

CREMORNE WARD – WEST SECTION
HISTORICAL RESEARCH STUDY
FOR POSSIBLE CONSERVATION AREA STATUS



Prepared by

GILLIAN BEST with KERRY DAVIS-HEAD

(Committee Members of Cremorne Residents' Association
of Lots Village)

& CLLR. GERARD HARGREAVES)

Contact details: www.cremornera.co.uk

**CREMORNE WARD – WEST SECTION
PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL RESEARCH STUDY
FOR POSSIBLE CONSERVATION AREA STATUS**

PREAMBLE:

By the summer of 2011, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had thirty-five Conservation Areas spread over its eighteen wards, covering some 70 per cent of the Borough.

More than forty years ago, the Eastern section of Cremorne Ward was awarded conservation status, (19) Cheyne. The designation was expanded to include the Moravian Burial Ground in 1981.

This application seeks conservation status for the remaining part of the Cremorne Ward to bring it in line with its immediate neighbours:

19 Cheyne, 16 Sloane/Stanley, 25 St. Mark & St. John and 21 Thames.

I) Area under consideration (See also Map: Appendix 1)

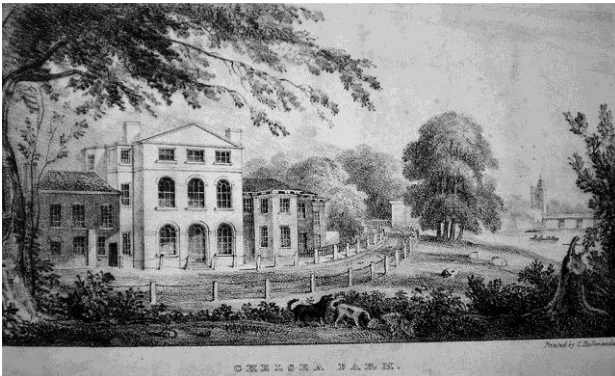
The area is defined within:

- i) West: Up to the Borough boundary, including all the properties, both residential and commercial, on either side of Lots Road.
- ii) North: The Kings Road from Stanley Bridge to Edith Grove bordering conservation areas (25) The College of St. Mark & St. John and (16) Sloane/Stanley but excluding The Guinness Trust Estate and the World's End Estate
- iii) East: From junction of Cremorne Road and Lots Road South, through Ashburnham Road to Kings Road (but excluding garage). Also Tadema Road (but excluding single storey newsagent and dry cleaning shops near junction of Tadema and Kings Road.)
- iv) South: Lots Road South bordering the Thames Conservation area to boundary borders with Hammersmith and Fulham.
- v) The West side of Edith Grove, including properties Nos: (78-116 inc.) to the boundary with the South edge of the Guinness Trust Estate. Also including four properties on Ashburnham Street: Cornwall Mansions, a small one-storey building, Conningham Court, and Ashburnham Mansions up to the border of the Guinness Trust buildings.

2) Area Development

From Anglo-Saxon times, attached to Chelsea village there was a tract of land divided into individually owned lots, and open to common pasturage after the annual harvest.

In the 17th Century the Chelsea Farm area was used for market gardening plots, supplying Central London. Of note is that John Rubergall, a Frenchman, who leased many "lots" of land in the area, was the first person to successfully grow lettuces in England.

