

New vicar announced

Father Gillean Craig, 53, currently Rector of St George's-in-the-East in Tower Hamlet, will be the new vicar of the parish of Kensington. He succeeds Father Timothy Thornton, who left the parish in October to become Bishop of Sherborne in Dorset. Father Gillean will be installed at a special service in St Mary Abbots on 26 June, led by the Bishop of Kensington, the Rt Reverend Michael Colclough, and shortly thereafter he and his wife, Linda Hirst, a professional singer, will move to Kensington.

Traffic chaos this summer

The current alterations to pedestrian crossings on Kensington High Street are just the beginning of a major face-lift of pavements, streetlights and pedestrian crossings. The work started with the crossings east of the Church Street junction and then jumped to the west end of High Street, where even a few trees have been planted in the middle of the street.

The Cherry Tree

A newsletter for the Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association
 Editor: Thomas Blomberg
 Daytime: 8237 7907
 Evenings: 7938 3775
 thomas.blomberg@sdi-media.co.uk
 Material for future issues can be sent to:
 Flat 7, 18 Vicarage Gate, London W8 4AA

The Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association

Chairman: Willoughby Wynne
 39 Brunswick Gardens, London W8 4AW
 Tel: 7727 9786

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.

Work on the Church Street junction is planned to take place this summer, during the peak holiday season, "to take advantage of the lower levels of traffic", according to a statement from Town Hall – another way of saying that it will cause the traffic down Church Street to run even slower than usual. Be prepared for chaos this summer!



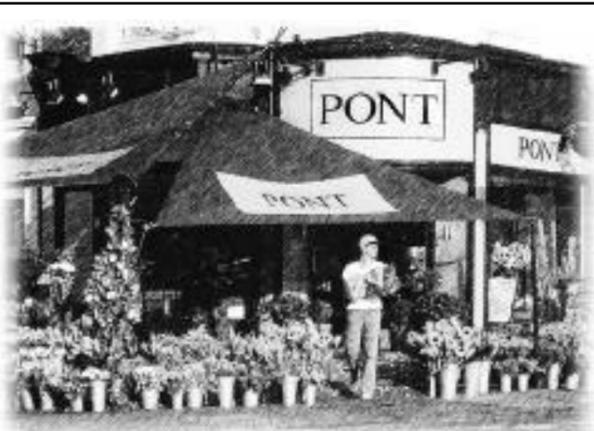
Work on the new crossing is in progress.

Finally a crossing

After several rejections, the CTRAA finally managed to convince the Council late last year that there was a great need for a pedestrian crossing where Kensington Mall joins Kensington Church Street. Anyone who has been standing waiting on that corner for several

minutes, watching the traffic racing around the bends of Kensington Mall, realises how much easier it will be to walk along the eastern side of Church Street in the future. The work on the crossing started a few weeks ago and is expected to finish shortly.

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Welcome to our Jubilee Party!

On Sunday 26 May, one week before everybody else, the Cherry Trees area will celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee with a big party in St Mary Abbots Vicarage Garden, followed by a special children's party.

The Queen herself will unfortunately not be able to attend, as she and the Duke of Edinburgh will be in Edinburgh on that day, as part of her big 15-week Jubilee tour, but the residents in our area will no doubt be able to thoroughly enjoy the day anyhow.

In the garden there will be drinks, food and plenty of space for everyone. In case of bad weather the CTRAA has secured St Mary Abbots' Hall as a backup. The party will start at noon and finish with a magic show 2.00 - 2.30pm, followed by the children's party in St Mary Abbots' Hall, with more entertainment, games and cakes.

Instead of street party

The CTRAA committee was originally thinking of holding a street party during the long Jubilee Weekend, like the rest of the country, but, realising that many residents will take the opportunity to go away on a short holiday on that four-day weekend 1-4 June, it soon began to focus on the preceding Sunday instead.

That in turn made it obvious that the party couldn't be held in a street, as 26 May will be a normal Sunday, attracting lots of shoppers to Kensington. Beside the fact that it probably would be impossible to get permission to close off a street for a party on any other day than the official party days, we would run the risk of finding more outsiders helping themselves to the wine and the food than actual residents. That led the thoughts to the garden behind the Vicarage, as our usual party venue, Inverness Gardens, was deemed too small.

