

The Cherry Tree

A newsletter for the Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association 1/2000

To paraphrase Winston Churchill: Never in the history of the Cherry Trees area was so much fun owed by so many to so few seconds for so many hours. What we refer to? The shooting of a short scene in Brunswick Gardens on 23 February for Disney's forthcoming "102 Dalmatians", of course!

What at the outset we feared might evoke harsh words from many in the area who would feel inconvenienced, turned out to be a very well organised event which hardly irritated anyone. On the contrary, it was regarded by most as a highly enjoyable occasion, giving many a brief insight into how much staff, work and time goes into every second of a modern Hollywood movie.

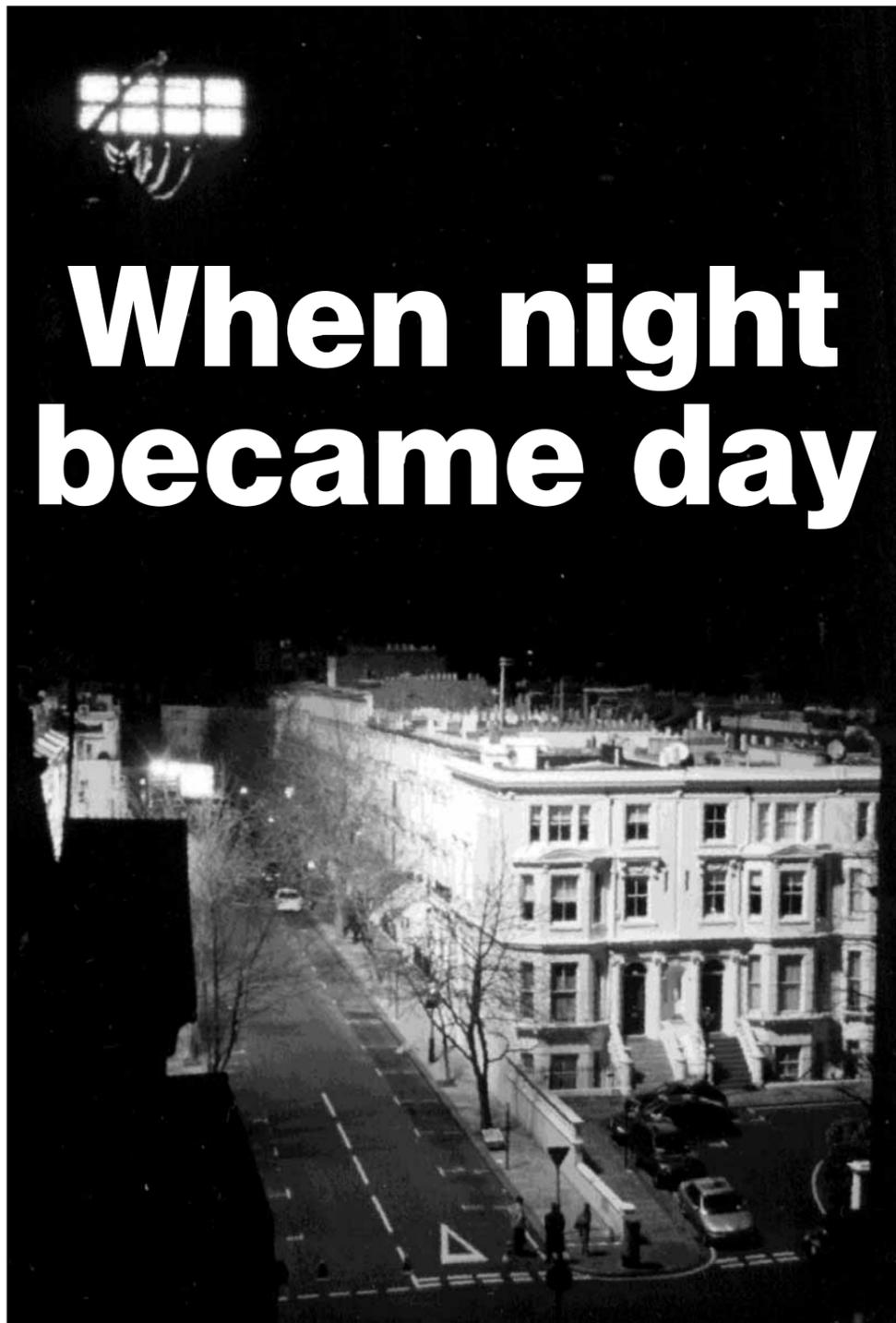
The preparations started in the morning, with all the parking spaces in Brunswick Gardens, Vicarage Gardens and Berkeley Gardens being cleared of some 500 cars. The film company had arranged alternative parking at Kings College and offered everyone who parked there a £50 compensation and a shuttle bus service to and from the temporary parking area.