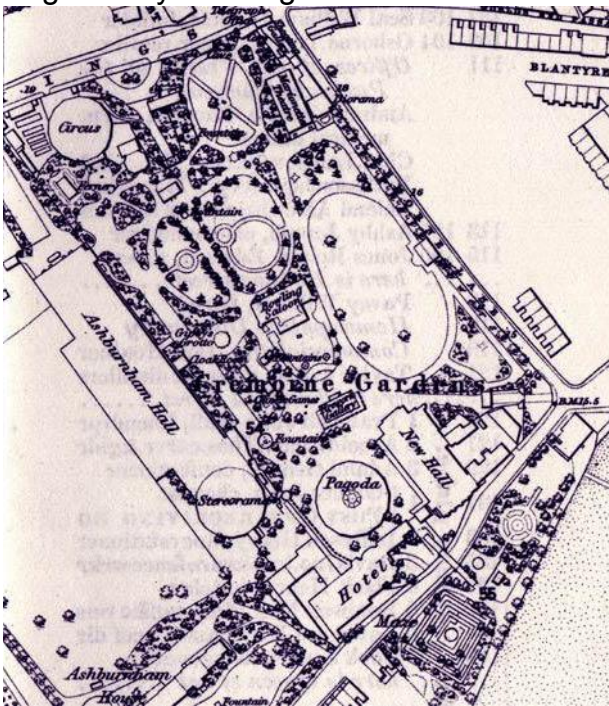
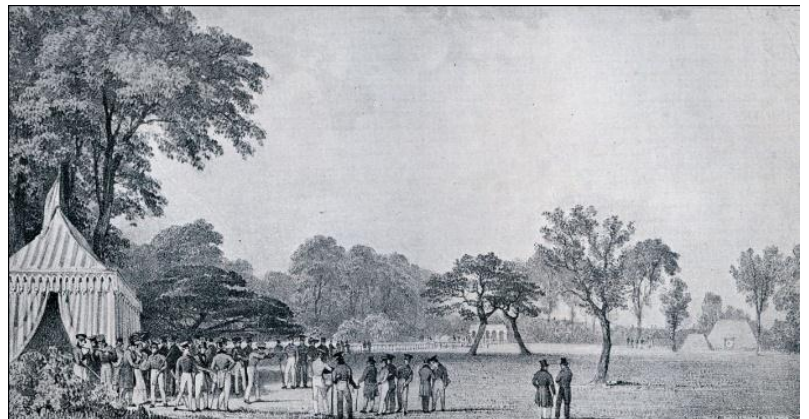


In 1778 Chelsea Farm was purchased and Cremorne House was built. Also Ashburnham House and Ashburnham Cottage.

Some fifty years later in 1825 Lammas rights of common grazing of cattle were abolished on the "Lots" (the origin for the name Lots Road)

In 1830 Charles Random de Berenger, (who preferred Baron de Beaufain or Baron de Berenger) purchased the land. He was a sportsman and in the grounds opened Cremorne Stadium.

Members who paid their two or three guineas could, under the Baron's instruction, shoot, box, and practise "manly exercises generally" in the grounds.



Some fifteen years later with the death of De Berenger, the Estate grounds were sold and with an investment of £5000, in 1846 it was turned into a pleasure garden which became a popular and noisy place of entertainment rivalling many in the capital. In 1850 under the ownership of Thomas Bartlett Simpson, the twelve acres were increased to include the grounds of Ashburnham House which held flower-shows and other exhibitions.

Dancing between 8.30 and 11 was accompanied by an orchestra housed in a pagoda lit with hundreds of coloured lamps and surrounded by a circular platform large enough to accommodate four thousand dancers.



There were two theatres for farce and vaudeville, featuring stars of the day including Jack Sharp, Sam Cowell, Robert Glindon and Herr von Joel, described as “a peculiar old German” who yodelled and gave imitations on his walking stick of birds and feathered fowl.

However, the English magistrates drew the line when Madame Poitevin, in the character of Europa, ascended from Cremorne on the back of a heifer attached to her balloon. Madame Europa and Mr. Bartlett were fined at the Ilford Sessions for cruelty to animals.

ROYAL



Theatre.

MR. T. SMITH.

Engagement and Tour.

Acting & Stage Manager Mr. ROBERT BOCKY,
Principal Conductor Mr. J. H. TULLY,
Decorations & Scenery Mr. W. DEVERLY,
Musical Director Mr. GUNNIN,
Ballet Master Mr. COLEMAN,
Grand Corps de Ballet Miss DUFFY.

from Drury Lane Theatre,
from Drury Lane Theatre,
from the Royal Italian Opera,
from Drury Lane Theatre,
from Drury Lane Theatre.

OPERA, BALLET & FARCE

VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC,
GRAND DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS, &c.

ADMISSION FREE.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE CELEBRATED PAPA ROSA.

MISS THERLWALL,

(From the Royal English Opera, Covent Garden Theatre.)

EVERY NIGHT

Will be presented, in English Version of OPERAS, selected Operas, LE

Marriage au L'anternes

With New Sonnets, Dresses and Appointments.

