

than 400 charities based in the borough – many of which are struggling to survive in the current climate. Helping donors identify the local charities that best meet their interests, the foundation ensures funds are channelled to areas where they will be most effective, monitoring grants and providing donors with feedback and opportunities to share knowledge and experience at regular events.

To learn more about FOCUS K&C's projects, volunteering opportunities within the borough and tax-efficient ways of giving, visit their website [www.focuskc.com](http://www.focuskc.com) or contact the director, Jeremy Raphaely at FOCUS Kensington and Chelsea Foundation, Lighthouse West London, 111-117 Lancaster Road, London W11 1QT Tel: 020 7243 9806 or email: [jraphaely@focuskc.com](mailto:jraphaely@focuskc.com)

### Fr Michael Fuller

On 26th November, a special service was held to celebrate Fr Michael Fuller's 15th anniversary at St George's Church Aubrey Walk. Together with a team of enthusiastic worshippers, Fr Michael has revitalised and renovated the once run-down church to create a vibrant, welcoming place for the congregation and a fantastic space for the community.

### Membership Update

At the end of 2009 we had 291 subscribing members and 11 life members. Although we have a core group of active supporters, each year we have a net loss of members.

**Please encourage your neighbours to join the Association. The greater the membership, the stronger our voice!** Anyone living within the area bounded on the north by Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue, on the west by Holland Walk, on the south by Kensington High Street, and on the east by Kensington Church Street is eligible for membership.

If your membership is due for renewal, you will receive a subscription renewal form with this newsletter. Fees remain £15 for one year, or £60 for five years. New members forms can be downloaded from the website at [www.chra.info/membership](http://www.chra.info/membership) or contact Anne Margaronis at 26 Aubrey Walk, W8 7JG. Thank you for your continuing support!

### Commonwealth Institute

By the narrowest of margins the revised plans for the Commonwealth Institute building won approval but only after the Chair of the Planning Committee cast the decisive vote. The plans, as passed, envisage significant residential development and the use of the building by the Design Museum. It is hoped that the scheme will go to a Public Inquiry.

### The Kensington Society

The Kensington Society plays an important role, aiming to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington. They are particularly active in the area of planning within the borough: the weight of their voice is enhanced by the size of their membership.

Annual membership is £15. Please contact the

Membership Secretary at; The Kensington Society c/o 2 Campden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, London W8 7HX Or visit [www.kensingtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.kensingtonsociety.org.uk) where you can download a membership form.

The Kensington Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 29th April 2010 in the theatre, first floor of the St. Mary Abbots Centre, Vicarage Gate, London W8 4HN at 6.30pm for 7pm.

### General Election 2010

Kensington is a former parliamentary constituency in the Parliament of the United Kingdom in West London, comprising the northern and central parts of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, around Kensington. It existed between 1974 and 1997; it is to be reestablished by the Boundary Commission for England at the next UK General Election from parts of the Kensington and Chelsea and Regent's Park and Kensington North constituencies.

Following their Fifth Periodic Review of parliamentary representation in North London, the Boundary Commission have recreated the Kensington seat using the following electoral wards; Abingdon, Brompton, Campden, Colville, Courtfield, Earl's Court, Golborne, Holland, Norland, Notting Barns, Pembridge, Queen's Gate, and St Charles. This recreated 'Kensington' seat will be fought at the next UK general election.

The remaining electoral wards of Cremorne, Hans Town, Redcliffe, Royal Hospital, and Stanley are used in the cross-borough creation of Chelsea and Fulham. We understand that Sir Malcolm Rifkind – Conservative – has decided to stand for this newly created Kensington seat. Whilst there are certain to be a number of other prospective candidates, as of now the only other certain prospective candidate is Robin Meltzer for the Liberal Democrats.

### The Mayor's Transport Strategy - A Consultation

On 12th October 2009, Mayor of London, Boris Johnson published a new draft Transport Strategy for consultation with members of the public, businesses and stakeholder organisations. Copies of the leaflet setting out a brief overview and additional information are available at [www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london](http://www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london) Included in the leaflet is a questionnaire that enables you to inform the Mayor of your views on this draft strategy. Consultation ends on the 12th January. Could I urge you to obtain copies of this document and make your views known, since silence will imply agreement to all of its proposals.