Floodlights

While this was happening, a huge crane was positioned in Vicarage Gardens and hoisted a battery of very strong floodlights some 100 feet up in the air. The lights were so strong that they later in the evening lit up the whole area enough to turn night into day.

Towards the evening more and more crew and equipment arrived, and by 8 p.m. it was time to start the shooting.

The scene took place outside no. 40 Brunswick Gardens: It's a winter evening with snow flurries in the air, so the street is wet and shiny. A thief appears in a window on the second floor with a sack of



Brunswick Gardens and surrounding streets were totally lit up by the strong floodlights.

stolen Dalmatian puppies. He climbs out of the window, drops the sack into the basement area and prepares to climb down himself. Suddenly, a young couple passes by,

engaged in a lively conversation, so the villain hangs on to the window sill, hoping they won't notice him. As soon as they have passed, he loses his grip and falls into the base-

ment area. After a short while, a very shaken-up thief emerges from the basement with the sack and walks right into a lamp post. Scene ends.

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40 Brunswick Gardens was the centre of attention.

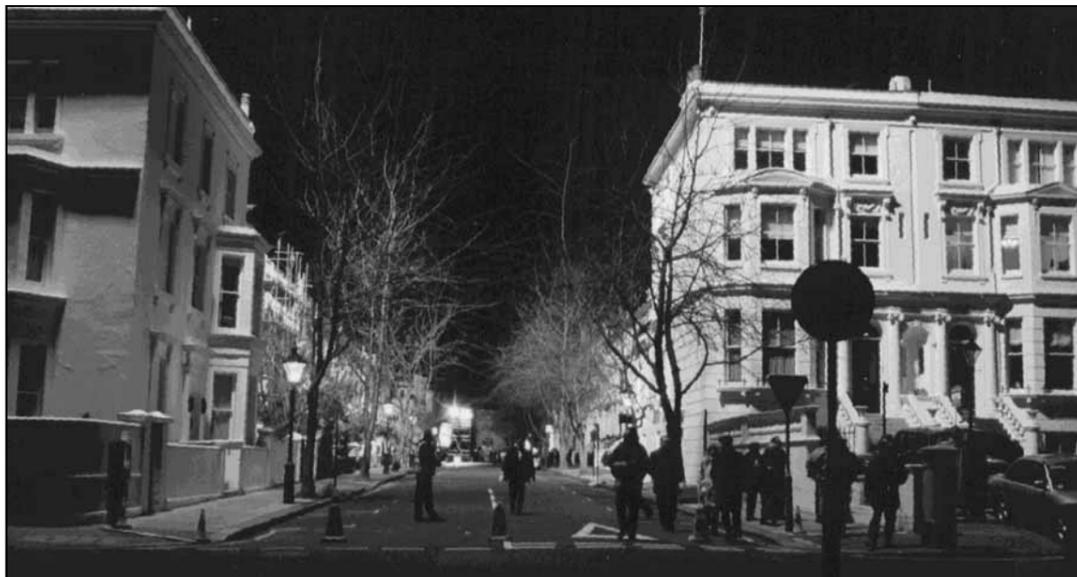
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Snow and wind

