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## Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



WELCOME TO ONSLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION'S NEWSLETTER. Another new year brings another fresh set of challenges for this much sought after – yet constantly targeted – district of London. As I write, the sorry saga concerning

the redevelopment of South Kensington Station continues: having been refused planning permission last year for their dismal, out-of-scale scheme, Native Land and Transport for London are back yet again with an appeal against the unanimous decision by RBKC's elected councillors.

Onslow Neighbourhood Association has already spent many thousands of pounds on its objections to this bland, generic proposal, a sum which includes the high cost of legal representation at this latest planning enquiry. ONA's membership subscription goes hardly any way towards being able to cover these kinds of sums; consequently, any donations towards ONA's continuing battle to preserve and enhance this much-loved area of London would be very greatly appreciated. Please email us on [onslowa@gmail.com](mailto:onslowa@gmail.com) if you feel able to support us. We are hugely grateful to those who have already sent us a donation.

What a hash TfL has made of creating a station which is fit for purpose in South Kensington! I would go so far as to suggest

that TfL has been a malign influence in the borough from as far back as 1972 when its predecessor, London Transport, knocked down a perfectly good row of shops and houses in Pelham Street on the pretext that the land was needed to install escalators to the Piccadilly Line. In reality, only a tiny amount of that space – if any at all – was required and we have been forced to stare at a long, ugly brick wall ever since. The many monstrous redevelopments proposed would indicate that it was always TfL's intention to 'milk' the site for as much money as possible, regardless of the detrimental effects on South Kensington's unique character. Ironically, had TfL submitted a proposal at any point over the last fifty years (!) which actually respected the station's surroundings, it would doubtless have been passed years ago and the apparently 'bankrupt' organisation would have been 'coining it in'. Who knows how many millions (billions?) it has lost while its unfortunate customers are forced to endure a station which is not only unfit for purpose but, at times, downright dangerous. In the twenty-first century it is a scandal

that this much-vaunted 'gateway to the museums' has no step-free access. And, at the risk of annoying everyone even more, I feel duty-bound to remind 'younger' readers that – pre-1972 – there was step-free access right down to the Piccadilly Line platforms via the lifts on Pelham Street. So much for progress.

Other challenges to our  
*Continued overleaf* 🍷



*A pre-1972 view along Pelham Street*

**ONA AGM 2023** Please come to the **50th Annual General Meeting on Thursday 16 March** at the Institut Français, 17 Queensberry Place, and bring a neighbour. There will be drinks at 6 pm and the meeting will start at 6:30. An agenda and further details will be posted on [ona.org.uk](http://ona.org.uk).

beleaguered neighbourhood include a rumoured application to build more than *thirty* new dwellings at the back of the old Christie's salerooms on Old Brompton Road. These could only be reached via the tiny alleyway called Barnaby Place and, already, both the fire and ambulance services have confirmed that their vehicles would be unable to access the site. Neither could the refuse collection vehicles, meaning that potential residents would have to carry their rubbish to Old Brompton Road where it would fester alongside all the other piles of garbage.

Meanwhile, in the nick of time, ONA Trustee Susanna Trostdorf spotted that South Kensington has been identified in both RBKC's *Local Plan* and the Mayor of London's *London Plan* as 'having a night-time economy of national/international significance'. The fact that South Kensington is one of the most

residential areas of London is not mentioned. Interestingly, the plan relies heavily on the presence of the Royal Albert Hall, The Royal College of Music, The Royal College of Art, etc., to justify this designation yet none of these are within the Royal Borough. Susanna's watchfulness enabled ONA to submit pertinent questions on the consultation's final day as to what this 'night-time economy' might actually mean for South Kensington.

There is a constant stream of consultations and planning applications in our area and ONA is in urgent need of volunteers if we are to continue to be able to assess them properly. Please do contact us at the email address above if you would like to help.

Finally, ONA's next AGM starts at 6:00 for 6:30 pm on Thursday March 16 at the Institut Français (*see front cover*). Do come along if you possibly can!

## A neighbourhood institution changes hands:

*... fortunately, it's business as usual*



From top: McKay's Bullnose shop in 1970; Harrington Road shop façade; outside Harrington Road in January

D. McKay's, the longstanding greengrocer on Harrington Road, changed ownership recently, but thanks in part to a restrictive lease, has not been converted into yet another café, and will keep on selling fresh fruit, vegetables and juices.

Opened in 1948, McKay's is probably the second oldest retail shop in our area, surpassed only by Medici Gallery (1939) on Thurloe Street. According to James McKay, who worked at the store with his brother Ian for 45 years, their uncle Denis started the business. Denis's brother Jim joined him a few years later, eventually taking over when Denis went into farming and then handing the business to his sons, James and Ian.

For a time, there were two D. McKay's – the original on Harrington Road, and another in the South Kensington Bullnose which opened in 1956. The Bullnose shop (pictured) closed in 1995 after rents went up too much in that location, according to James.

James explains that the lease requires that the Harrington Road space be let for the sale of fresh produce. When he and his brother decided to retire, they

chose to sell the business to the Jay Patel family, on the recommendation of one of their Covent Garden suppliers. The Patels have given the interior a facelift, expanded their trading hours and now provide wicker shopping baskets. They have also kept on Castro Rodriguez, who has been working at the shop for ten years, and retained the distinctive 1940's façade.

