



## YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD VOICE

A publication of the Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum and the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

**Autumn/Winter 2020**

**Issue 9**

A warm hello to our members from your neighbourhood forum and amenity society, Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum (NHENF) and Westbourne Neighbourhood Association (WNA).

Our last newsletter was published back in February and it is becoming hard to remember what life was like then. It has certainly been a tough 9 months, and we sincerely hope that you and your families and friends have remained healthy, and have found ways to adjust your lives and routines to be as fruitful and enjoyable as is possible in the circumstances. Your NHENF steering committee has been able to carry on with many of our normal tasks, virtually, which we will describe later in this newsletter.

Before we discuss our own work though, we'd like to acknowledge, with immense gratitude, the extensive support we received during a scary and challenging time in March and April from one of our Bayswater councillors, Emily Payne. Right at the start of our first lockdown she jumped on the task of setting up street-by-street WhatsApp groups, enlisted volunteers for grocery and pharmacy runs and provided a stream of helpful information that has continued to this day. We hope you will join us in thanking her, along with the many local volunteers for their selfless time and effort on behalf of our residents.

Also, very sadly, in May a former long term Chairman of the WNA and a much-loved neighbour and friend to many of our residents, Pat Burn, passed away after a long illness. She was a gentle and sunny person with a fantastic sense of humour, and she never failed to attend our events and support the efforts of the local neighbourhood organisations. Sheila Mitchell-Keating has written a piece about Pat later in this newsletter.

Despite the fact that most things were shutting down in the spring, we received a flurry of planning applications for comments, and those kept coming throughout the summer and autumn. Many were for

the same things - larger and taller rear extensions and infills that if designed poorly can have a detrimental effect on neighbours and eat up our remaining garden space. This prompted us to draft a set of Planning Guidelines where we put forth some principles for development. These were emailed to all of you in September and are also posted on our website, and we hope if you didn't have a chance to read them before, you will now. We'd welcome your feedback. There have been times when we've been challenged on our planning comments and we felt it was important to have a public document explaining how and why we make these comments. We hope that anyone intending to expand or change their properties will review these so they understand the goals for our built and natural environment.

In addition to our weekly planning application reviews, over the past months we participated in a number of Zoom and Teams calls with various Westminster departments on everything from Covid support and the homeless to hospitality and street modifications. As you might imagine, the pandemic has been devastating to large swathes of Westminster, particularly the retail, hospitality and entertainment areas in the West End, and much work has gone into lessening the impact on these groups.

During our Zoom autumn steering committee meeting we agreed to have the following roles:

Chairman - Richard Perkins  
Vice-Chairman - Penny Bagnall-Smith  
Secretary - Annabel Noth  
Treasurer - Glenn Taylor  
Website - Steven Clutton  
Planning - Andrew Pilkington and David Rea  
Liaison with Westminster Forums - Suzanne Forte

Planning application reviews - Andrew Pilkington, David Rea, Penny Bagnall-Smith

Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee - Richard Perkins, Suzanne Forte, Andrew Pilkington, David Rea, Steven Clutton and Penny Bagnall-Smith.

As outgoing Chairman, I'd like to say that it's been a privilege getting to know so many of you, and rewarding to work alongside other committee members as we expanded our membership, introduced some new events, developed some schemes for public realm improvements and drafted the first version of our Neighbourhood Plan. Once this document is revised and eventually adopted, it should help us to achieve a higher quality public realm, an excellent standard of housing, more beautiful buildings and streets and a cleaner environment.

For now, we wish you all a healthy holiday season and a much easier 2021.

*Suzanne Forte*

## Public Realm Shrewsbury Gardens

As we wrote to you back in February, we received CIL funds to enable Groundwork, a London charity involved in the improvement of green spaces, to commence design work for Shrewsbury Gardens. Over the past year we have been Zooming with their design team to discuss possibilities for the gardens. On the 21st of January, 2021 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. you are invited to an online workshop to discuss the design proposals and make comments. The poster below will be put up around our area and we will remind you again in January. You can read more about the proposals on our website: [www.nottinghilleast.org.uk](http://www.nottinghilleast.org.uk), and sign up by emailing [jenny.dunn@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:jenny.dunn@groundwork.org.uk).