The Jubilee party will replace the regular CTRAA summer party.

Diamond Jubilee next?

That the Queen has reigned for 50 years is quite an achievement. When she celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1977, only 13 of her predecessors had held the throne that long. 25 years later she has passed all of them except four (Henry III, Edward III, George III



and Queen Victoria) in the race to be the one who has held the throne the longest.

Victoria still holds the winner's cup, being the only regent in the world who has celebrated a diamond jubilee at 60 years before she reached the finish line at 63. Now it seems very possible that she will have to hand over the cup to her perky great-great granddaughter in 14 years' time.

Queenly wedding dresses

While the Jubilee Weekend 1-4 June is the culmination of the celebrations, there are events marking the 50 years throughout the year. Several of them will take place within walking distance of our area.

The first to start was the exhibition at Kensington Palace, "A Century of Queens' Wedding Dresses 1840-1947", which opened 1 May and continues until 31 December. Five royal wedding dresses are on display, including those of Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and HM Queen Elizabeth II.

On 19 May St Mary Abbots Church will hold a Golden Jubilee Choral Concert, attended by HRH Princess Alexandra.

On 6 June there will be a special edition of the proms, called "Spring Proms" in the Royal Albert Hall.

Picnic with the Queen

A bit further away, but especially intended for the people of WEST London is "The Queen's Golden Jubilee Picnic In The Royal Park", held in Bushy Park, by Hampton Court, on Tuesday 25 June. This event, which will be attended by the Queen, is organised by the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston, Richmond, City of Westminster, and The Royal Parks. Entry will be free to this afternoon of traditional county



Only four other monarchs in British history have reigned as long as HM Queen Elizabeth II. (Picture by John Swannell / Camera Press)

fair entertainment and it is anticipated that 10,000 people will come with their picnic baskets, starting at 11.30am.

Jubilee Weekend highlights

The highlights during the Jubilee Weekend will be as follows:

On Saturday 1 June the Queen will host a classical concert in the gardens of Buckingham Palace with many renowned stars. It will also be shown live on TV.

On Sunday 2 June there will be jubilee church services all over the country, followed by a nationwide bell ringing, which will be the largest co-ordinated event of its type in history.

On Monday 3 June there will be gun salutes in Green Park and from the Tower, followed by a pop concert in the gardens of Buckingham Palace with old-timers like Sir Cliff Richard, Sir Paul McCartney, Rod Stewart, Eric Clapton, Tom Jones, and Sir Elton

John, as well as newer stars like Atomic Kitten, Blue, S Club 7 and Will Young. The concert will be shown on TV the next day. Towards the evening the Queen will light the first of a series of beacons across the country, which will be followed by a spectacular firework display.

On Tuesday 4 June the Queen will head a ceremonial State procession from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's Cathedral, where a National Service of Thanksgiving will take place. In the afternoon, she will make a Balcony Appearance at Buckingham Palace and watch a Royal Air Force Fly Past, and then she and Prince Philip will attend a giant carnival pageant that will proceed down The Mall.

By then the Cherry Trees residents will probably be quite blasé, having celebrated two weekends in a row. See you at our party!

Board frauders convicted

In April, the three owners of Berkeley International, of 172 Kensington Church Street, were fined £9,450 by West London magistrates for four cases of having put up boards outside properties without the permission of the owners; boards that falsely claimed the properties to be for sale or let, which is an offence under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. In addition, the three estate agents were ordered to meet the Council's legal costs of £3,000.

The Borough's trading standards officers will now report them to the Office of Fair Trading, which has the power to disbar them from operating as estate agents.

The conviction signals a less tolerant attitude to board fraud; in October 2000, Foxtons were only fined £600 for a similar offence.

Residents who find themselves victims of board fraud or other sharp practice should call the Borough's Trading Standards office: 7341 5610.



More wildlife in Brunswick Grdns

In the last issue of The Cherry Tree we showed a picture by Carys Wynne of a tawny owl sitting in a tree outside our dear chairman's house on Christmas Eve. A few weeks ago, Carys was out with her camera again. This time the top end of Brunswick Gardens was visited by a peacock at 9am, who, after posing for the camera, strutted past the Wynne home and turned left into Palace Gardens Terrace.