Fiancée Miss THERLWALL, MRS. MARSON
Catherine Miss OUSTON, DR. POLLOCK, MR. GARDEN, MISS LENO
Goddess Mr. JOHN MORRIS, DR. POLLOCK, MR. GARDEN, MISS LENO
Conductor Mr. TULLY.

which will be highly applauded with enthusiasm

celebrated under THE

ECLIPSE OF LOVE.

(As Young Person) Miss R. GUNNIN
(The Village Captain) Mr. COLEMAN
(The Soldier) Mr. DEVERLY
(A Minstrel) Mr. GUNNIN
(The King) Mr. BOCKY
(Adrian's Father) Mr. G. BOLLINO
(Adrian's Mother) Mrs. DEVERLY
(The Queen) Mrs. DEVERLY

Miss R. GUNNIN
Mr. COLEMAN
Mrs. DEVERLY
Mr. BOCKY
Mrs. DEVERLY
Mrs. DEVERLY
Mrs. DEVERLY

CREMORNE.
E. T. SMITH. PUBLISHED.

GRAND
BALLOON ASCENT
AND
Balloon Fete,
Thursday, Oct. 4th.


BENEFIT OF
MR. W. H. ADAMS
(THE CEREAL'S AGENTS)

The Interesting INFLATION of the BALLOON will be followed
by **PARTIAL ASCENTS**; and after the **GRAND ASCENT**,
BOYD'S EXCELSIOR TROUP
OF DOGS AND MONKEYS,
THE AL FRESCO BAL,
AND THE WONDERFUL EXHIBITION OF BUONO CORE.
The Fire King.

TICKETS ONE SHILLING.

[illegible]

ROYAL



CREMORNE GARDENS

Proprietor and Manager - Mr. JOHN BAUM.

Mr. JOHN BAUM begs to announce that a large portion of the Theatre and various Entertainments is - FREE to the Public.

ADMISSION - - ONE SHILLING

CREMORNE TIME TABLE:

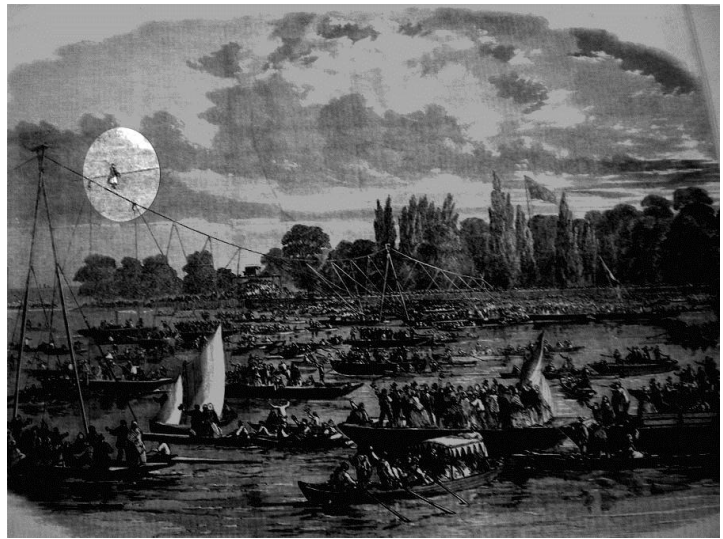
Grand Band	8 0	Talks and Verses	9 20
Orchestre	6 0	Concert	9 30
Faces	7 0	Fireworks	10 10
M. Perrier	7 30	Burning of Chicago	10 14
Ballet Extravaganza	8 0	Grand Ballet	10 30
Comic Ballet	8 30	Talks and Verses	11 0

Chief of Orchestra Mr. H. BIRDOL
 Gun Engineer Mr. J. PEPPER
 The Gardens and Floricultural department under the care of Mr. KING
 Pyrotechnic Artist Mr. J. WELLS
 Secretary Mr. E. M. ADAMS
 TREASURER MR. W. KING.

THE GARDENS ARE OPEN FOR PROMENADE ON SUNDAYS,
 Admission by Refreshment Card, SIXPENCE.

When Simpson retired in 1861 Edward Tyrrell Smith took on the management. His innovations included a female Blondin who undertook to cross the Thames on a tightrope some hundred metres above the river.

She got two thirds of the way across, but then the rope was sabotaged and she was lucky to survive.