# Shrewsbury Gardens Improvement Plan Have Your Say!

Shrewsbury Gardens is a much loved green space but it needs attention. The Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum asked environmental charity Groundwork London and Westminster City Council to help develop a plan for the gardens and we are delighted to now share this design with the wider community. We would love your feedback on the designs as the space should meet the needs and aspirations of all who live and work in the local area.

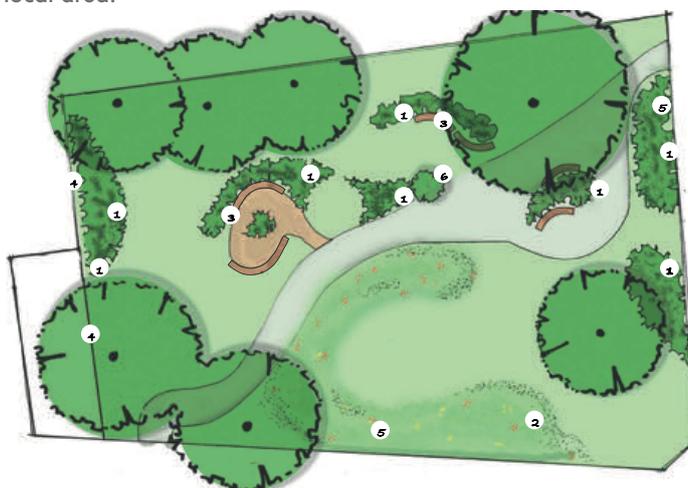
### 21st January 5pm-6pm

You are invited to an online workshop hosted by Groundwork London to discuss the design and gather feedback.

To sign up please email Jenny at [jenny.dunn@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:jenny.dunn@groundwork.org.uk)

For more information and to give your feedback please visit

[www.nottinghilleast.org.uk](http://www.nottinghilleast.org.uk)



1: Species rich planting communities, for texture, movement and colour in a contemporary style.

2: Natural earth mound amphitheatre planted with wildflowers provides a natural performance, sitting or picnic space.

3: Curved seating set in planting with gravel path, to form a garden room with new bins.

4: Removal of existing fence.

5: Tree works as required - to include removal of lower branches increasing light levels.

6: New specimen feature tree.

Scan to visit the Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum website:



City of Westminster



## Planning and Conservation

### Chepstow Road Architecture

by David Rea

In June 2019 a Neighbourhood Walk uncovered some forgotten history in our area. In fact, the discovery of the Burlington Road postcard sent in January 1915 by a resident of that street reconnected us all with a lost historic street plan at the heart of the NHENF area, and which is now occupied by Wessex Gardens (see issue no. 7).

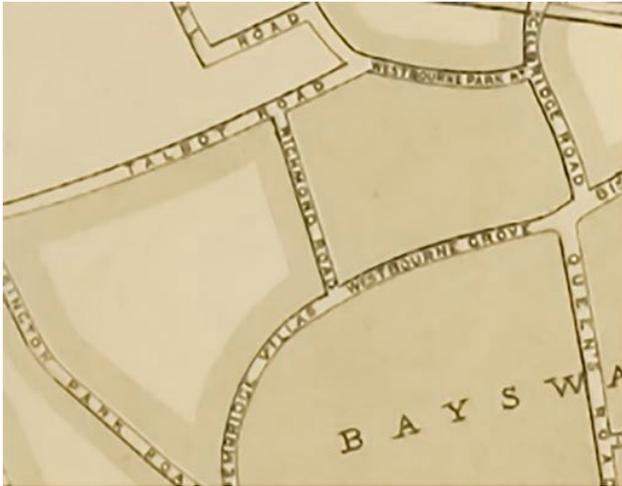
Another newsletter and another discovery - a postcard this time dating from the late 1890s of another street in our area has proved to be equally intriguing. Just as most of us would be unlikely to have been able to place Burlington Road locally, who would be able to say where Richmond Road is?