Several people called RSPCA, and eventually the peacock was picked up and probably returned to Holland Park.

Considering that peacocks are poor flyers, and that Holland Park is a good 20 minutes walk away, involving crossing a number of streets, this must have been one very determined bird. On its way to do house hunting in Kensington Gardens, perhaps?

It looks as if we need to request that the Council declares the top of Brunswick Gardens a wildlife sanctuary...



George was secretly married to Maria Fitzherbert.



Bigamist George was Prince Regent for nine years before becoming king.



Princess Caroline was perhaps scandalous but extremely popular.

When George II died in 1760, so did Kensington Palace's role as the regent's residence. George II had outlived his son Fredrick by nine years and was succeeded by his 22-year-old grandson, George III (1738-1820), who didn't like Kensington Palace. He bought Buckingham House in 1761, and since then Buckingham Palace has been the official residence of the British monarchs.

George III (later known as "Mad George") showed little interest in Kensington Palace, except as a storage place for paintings. With no court life and no role for the State Apartments the palace soon fell into a state of disrepair. However, by the end of the 18th century apartments were required for some of George III's children and other members of the Royal Family, so vast sums were spent on accommodating them, causing the Duke of Wellington to remark that they were "the damndest millstone about the necks of any government that can be imagined".

The first person to be offered apartments in the palace was George III's fourth son, Edward, Duke of Kent, who in 1798 was allocated two floors of rooms in the southeast corner of the palace, beneath the State Apartments. Edward's apartments weren't ready for him until 1812, and four years later huge debts forced him to leave the country and live in Brussels.

The unruly Caroline

In the meantime the eccentric Princess of Wales had been offered apartments in 1804, when the relationship between her and her husband became intolerable. The Princess' name was Karoline von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (known in British history as Caroline of Brunswick), and her husband was the future George IV, son of George III.

Her apartments, in the northeast corner of the palace, were also in need of repair, so it was not until 1808 that they were ready for occupation. Caroline had 11 rooms for her own use, all of which were splendidly furnished in the latest fashion. An additional seven rooms were allocated to her ladies-in-waiting and a further 30 rooms for her staff. Until 1814, when she left England for Italy,

the Princess divided her time between Kensington and her other home in Blackheath.

Their only child, Princess Charlotte (1796-1817), had also been given an apartment next to her mother, but it is uncertain if she ever lived there.

Today Princess Caroline is often coined as the original "People's Princess", and she is still a very controversial person. Some current writers quote sources at the time who described her as a fat, ill-smelling, immoral flasher, while others claim that she actually looked somewhat like Princess Diana and that most bad things said about her at the time were malicious slander, spread by friends of the Prince of Wales.

She may not have been an ill-smelling flasher, but she was probably wilder than what was regarded proper at the time. She was famous for her parties and in 1810 the Head Gardner at Kensington wrote that "when the Princess has her parties, the grounds are open as a common field, and carriages have been seen at Midnight, driving over the Walks and Lawns, to the great injury of the Royal Gardens".

She enjoyed enormous public support, partly because of the way her disliked husband treated her. He was thoroughly disliked because of his lavishly built palaces, extravagance and numerous mistresses in a time of social distress and general misery following the Napoleonic Wars and the changes brought forth by the industrial revolution.

The bigamistic George

The goings-on with the Prince and Princess of Wales at the time make the Diana-Charles-Camilla triangle pale in comparison: Prince George, a notorious womaniser, was secretly married to a commoner and twice-widowed Catholic who was six years

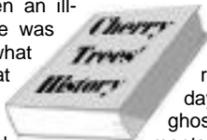
older than himself, Maria Fitzherbert; he hated his wife and cousin Caroline from the start, having been forced to marry her in 1795 as a condition for Parliament to pay his enormous debts; and he and his friends spread malicious rumours about Caroline to the extent that she became subject of a Government investigation.

She didn't return from Italy until 1820, when George ascended to the throne, after having been Prince Regent since 1811 because of his father's mental illness. When she arrived George took out a Bill of Divorcement in the House of Lords, but that caused such uproar in the country that the divorce proceedings had to be abandoned. She came to his coronation in 1821 but was publicly refused entry and died 19 days later, 53 years old. Her ghost is said to haunt the apartments where Princess Margaret later lived.