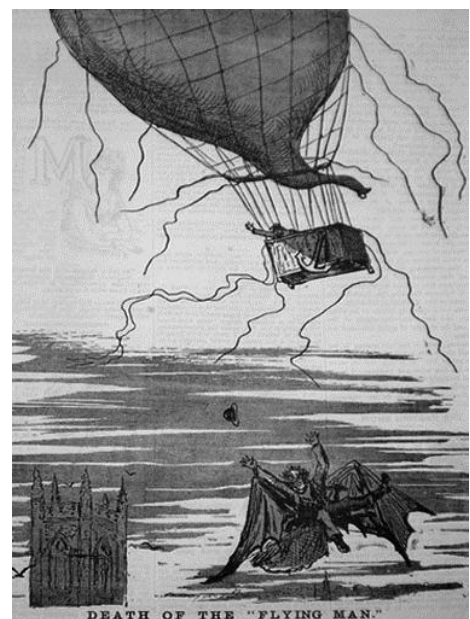
Smith also arranged for trapeze artists and, in Ashburnham Hall, a dog show, trotting matches and wrestling.



John Baum became the lessee in 1870.

Under his stewardship a new theatre was built.

He also hired one Vincent de Groof "The Flying Man" who had constructed a flying machine based on a bat, with wings of 37 feet with a tail of eighteen feet. His first attempt suspended from the balloon took him miles away to Brandon in Essex, where he made a perilous escape, but the Cremorne spectators felt cheated, so the event was repeated. This time the wind took him in the direction of St. Luke's Church in Sydney Street. At this point the rope tethering him to the balloon was severed and he plunged to the road and was taken off to the Chelsea Infirmary where he died.



Gradually, however, the Gardens became notorious for prostitution, and public clamour for its abolition became deafening, spearheaded locally by the Chelsea Vestry. This contemporary letter in the Times conveys the vehemence of the opposition:



"I remember, also, Cremorne-gardens when they were a place of innocent amusement and recreation. ...I am not interpreting the feeling of my fellow parishioners too strongly when I describe the Cremorne-gardens as the blight of the quarter in which they are situated. I have seen it said that, granting the noise and discomfort, such an establishment is an inevitable appendage to a metropolis; if so, I say that the ratepayers and residents of Chelsea have borne the incubus long enough.... Mr. Baum's pecuniary loss may be heavy, but he should remember that the profits of his predecessors and himself have been the cause of preponderating injury to others, and he must not suppose that the interests of a private speculation can be allowed to outweigh the public good. As to this, however, I have little doubt that if the proprietors of Cremorne (for I believe Mr. Baum is tenant only) would be content to surrender the making of profits at a cost beyond estimate, because not measured in coin, they would find in the application of the ground for erections fit for the pure homes, whether of the merchant or mechanic, ample compensation within a reasonable time for the present sacrifice they are called on to submit to.

*I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A RESIDENT HOUSEHOLDER
Chelsea, Oct. 19*

The Times, Oct 20 1871"

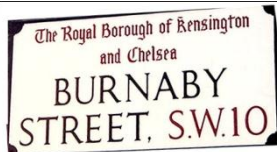
The pressure from this Victorian "political correctness" was overwhelming and it coincided with Baum falling ill and unable to manage his Garden. He was also greatly in debt so when in 1877 the licence came up for renewal, Baum's counsel surprisingly informed the authorities that Baum had withdrawn his application. The licence lapsed.

3. Urbanisation:

As soon as the Gardens were cleared and the contents auctioned off – from the contents of the hotel, to the statuary and a couple of balloons, the owner of the land, Mrs. Simpson lost no time in letting it in building plots. As The Times correspondent had suggested, the site was developed with "pure" homes and in the very next year

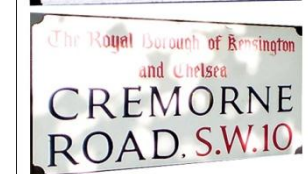
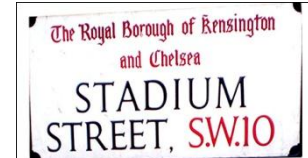


occupying much of the footprint of the former pleasure gardens, it eventually comprised ten or so Victorian residential terraces, with a central spine,



Burnaby Street (which followed the main avenue of the defunct Cremorne Gardens) named after Edward Burnaby, brother of Admiral Sir Willoughby Burnaby who lived at Ashburnham Cottage.