### Community Times Kensington

The monthly magazine, Community Times Kensington, edited by local resident, Lucy Elliot, reaches over 30,000 readers. Do pay a visit to [www.ctkensington.co.uk](http://www.ctkensington.co.uk) where you will find an on-line directory of services in Kensington, a guide of December events in the borough, as well as an on-line version of the magazine. Lucy Elliot, Editor tel; 07921 558520



# Campden Hill Residents' Association

## Christmas Newsletter 2009

[www.chra.info](http://www.chra.info)

Issue 38

### Chairman's Message

Monitoring and responding to the Council's plans for Holland Park School have once again taken up a large amount of time and effort. This year, your committee has also had to keep up with the stream of 'consultations' emanating from both the Town Hall and City Hall; the Transport Consultation - mentioned elsewhere - is a good example. 'Consultation fatigue' is a real problem, particularly if, as some believe, the outcome is already a foregone conclusion.

A major and continuing concern for the Association is the shortage of people willing to serve on the committee. The two areas in particular need of strengthening are Planning and that of Treasurer. In both cases it would obviously be of value if the individual had some appropriate knowledge - but not essential. Could I therefore make a heartfelt plea for volunteers - the time commitment is modest but the 'feel good factor' is significant!

Very best wishes for a happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy 2010!

*David White*

### Dates for your Diary

The CHRA AGM will be held on May 11th 2010 at St. George's Community Space, Aubrey Walk. The CHRA Summer Party is provisionally booked for June 8th 2010 in Campden Hill Square Gardens. This date will be confirmed in the New Year. Visit our website [www.chra.info](http://www.chra.info) for updates on local information and community news.

### Holland Park School

As most members will know, the Council has now given itself the go-ahead to proceed with the re-development plans for Holland Park School. CHRA's position from the outset has been based on two overriding considerations - that the school should remain in its current location and that no land should be sold to finance the project. In our 'Alternative Vision' we showed how the school could be upgraded with its wonderful campus-like setting preserved. With the help of leading educational advisors we also established that the Council has been earmarked in this financial year for over £30million of Government funding under its *Building Schools for the Future* program – funds set aside for the express purpose of remodeling the school and more than sufficient to allow the

'Alternative Vision' to be realised. Sadly, the Council refused to engage with us in any meaningful way.

So what are the consequences of the Council's decision to go ahead with their own scheme? For the students it will mean being educated on a building site for at least the next 4 years with all the problems that will bring. For local tax payers, it will mean the southern site playing field - a unique public asset - will be sold to finance this project in a borough which, by its own admission, is desperately short of open space and sports facilities. At a time when the financial world is in turmoil the financial structure proposed for this project carries with it considerable risks and may well expose taxpayers to major cost overruns. The final cost of the whole project is currently expected to be £80-£100m.

Why is RBKC spending so much of our money when new Academies, financed by the Government, cost on average half of this? And what architectural gem will we have to admire in the years ahead? A massive glass box as big as Buckingham Palace, totally out of keeping with the surrounding Conservation Area. Even the Council's own architectural panel described the proposed building as, "a building that would date very quickly", "monolithic and relentless", with "architecture that failed to excite."

The report to the recent Family and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee implies that there are still uncertainties as far as the appointment of the main contractor, the price at which they can deliver this project and their financial reliability. The sale of the southern site is not a 'done deal' and whilst the Council believe they are able to sell this site at a price that will cover the overall cost, the actual decision to sell, to whom, at what price and with what conditions, has yet to be made and could well be challenged. So watch this space.

*Sally Davies*

### Holland Park

In a changing world, it may reassure members to know that news from Holland Park remains reassuringly static!

The borehole continues to flow freely and provide the park with all its irrigation needs. The Ecology Centre continues to cater for an expanding number of visitors. The peacocks produced six peachicks in July, all of whom continue to flourish - although it must be reported that the golden pheasants provided a tasty treat for the foxes! In addition to this peaceful productivity, a Bird Survey has been carried out which shows that no less than forty-six

bird species are flourishing in the park, thirty-one of which species have been breeding. Population explosions aren't always a good thing, but amongst the birds it is definitely something to celebrate.