NHENF can now reveal that Richmond Road is in fact Chepstow Road, (name changed in 1937) and here is that same view today.



An enforced change of name has placed a disguise over one of our oldest streets. ‘Richmond Road’ was possibly the first to be developed in our area, from what were then fields west of Paddington. An 1851 map shows Richmond Road alone, running north and linking a truncated Westbourne Grove in the south with Talbot Road to the north. By this time houses on both sides of the street had been built.



A good deal more has changed also, but the clues suggested by the 1890s postcard are now clear for all of us to see.

Unusually for a London street of its time (as compared to a square, or Regent’s Park) Richmond Road was designed to have two architecturally matching sides, framing views as the street runs north and south. The two terraces of 24 houses each, as revealed by the postcard, were finished in a stony coloured render making the street resemble Bath rather than West London.



Natural stone coloured render in imitation of Bath stone as seen in nearby Orme Square.

Through time, residents have painted the houses in a creamy white, following perhaps the trend at Regent’s Park which similarly started off life as a series of Bath stone coloured structures forming the backdrop to The Regent’s Park.

Combine this original stone coloured elevation and a verdigris painted ironwork and a softer picture emerges. Verdigris is a flat green/ grey colour in imitation of bronze, prevalent in Regency London, and can be seen today on the railings at Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner. It is highly likely that the intricate ironwork seen in Chepstow Road would have also been finished in verdigris.



Verdigris coloured railings against the bath stone elevations of Apsley House show a similar combination of colours as originally displayed at Chepstow Road, where a Bath stone render mimicked real stone

While Regent’s Park has its park, the original setting of both Chepstow Road terraces situated back from the road and behind deep greened frontages alludes to the idea of seeing architecture as a backdrop to a green swath of planting.

The postcard has turned up a second intriguing discovery which has caused quite some interest recently – the central triangular pedimented architectural composition with balustrades and urns atop, which previously sat above the four central houses on both sides of Chepstow Road.

The pediments alas are both long gone and the Chepstow Road of today is a bit out of balance. One side has been allowed to add mansard roof extensions while the other has an entirely flat top, having lost a more lively classical skyline above. That strikingly symmetrical composition has been lost to us who live in the street and nearby.

There is a further mystery that has yet to be solved – what, if any, decoration was designed to sit within the triangular pediments which faced each other across Chepstow Road? Here is an example from Regent’s Park showing a scrolling sculptural decoration which fills the triangular ‘tympanum’ area within the pediment.



The postcard, albeit with its oblique view up the length of the street, does appear to suggest some decoration within the pediment. Perhaps further researching of online archives by NHENF residents will turn up yet more information?

In any case moves are afoot to try and redress the unsympathetic treatment of our oldest street, and to give it back some of the architectural balance and symmetry which originally distinguished it from the other streets adjacent. NHENF is happy to support this latest initiative by residents in Chepstow Road to seek council support to permit mansard additions of a uniform design for the east side of Chepstow Road. This would be combined with a reconstruction of the central pediment and other missing architectural detail, thereby also bringing public benefits.

Now if these terraces were indeed designed by someone formerly from John Nash’s office who had worked on the Regents Park development of some 15- 20 years before, as has been suggested, this would certainly account for the very confident quality of their design.

## Neighbourhood Plan

As we mentioned in our February newsletter, work was paused on our Neighbourhood Plan while we wait to see the final policies in Westminster’s new City Plan 2019-2040. This document has been undergoing consultations and examinations and should be adopted by early spring 2021, at which time we can resume our revisions and forward the final proposals to all of you for your comments.

