking at numerous engravings, photographs and paintings going back to the mid 19th century, it can be clearly seen that almost the entire Eyot was covered with low growth.

For 60 years, the OCPS has been instrumental in the survival of the withy bed by cutting them annually. The Society has used the alternative historical technique of 'pollarding' whereby the trunk of the osier is left to grow to about 4 feet and then the withies cut each year from this point. This had maintained the compact, low growth of the Eyot with which passers-by are so familiar.

What has also become apparent from research is that although withy beds were common along rivers in England, Chiswick Eyot is one of the few historic beds remaining and the only one on the Thames. As a result, it can be seen that it is a very important historical resource both in terms of appearance and use. The importance is reinforced by the



fact that the Eyot sits adjacent to the Old Chiswick Conservation Area, one of the first Conservation Areas to be designated in England and one of the country's richest such areas in terms of historical assets.

If you would like a copy of the document we have produced about the Historical Significance of the Eyot and how this can be maintained, Jane Nissen would be happy to email you a copy (jane@nissen.demon.c o.uk).

Very low growth on Eyot with Chiswick Mall behind (1850s-1870s)

Caring for the Eyot

There is much to do to ensure the longevity of the Eyot: OCPS is collaborating with Thames 21 to make this happen. Both organisations agree its significance as an historic withy bed is of central importance in this work. The OCPS will lead on maintaining the unique look and use of the island by pollarding all the osiers annually as we have done in the past. The experiment of February 2011 to pollard only a third per year led to loss in historical significance and will not be repeated.

We are also working with Thames 21 to find funding for bank stabilisation. As they are leading on this issue as well that of improving biodiversity, please keep an eye on their very active web-site (www.thames21.org.uk).

T21 will lead on the vital work of helping to stabilise the perimeter of the island much damaged in recent times by the Chinese mitten crab and to maintain, as far as possible, the biodiversity of the island mainly by removing Himalayan balsam (a non-native invasive species) and by removing plastic litter and piled-up plant debris.

You are warmly invited to help pollard the osiers on Sunday 26th February 2012; details to follow

Planning

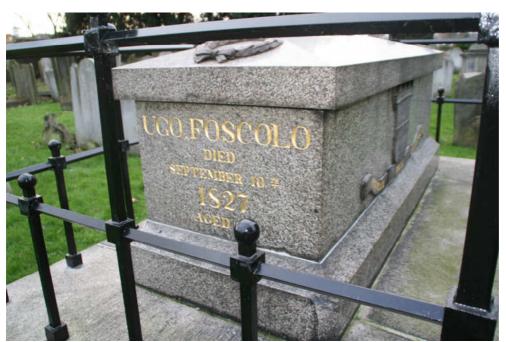
The proposed addition of a small kitchen and toilets to St Nicholas Church is a sensitive issue for some. The aim is to provide modest facilities that will benefit all who visit the church. Plans have been submitted to the DAC (Diocesan

Advisory Council) and negotiations are currently taking place. It is proposed to extend the current boiler room with access directly from the church. There is a considerable amount of consultation still required in order to balance both amenities of the church with its architectural importance. OCPS are in consultation with both the church and their architects.

St Denys House has been granted planning permission to provide a larger meeting room and flat. This had gone through extensive consultation with sensitive modifications to ensure that it will not adversely affect the residents of Church Street or indeed the overall aspect of church environment. At the last OCPS meeting, the implications on traffic were discussed extensively and the majority opinion was that the impact would be minimal.

As all of you are probably aware, the King Street Redevelopment Scheme has been withdrawn for the present. The council will work with the GLA on an independent rigorous assessment of the project, but the planning application remains live.