The bees are also doing well and, being of the well-mannered nature - as expected in Kensington - have stung no-one to date! The park is also providing a service to the Borough whereby it will collect errant swarms that are spotted in streets or gardens. However, if you have lost a swarm, please don't expect the park to return your potential honey. It would appear that the law, in this instance, dictates that 'finders are keepers'!

Finally, any volunteers, who may wish to work in the park or ecology centre will always be made welcome. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact Graham Vincent at: [graham.vincent@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:graham.vincent@rbkc.gov.uk) - he asks me to send my apologies to anyone who has tried, in vain, to contact him on the 'phone!

**The Friends of Holland Park** work to guard the park's beauty and character. They raise money through subscriptions, donations and community events including: a monthly bird walk, tree walks, concerts, carol concerts, an annual art exhibition in the Orangery, parties, talks etc. For more information please visit their website at [www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org](http://www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org) where you can also find out how to become a member. Alternatively, please contact their secretary, Mrs Rhoddy Wood on 0207 602 0304 or email her at [rhoddy.wood@thefriendsofhollandpark.org](mailto:rhoddy.wood@thefriendsofhollandpark.org)

### Mary Spain



### Being a Local Councillor

But what do you actually DO as a Councillor? If I received a hot dinner every time I was asked this question I would be very rotund!

Your Council provides a wide range of services which cost each resident of the Royal Borough roughly £50 per week. It is a big business which covers education, "affordable" housing, social services, maintenance and cleaning of streets, rubbish collection, planning, parking, licensing and many other services.

In the past, decisions were taken in public either in Committee or in full Council. Now, with the new system

of governance forced upon us, decisions are taken by the Leader of the Council or by one of the appointed members of his Cabinet.

A range of scrutiny committees, acting in a manner rather similar to the Parliamentary Select Committees, keeps a check on decisions, very often shaping those decisions before they become public and carrying out a range of studies and investigations which could lead to future decisions.

In Campden ward, Tim Ahern is the Cabinet Member for Service Improvement and Regeneration. I chair both the RBKC Health Scrutiny Committee as well as its pan London equivalent covering all 32 London Boroughs, and I chair the Steering Group for all Scrutiny Actions. Robert Freeman sits on the Health Scrutiny Committee and has just completed a study in depth into dentistry within Kensington and Chelsea. He is also the borough's champion for the elderly.

Yes, but what do you actually DO?

Apart from sitting on committees, by far the most boring of occupations, all councillors are under a constant flood of requests or complaints from members of the public who see themselves as being unfairly treated. The list is endless and I can only give a few examples. Parking is high on the list but here there is a well-established complaints procedure, which should be used.

Others for me have included the poor quality of incontinence pads issued today by the local NHS – satisfactorily resolved. A demand that I arrange for the Council's exorcist to remove from a Council flat the ghost of a naked woman who was disturbing the occupant's sleep, not resolved; the Council has no exorcist and the complainant was steered to the local vicar. Housing features highly in the requests for help but in this Borough with demand far outstripping supply, it is extremely difficult to provide the resident with what he/she wants. Planning applications are also numerous with requests that I stop a particularly outrageous application. Some I win; some I lose.

Often people fail to understand that the Council's powers are limited. For several decades central government has been chipping away at the powers of local authorities. In broad terms local councils take the law rather than make the law. There can often be flexibility in interpretation and here your Council has been frequently imaginative and successful, but RBKC is essentially a creature of statute and has to apply the law even when it may disagree with it.

There are times when we can amend or influence the law. I remember when the national laws on both drugs and licensing were altered at the behest of this Council. I also remember going to see a junior education minister – now our Foreign Secretary – to complain about the proposed alteration in a grant regime dealing with funds for those councils with high numbers of minority ethnic children. If implemented, our schools would have lost a few million pounds. I went with two Labour councillors and put our case. The junior minister told me flatly that I was wrong and even the most sullen stare from me had no effect until the then Labour deputy Leader of Birmingham Council said in a thick Brummy accent "he may be a bleeding Tory

but on this issue he is right." We won our point.