## Those Were the Days

by Sheila Mitchell-Keating

The days I’m referring to in this article were the 1960s and I am looking back to the spring of 1959 when the Keatings moved into 35 Northumberland Place, London, W2. The area was just starting to emerge from its slum image. Genteel Bayswater properties of the inter-war years, which had degenerated into rooming houses with gas meters on every floor and interior doors being secured with Yale locks, were gradually reverting back to family ownership. Prices were in the low thousands – we paid £2,750 for ours – and although there were few ‘luxuries’ like bathrooms, the potential was there and it was possible to move in and renovate gradually. The neighbours included the slightly more affluent doctors, accountants, lawyers and other professionals. But among these were a scattering of freelancers, musicians, art historians, journalists and, in our case, an author about to have his first book published. We already had two small children and like most of our friends were hoping to become a family with three or four offspring. Unlike almost all our close friends who, having decided the houses were too small to accommodate more than two children, had moved to bigger and grander things, we stayed put and built dividing walls, which ultimately enabled each of our four to have their own bedroom with the basement being used as a children’s sitting room.

Harry published sixty-five books and all but that first one was planned and written during the fifty-two years he lived at number 35. Most of them in the study which was the back half of the first floor and many of them on the old portable typewriter which he had bought second-hand after the end of the Second World War. Fortunately he had formidable powers of concentration but even so we all learnt to go very quietly past the study door when it was firmly closed between around nine in the morning and six in the evening.

That comparatively small space played host to an imagination which (along with hours of intensive research) dreamt up life on a continent he had not at that stage visited, together with a character, Inspector Ghote of the Bombay CID, who earned him world renown, as well as speculation (even in India itself) that the author must have been born and bred there.

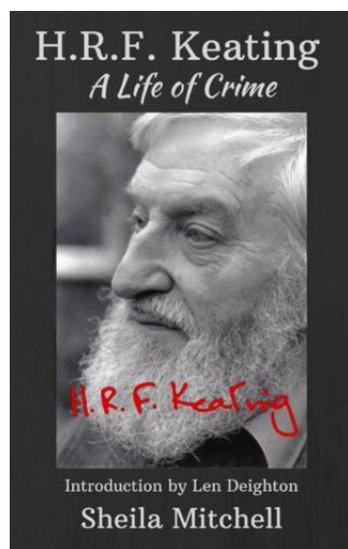
Later, in that same small space, he added an ability to write books set in late Victorian times, particularly its grimy underworld, which fascinated him.

As with India his research was extensive and the reader is presented with the often hypocritical lives

of the affluent along with the degradation and hopelessness of the poor. But the guiding principle behind all Harry's writing never wavered – however much you wanted to share your fascination with a place, a time or a passionate belief, this must never prevent the telling of the story. It was his mantra that a writer has a duty to the reader to entertain. So whether in India or exploring the upstairs downstairs life of a century ago or indeed in one of the many contemporary novels he wrote, there is always an ongoing story to be told with a rich background of fact and even underlying philosophical thought should you want that as well.

Amazingly he even managed to stick to this mantra in the ten non-fiction books he wrote, all of which were about aspects of crime writing. The books were about the writers themselves or critical overviews of the craft, but they all contained that essential element – the ability to keep the reader turning the pages from beginning to end.

Now nine years after his death his biography *HRF Keating: A Life of Crime* has been published. Using the books in chronological order as the backdrop, I have endeavoured to present a picture of the man who lived from his thirties to his eighties in a Victorian terraced house and sat at a desk in a small room creating a host of characters who often lived in other lands and other times.



I have, of course, been experiencing all the frustrations of having a book published in a period of international crisis when there have been no bookshops or libraries and everyone is reliant on buying online. But nothing can destroy the pleasure it has given me to see the book come to fruition and the opportunity it has given me to relive our time together from

'rags to riches', from the slum to the splendour of smart Notting Hill, as well as living for more than three score years in such a beautiful street in West London.

- H.R.F. Keating *A Life of Crime* is available in paperback and as an e-book from online booksellers.

## Obituaries

### Pat Burn

by Sheila Mitchell-Keating

It would be difficult to find a more admirable person than Pat. Whatever life flung at her she accepted and making the most of whatever it was, she set about finding the best possible solution. The last major upset in her life, when she was diagnosed with inoperable bladder cancer, was the most positive illustration of this approach to life. There were many times when the majority of us would have thrown in the towel but each time she found the resolution to continue the fight, and always with her characteristic ability to find something to laugh about.