Beside actors, director, stunt-man, puppies, camera and sound crew, this short scene required additional lights at the site; reflectors to diffuse the light; powerful lights in neighbouring windows to out-shine the lights outside and thus give the feeling of lit up windows; a snow cannon blowing real snow from a high crane and another snow cannon situated in a window at the top floor; a wind machine to make the snow fall down in a natural way; and a man with a water hose to keep the street and the pavement wet and shiny.

Ambulance and loo

There was also an ambulance on the site, in case there was an accident; dressing room trailers for the actors; dog handlers to take care of the puppies between each take; caterers to feed the crew; make up artists to adjust hair and make-up between each take; wardrobe people to make sure the clothes are okay; carpenters for all sorts of last minute changes and adjustments; and a portable loo... No wonder there were more crew than spectators at the set, even though a large number of the people in the area came to watch.



Night turned to day when the Cherry Trees area became Cherrywood for a single evening.

For an evening Cherry Trees became Cherrywood

The whole scene was about 30 seconds long, but required several takes with long pauses in between. So not until 3 a.m. was the director satisfied and could send everybody home.

By next morning almost all the signs of the film shoot were gone and the cars were once again filling up all the parking spaces. It was almost as if it hadn't happened...

So why was our area chosen for this scene in the sequel to "101 Dalmatians" from 1996? Well, a scene in "101" was actually also shot here - that time in a basement flat in Palace Gardens Terrace, and so discreetly that most people in the area never noticed it.

Cruella is back!

As anyone who saw the previous film will recall, Cruella DeVil (Glenn Close), who planned to make herself a nice Dalmatian coat, was finally taken by the police. But

if you thought that was the end of her, you were seriously mistaken. The official plot outline for the new film is: "Cruella DeVil gets out of prison and goes after them darned puppies once more."

Beside Glenn Close, the new film also features the French heart throb Gérard Depardieu. "102 Dalmatians" is scheduled for release in the US at Thanksgiving in November, so it may very well open for Christmas in the UK. Then we will all have to go and see the 30 seconds of glory for the Cherry Trees area - provided that it hasn't ended up on the cutting room floor...



In the UK by Christmas?



The big crane with the strong floodlights was positioned in Vicarage Gardens already in the morning.



Brunswick Gardens had probably not been so free from parked cars since the early days of the last century (i.e. early 1900's).



The iron church was built already 1855 by Archdeacon John Sinclair. It was the first church of its kind in London.

The Tin Tabernacle

The first building to be erected after the development of the glebe land had been agreed in 1854 (see last issue), was a church. Archdeacon John Sinclair, the vicar of St Mary Abbots, had a quickly growing parish with residential areas springing up everywhere. In the immediate vicinity of the vicarage alone, there was the glebe development as well as extensive construction on the other side of current Church Street.



The brick church from 1888 was bombed during WWII.

In addition to that, the St Mary Abbots church was in a poor state and would need to be rebuilt or replaced very soon. During that work the parishers would need an alternative place of worship.

So, already in 1854 Sinclair started the building of a temporary iron church on the grounds of his vicarage, at the southern end of the planned Palace Gardens Terrace. The church, constructed of corrugated galvanised iron, was completed by September 1855. The official name was St Paul's Church, but it was commonly known as "The Tin Tabernacle".

By 1885 the iron church was in urgent need of replacement. The site wasn't ideal,

squeezed in the corner of PGT and Vicarage Gate with only part of the church visible from the street, but land prices ruled out other alternatives. So, a new brick church in French Gothic style was built and ready for service in November 1888.

During the Second World War the church was badly damaged and not rebuilt. The site was sold to the Distressed Gentlemen's Aid Association who built the current nursing home on the site. This has recently has been taken over by the Elizabeth Finn Trust and has been renamed "Vicarage Gate House."