As well as Ashburnham, two other streets in the typical grid pattern were given names to reflect the close historic ties with the area. Cremorne and Stadium survive to the present day.



The terraces were constructed with three storey buildings, with rear gardens but they were not uniform in design. Some had basements – like Burnaby, with basement cellars under the pavement for the storage of coal, but others like Stadium Street did not. Many featured central bay windows, and the accommodation was generous and well-proportioned with the ground floors particularly of good height.



Cremorne was badly blitzed during the Second World War and was rebuilt and more recently redeveloped.



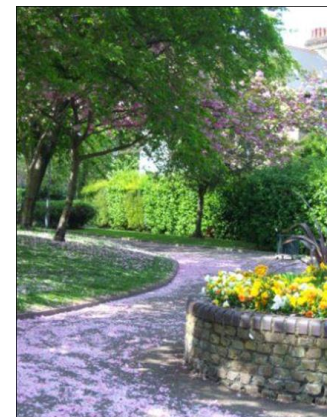
In this, for the most part, Council Planning permission has been empathetic to the character of the area as well as the wishes of residents, with new builds having to conform in both construction and materials – like traditional bricks and pitched roofs.

Also improvements, including additions – like extensions in the back garden areas ...



as well as loft extensions, and most recently basement excavation - have been permitted.

But the biggest landscape change to the area was the creation of Westfield Park in the 1960's on an extended bomb site of nearly five acres spanning an area immediately to the South of Kings Road. The Council ensures imaginative planting and a well-groomed area, and combined with two formal children's play areas, it has become a welcome and much used public amenity. In 2011 Westfield was awarded its first Green Flag – the national benchmark for parks and green spaces.



Lots Road Power Station was built on the riverside site previously occupied by wharves and industry. Chosen because of the easy access for coal barges providing fuel, it was designed to provide the necessary power for the Piccadilly, District and Metropolitan underground services. Sixty years later it underwent major modernisation. In 2006 the then decommissioned power station received planning permission for major conversion. This is currently on hold because of the economic downturn, but when it is completed will provide additional housing and amenities that should benefit the area as a whole.



The mixed community in both private and social housing continues to the present day, with some of the houses remaining as single units and others converted into flats.

They stand side by side with long established and more recent commercial/ business operations as well as specialist shops and services – ranging from an Indian restaurant and bakery to a cluster of interior design boutiques conveniently sited adjacent to the Design Centre in Chelsea Harbour.



The diversity of activities catered for range from a couple of well-frequented neighbourhood pubs, one of which featured in three atmospheric British films...



...to a bustling Auction House, and a much respected and long-established Jazz Club – the 606 in Lots Road.





The area now boasts two excellent educational centres – the long-established and prestigious Heatherley Art School, now in a new purpose built building, and most recently Chelsea Academy completed in 2011 which won the Public Building Project of the Year with the following citation:



“Schools have endured a tumultuous year but Chelsea Academy proves beyond any doubt that they can still have the power to exhilarate, enthrall and inspire. Situated in a dense residential area on a tight urban site opposite Lots Road power station in south-west London, this is a building that enriches both itself and its neighbourhood in the process. Its confident massing squares up to the power station while also managing to relate to the two-storey terraces at the other end of the site. In addition, internal

spaces are deployed as visual conduits that stitch urban views around and through the building together. All of which endows Chelsea Academy with a richness of character and a diversity of form that make it a virtually seamless extension of its urban fabric rather than an autonomous addition to it and a well-deserved winner of this category.”

Complementing the landscaping of Westfield Park, the Council has also replenished and maintained the trees along the streets in the Ward. Recently too, many pavements have been replaced and cleansing and rubbish collections are well organized and controlled.

With such an agreeable environment, the housing stock generally has been improved, is in good condition and is increasingly well maintained.



Conclusion:

The result of these Council and community endeavours is that the character and ambience of the area is pleasingly preserved for those who live and work there.

Representative of a traditional, typical London “village”, Cremorne offers as relevant and varied a 21st century environment as the immediate new kids on the block – the futuristic high-rise river developments of Chelsea Harbour and Imperial Wharf.

In embracing both the old and the new, this character-laden and increasingly vibrant area merits consideration to become a conservation area.

October, 2011

APPENDIX 1