She was for many years the Chair of the WNA (Westbourne Neighbourhood Association) and with the help of a stalwart few, produced Newsletters which kept us up to date and mounted campaigns to tackle the inevitable problems that arise in an ever changing environment. Somehow she managed to keep the workload under control and it was many years before even she had to acknowledge that it was time for her and her team to pass on these burdens to others.

Having married comparatively late in life someone who was a few years older than herself, their time together inevitably came to an end and she was left to face her own last illness on her own. She refused to allow herself to be a burden on her many friends and accepted what were at times horrendous times in hospital. We were all deeply relieved that her final weeks were spent in the St. John and St. Elizabeth hospice where she had excellent palliative care. RIP to one of the best and nicest human beings.



## Events

*Please note that since we suggested this activity, London has been placed in Tier 3 and gatherings with multiple households in private gardens are not allowed. Please heed the warnings about keeping your distance at all times.*

### **Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum** aka Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

**Raise a glass of festive cheer!**  
**4 p.m. Sunday 20th December**

**We invite you to participate in**  
**socially distanced drinks**

**on your front doorstep or in your front garden**  
**over the wall with near neighbours**

### **Christmas Lights Competition**

**We will soon be touring the neighbourhood looking for the best**  
**Christmas lights**

## **Annual General Meeting**

*(Our AGM was postponed due to Covid.  
We will contact you all when we have a date for 2021.)*

Would you like to join the steering committee? If so the AGM is the time to put yourself forward for election. You can do so at the meeting, or you can send us an email a little in advance of the meeting expressing your interest - you will need a nominator and seconder. If you are new to the neighbourhood and finding a nominator would be difficult, please email us.

We look forward to seeing you all next year!

[www.nottinghilleast.org.uk](http://www.nottinghilleast.org.uk)  
[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)

## Really Useful List

*Experienced decorator and paper hanger, with degree in interior design. Excellent results.*

Rupert Rutherford - 07982 849706 or 0208 743 1844

*Recommended by Sheila Keating*

### **Plumber**

Alpine Plumbers LTC, Felix Marco 07957 294830  
Gas Safe

### **At-Home Hair Cut, Colour and or Style**

Memet Senol, 07957-140067

*Recommended by Suzanne Forte*

### **Garden Builder and also Christmas Trees**

Hew Stevenson, Shoots and Leaves 0208 563 7733  
www.shootsandleaves.co.uk

*Recommended by Suzanne Forte*

### **Window Cleaner**

Marcin Woznica (Martin) 07736-442964

*Recommended by Eleanor Robbins*

### **Plumber**

Elgan Davies 07870 161434

*Recommended by Sarmila Bose*

### **Thai Massage. Firm professional approach and wonderful benefits**

Om -14 Chepstow Road

*Recommended by Richard Perkins*

### **Carpenter**

Quart Construction/Robert Krupa  
07922 243229

robert.s.krupa@gmail.com

*Recommended by Teresa Tsakok*

If anyone wishes to recommend a good service provider, please email us at:

[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)

## Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum Membership

I certify that I live, work, or have a relevant interest in the Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum area.

Signed:.....Print Name .....

Address..... tick if business owner or worker ( )

Email..... and/or Phone Number .....

Please fill this in as legibly as possible, and please give us your address or telephone number so we can contact you if we have any problems with your email.

**If you have any special skills that you would be willing to contribute to the group, please note them here:**

.....

**Membership is open to all in our area, and is free. This form can be filled in and left at 1 St. Stephen's Mews or you can email us the information. Donations are entirely voluntary and will help us to continue to do our work for the neighbourhood. Donation cheques (made payable to WNA) or cash may be posted to, or left, as noted above, with Cye Elliot at 1 St. Stephen's Mews, London, W2 5QZ, or brought to our AGM or other events.**

**Donations can also be transferred directly into our account: Sort Code 60-02-08, Account number 7861-4023. If you choose to do this online, please reference your surname, street number and street name, (very important) and please drop us an email to let us know you wish to be a member.**  
[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)