The reclusive Augustus

In 1805 George's and Edward's younger brother Augustus, Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), was given the former housekeeper's apartments in the southwest corner of the palace. Augustus suffered badly from asthma and he became something of a recluse, devoting his energies to building up his extensive library. By the end of his life his collection filled ten rooms and comprised over 50,000 volumes.

In spite of his reclusive nature (or perhaps because of it, considering how poorly his brothers behaved in public) Augustus was the most popular of the sons of George III and his death at Kensington Palace in April 1843 was the occasion of a genuine display of public mourning. His body lay in state in the palace and for one day the public were allowed to pay their last respects. A temporary



Kensington Palace hasn't changed much on the outside since the early 19th century.

Kensington Palace after the regents, 1760-1837: From the outrageous Caroline to the overprotected Victoria

wooden staircase was erected from a first-floor window to ease the flow of mourners. It is estimated some 20,000 came to pay their last respect, which was remarkable in a time of no cars or public transport. His second wife, the Duchess of Inverness, continued to live in their apartments until 1873.

The chase for an heir

The death in childbirth of the Prince Regent's only child, Princess Charlotte, in 1817, forced the children of George III, even though several of them were in their mid 50's, to make hastily arrangements to secure the Hanoverian succession, for now there was no young heir to the throne - because although George III and his Queen Charlotte had 12 living descendants, not one had a legitimate child.

George, the 55-year-old Prince Regent, couldn't get another child. He was still legally married to Caroline, whom he detested, and even if he hadn't she was by then 49 years old. Next in line was Frederick. He was 54 years old and married since 1791, but had no children. Third in line was William, 52 years old. He had lived with the actress Mrs. Dorothea Jordan since 1791 and had 10 children with her. She had died in 1816, so now he set out to find himself a suitable wife. Eventually he married Adelaide of Saxe-Coburg and Meinengein, who

bore him two daughters and two twin sons, but they all died at birth or shortly thereafter.

The birth of Victoria

Even the fourth son in line, the 50-year-old bachelor Edward, left his hideaway in Brussels and went courting in Germany. In 1818 he married Princess Victoire of Saxe-Coburg (1786-1861). She was a widow with two children, Charles and Feodora.

Edward returned to England when his wife was expecting their first child, and on 24 May 1819 Princess Alexandrina Victoria was born at Kensington Palace in the ground-floor room in the northeast corner of his apartments. As a small child she

was nicknamed Drina, although her mother preferred to call her Victoria. Unfortunately, Edward died nine months later from pneumonia, only a few days before the death of his father, George III.

The overprotected Victoria

The fatherless Victoria grew up at Kensington. Her doting mother feared that she would be murdered, so she was never left alone, and she was so overprotected that she was not permitted to walk up or down a staircase without holding someone's hand.

The highly disliked George IV died in 1830, 68 years old, and was succeeded by his still childless brother William (Frederick, who otherwise



After Edward's death Victoria and her mother stayed in the palace.



When he was 50, the bachelor Edward had to produce an heir.



Prince Augustus was a recluse, but extremely popular.



William IV was very modest, compared to most of his family.

would have succeeded George, had died in 1827).

The reformist William

William IV, whose great love (beside Mrs Jordan) had been the Navy (he went to sea when he was 13, saw several battles and didn't resign from his Navy duties until 1828), was the opposite to his extravagant brother. He made the Reform Bill of 1832 possible, which did away with "rotten boroughs" and virtually tripled the electorate. This bill, and such reforms as the education act, the new poor law, and the abolition of slavery in the empire, marked his reign.

William was, however, already 65 years old when he ascended to the throne, so early in the morning of 20 June 1837 the teenager Victoria was awakened in Kensington Palace with news that uncle William had died and that she now was the ruler of the mighty British empire.

The Hanoverian throne, however, went to William's younger brother Ernest Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland, as the law of Hanover didn't allow a female on the throne. Thus the union of Britain and Hanover ended after 123 years.

The young Queen at once moved into Buckingham Palace, accompanied by her mother, but for the rest of her long life Kensington Palace would always hold a special place in her heart.