Donations for local restoration projects



OCPS was one of the major sponsors for the restoration of Ugo Foscolo's tomb in St Nicholas' churchyard. A much-loved romantic poet and writer, he died in 1827 at Turnham Green and was buried here, though forty-five years later his body was repatriated to Florence. Early this September, the refurbished tomb with freshened inscriptions and new iron railings was unveiled in front of a crowd of about eighty including a large number of Italians of all ages, as well as the

Mayor, neighbours, parishioners, councillors, historians and at least one retired vicar. The Italian Ambassador was unable to be present but there was an Italian MEP and other dignitaries. After the speeches and the presentation of a book (a copy of which was donated to the Society), there were refreshments in the church

Hogarth House was closed in September 2008 for refurbishment when a fire in the building caused further damage, which required raising additional funds. OCPS was able to sponsor the Hogarth House Trust, which spearheaded the works. On Tuesday 9th November, the house was reopened to the public. New research returned the paintwork to some of the original colours; information is attractively presented and one learns not only of the Hogarth family but also of other inhabitants of the house. It is well worth a visit.

Thames Tideway Tunnel

A light at the end of the tunnel? Following their public consultation last spring, Thames Water has at last published a set of drawings that give definition to their proposed route. The massive machine boring its way under the Thames will travel 30 metres below Miller's Court, crossing under the A4 on its way to the Storm Water Tanks at Acton. The project requires an approval for the location of the 'drive shaft' (where the machine is lowered into the ground) on the north foreshore near Wandsworth Bridge. No doubt this will be hotly debated following the second stage public consultation that ends in February.

How will this affect us? Thames Water wants to inspect the condition of property over or near the route as a precaution in case there might be slight subsidence during construction otherwise there will be nothing apparent on the surface near us.

Will it happen? The scheme has momentum. The findings of the enquiry into a cheaper, less intrusive alternative commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham have been largely discredited by TW. An amalgamation of 15 river charities is lobbying for an early start and the final proposals will be announced soon after the second stage consultation is completed.

What will it cost and who pays? The original cost estimates, which would have resulted in a £47 annual additional charge to households, have now risen to £4.1bn at 2011 prices, with a possible extra bill to households of over £70.

Wild flower planting on Hogarth triangle

As reported in the summer newsletter, the Society, led by wildflower expert Brita von Shoenaich, obtained permission from Transport for London (TfL) to plant the Hogarth Triangle with wildflowers. The project flourished and for a time the triangle was a beautiful sight. Then disaster ensued: due to a lack of communication, contractors for TfL strimmed a strip around the wild flower meadow, which destroyed a significant amount of the planting. Later in the season Thames Water dug up a large portion of the meadow to repair a water main.

In 2012 our plan is that things will run more smoothly. TfL has once again given permission for us to plant the triangle. A large number of bulbs have been acquired which will extend the flowering season. A small sign is to be placed on the triangle, commemorating the co-operative efforts of both the Old Chiswick Protection Society and TfL. We hope that in the forthcoming Olympic year, our wildflower meadow will be one of West London's more notable attractions.

Memories of Old Chiswick

Thérèse Bennett has begun to gather memories of Old Chiswick. She has now heard from nine people who have lived here for many years, or who did live here since moved but have memories of Old Chiswick before the A4 was built. She has also gathered some written reminiscences. If you have been in touch with her, she will contact you soon about recording your recollections. The OCPS has acquired a digital recorder for this purpose. If you haven't contacted her yet and have memories of life here before the A4, or if you know of someone else who might have recollections to share, please get in touch with Thérèse Bennett by email at t.tobin@talktalk.net or by phone on 020 8994 6753.

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, Waterstones and WH Smith or can be obtained from Rosemarie Clifton at Brampton House, Church Street.

Neighbourhood Watch

Since the last newsletter, we have seen a change in our police Safer Neighbourhood's team. PCSO Ike Ebosie remains with us and two neighbouring wards have been combined under one sergeant, Amanda Valiant. Response to reported crimes continue to be reported as excellent by our members, and actions of members have prevented some thefts in the area.

The council, police and locals have worked together to make the south side of the church a safer place at night. Thanks to all neighbours who have participated in patrolling the area in the evenings and picking up rubbish.

Keep vigilant in the run-up to the festive period. Please contact Penny Barltrop on 0780 794 4696 if you wish to join Neighbourhood Watch.

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

The OCPS can be reached at oldchiswick@googlemail.com