Finally we do try to represent our ward in the Town Hall but we act as representatives, not as delegates.

Councillors have to exercise their judgement and act in accordance with what they believe to be right. We do not satisfy all our residents all the time and some are quick to tell us when they disagree with our stance. Others are quietly grateful.

### Cllr Christopher Buckmaster



### The Kensington & Chelsea Music Society (KCMS)

Since its foundation in the early 1960's, originally as a gramophone society, KCMS has developed into an ambitious and highly respected local organisation for promoting the appreciation of chamber music in all its variety and from every period.

Our focus is to provide a London platform in Kensington and Chelsea for new and exciting talent performing wonderful music – and if one looks back over the decades, the list of artists who have performed for us who have since reached truly international acclaim, continues to grow. Meanwhile, we just love spotting the new talent. This season, the society will be hosting four classical music concerts at St George's Church in Aubrey Walk, the acoustics of which are perfect!

- The Navarra String Quartet on 18th February 2010, which promises to be a very special event, combining aural and visual meditative pleasure.
- The London Conchord Ensemble on 25th March 2010, one of the finest ensembles that you could wish to hear
- Pei-Jee Ng and Pei-Sian Ng, brilliant twin brother cellists, on 13th April 2010
- And, to conclude our current season in glorious style, a superb repertoire from a rare combination of two great string quartets, the Heath and the Doric on 19th May 2010.

All concerts begin at 7.30 p.m.

For full concert details and information about the performers, you can pick up our brochure at our venues, the offices of our generous sponsor, Mountgrange Heritage, or by visiting our website: [www.kcmusic.org.uk](http://www.kcmusic.org.uk)

Without the continued sponsorship and support of Mountgrange Heritage, KCMS would not be the enterprising and flourishing society that we are. Tickets are priced at £15 (KCMS Friends and Student Concessions £10) which includes a free glass of wine

and can be purchased at the door, or ordered in advance from the Hon Secretary, Paula Chandler (Tel. 07855 348 738).

Live classical music in a much loved venue, within a short walk away, is just too good to be missed. Do come and check out our talent spotting for yourself. KCMS and its Friends would be delighted to welcome you.

### Peter Thomas, Co-Chairman of KCMS

### Opera Holland Park Looking ahead to 2010

As the autumn nights draw in, plans for next summer's season are well under way. OHP are preparing an ambitious season full of passion, tragedy, laughter, jealousy and drama that also includes a revival of one of the company's most acclaimed productions to date.

**Pelléas et Mélisande** (Debussy) New production, first ever by Opera Holland Park  
June 1, 3, 9, 11, 16

**Carmen** (Bizet) New production  
June 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19

**Don Giovanni** (Mozart) New production  
June 28, 30, July 2, 4 (matinee), 6, 8, 10, 12, 14

**Fidelio** (Beethoven) Revival of the 2003 production  
July 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13

**La forza del destino** (Verdi) New production, first ever by Opera Holland Park  
July 27, 29, 31, August 4, 6, 10, 12, 14

**Francesca da Rimini** (Zandonai) New production, first ever by Opera Holland Park  
July 30, August 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13  
Sponsored by Opera Holland Park Ambassadors

Online Bookings will open on 26th March 2010 – visit [boxoffice@operahollandpark.com](mailto:boxoffice@operahollandpark.com)  
Telephone bookings will open on 29th March 2010, call 0845 230 9769. Personal callers can book at the box office from 6 April 2010 at Opera Holland Park Box Office, Stable Yard, Holland Park, London W8 6LU. Please note that £10 seats will only be available to book by telephone. Become an Opera Holland Park Friend and get priority booking for the 2010 Season.  
Visit [friends@operahollandpark.com](mailto:friends@operahollandpark.com) or call the Friends' Administrator on 020 7361 3910

### FOCUS Kensington and Chelsea

The FOCUS Kensington and Chelsea Foundation was created by local people to generate financial support for local charities. Strengthening the local community, they encourage residents' support for local causes, promoting local pride and social responsibility.

FOCUS K&C provides a link between donors and more