Today Vicarage Gate House stands on the old church ground.

Park with care until July...

Sureway, the company which has been overseeing the street parking for the Council the last couple of years, will be replaced by a new company from 1 July.

The main reason why they have lost the contract, is that they have an incredible 225,000 unanswered letters on their files, most of them presumably from residents contesting parking tickets.

The new company taking on the contract may have just as uncompassionate parking wardens, but we can at least expect complaints to be handled better, because the Council will take on the responsibility themselves of dealing with all the queries and complaints about the parking service.

As Sureway only has two months left of their contract, there is a risk that they instruct their parking wardens to ticket as many cars and vans as possible, in order to maximise the company's income before the contract expires.

So, let's be extra vigilant about details like having all the wheels inside the parking space markings and observing the yellow signs about temporary parking restrictions.

Graffiti clean up

The Council has decided that it will charge utilities like BT to remove graffiti from their street boxes as quickly as possible, in an effort to control the graffiti menace.

So, if the utilities do their bit and we make sure that our house walls are kept graffiti free, the graffiti "artists" may hopefully get bored and direct their energy towards something more useful.



Even when Church Street is at a stand still, there are no more "rats" running through our peaceful streets.

Peaceful no entry

Anybody doubtful about the advantage of the no entry at the top of Vicarage Gate, which was introduced last spring, has possibly had a change of heart by now.

Traffic congestion down Kensington Church Street has probably never been as bad, with the queue stretching all the way from Notting Hill Gate down to Kensington High Street almost constantly since January. And just before Easter it got even worse, with the northbound lanes being dug up at the bottom of Church Street.

The introduction of the no entry scheme was one of the most highly debated issues ever in the Cherry Trees area, as some feared that they would be very inconvenienced by it. By now even those most against it have hopefully recognised that the advantages by far outweigh any disadvantages.

Likewise, the improved one way scheme at the top of PGT seems to have turned out a lot better than what many feared. The bicyclists are about as few and far between now as they were when they turned into PGT illegally.

Summer Party!

CTRAA's annual summer party in Inverness Gardens will this year take place on Tuesday 20 June at 6.30 p.m. New and old members are very welcome. And while you make a note about the summer party in your calendar, please also note that the autumn party in Inverness Gardens is scheduled for Sunday 17 September at 12 noon.



New members welcome

The aim of CTRAA (The Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association) is to preserve and enhance our local environment. We are open to all residents in the area and rely on having an enthusiastic membership. Currently we have around 400 members and new members are always welcome. The annual subscription is only £3 per person (£8 for 3 years).

Electric rides in the park

If you find walking difficult but want to get about in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, there is help at hand. The Hyde Park Appeal provides a service called "Liberty Drives", where people with restricted mobility are driven around the park in electric buggies. The passengers can be dropped off at their favourite spots and picked up later.

This voluntary scheme is operating 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday - Friday from May to October with pick-up points at either end of The Broad Walk. To arrange for a pick-up or to find out more, please call Adam Nicoll on 0467-498 096.

The "Liberty Drives" service is provided free of charge, but the Hyde Park Appeal charity is maintained solely by voluntary contributions, so if the charity receives a monetary thank you for the ride, it will not take offence.

The "Liberty Drives" are in need of volunteer drivers for their electric buggies. If you're interested, please contact The Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau on 8960 3722.

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A newsletter for the Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association

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The aim of The Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association is to improve our neighbourhood and to function as our representative towards the Council and other authorities in matters concerning the area.

Membership is open to all residents living in Palace Gardens Terrace, Strathmore Gardens, Berkeley Gardens, Brunswick Gardens, Inverness Gardens, Vicarage Gardens, Vicarage Gate, on the southern side of Kensington Mall, and on the eastern side of Kensington Church Street between Vicarage Gate and Kensington Mall.