D. McKay's may be the only greengrocer in a half-mile radius where most produce does not come wrapped in layers of plastic or netting. There is a much wider selection of produce than in local corner shops.

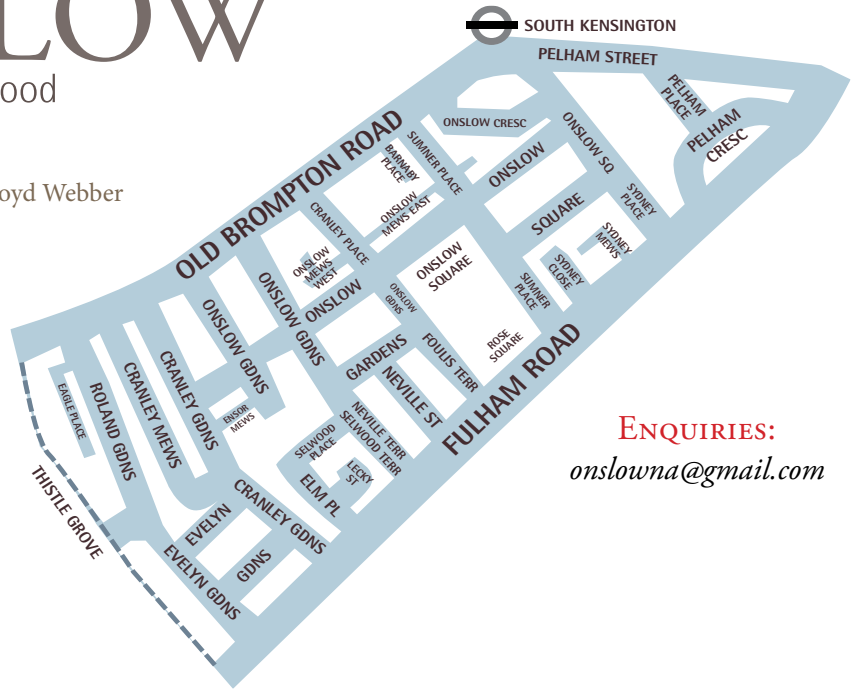
Despite the onslaught of cafes, restaurants, bistros and chain stores, our area retains some long-established and useful independent shops, including Stickland Pharmacy (1983) in the SKS Arcade, Medici and South Kensington Books (a bookstore has been on site since the 1940s), as well as enduring restaurants, such as the Polish restaurant Daquise (1947), all on Thurloe Street. Unfortunately, all four are in danger of disappearing for good if the current Native Land/TfL redevelopment plan goes ahead.



# ONSLOW

Neighbourhood Association

President Julian Lloyd Webber



The ONA was formed in 1972 to protect and enhance the residential and environmental quality of much of the western part of the Wellcome Trust estate in South Kensington (see map). We keep in touch with this annual newsletter and regular email updates. We host the only garden party permitted in Onslow Square – a unique opportunity to meet your neighbours, councillors and representatives of other local associations. Household membership is only £20 a year.

ENQUIRIES:  
onslowna@gmail.com

*The objectives of the ONA are:*

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning
- To stimulate interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the neighbourhood
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest
- To take steps to protect and advance the interests of persons living within the neighbourhood

# Join us!

**1** Make your online payment of £20 to our bank account:  
 Account name: Onslow Neighbourhood Association  
 Account number: 61011723  
 Sort code: 40-05-14  
 Reference: your name

**2** Set up a Standing Order for the payment of your annual membership fee on or before 5th January every year

**3** Fill in and sign the form below and post to Cynthia Parker, ONA Hon Treasurer, Flat 6, 29 Evelyn Gardens, SW7 3BE



I would like to join the ONA and I have paid my subscription fee of £20 into the ONA bank account

Your name .....

Home address .....

Email .....

Phone number (home/mobile) .....

By signing this form, you are confirming that you are consenting to ONA holding and processing your personal data in order to keep you informed about news, events and activities and to manage your membership and your annual subscription. ONA will never share your information with a third party. I consent to ONA contacting me by  post  email  telephone

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick this box:

Yes, I want the Onslow Neighbourhood Association to claim Gift Aid on my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you:

want to cancel this declaration; change your name or home address; no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

PLEASE COMPLETE & SIGN THIS FORM & SEND TO:

Signature ..... date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

*giftaid it*



Cynthia Parker, Hon Treasurer, ONA, Flat 6, 29 Evelyn Gardens, SW7 3BE

ONA is a Registered Charity. Charity Number: 264 296

# ONA Garden Party: 15 June, Onslow Square



Last year's Garden Party attracted a record number of attendees. Fortunately, the weather cooperated and members, neighbours, guests and local councillors had a chance to meet and mingle in the ambience of a beautiful garden.

The party is expected to take place on Thursday 15 June in Onslow Square. Please check your emails and the website for confirmation and further details. If you'd like to help organise the party or help on the day, please email [onslowna@org.uk](mailto:onslowna@org.uk).



2022 Annual General Meeting at the Institut Français



ONA members at the November Poppy Appeal in South Kensington Station. New volunteers are always needed! Please email Isabella Ohan on [isabellaohan@yahoo.ca](mailto:isabellaohan@yahoo.ca) if you'd like to help.

## Help grow ONA!

There is power in numbers – and you can help ours grow. If every reader of this newsletter signs up for membership in ONA, and asks one other neighbour to do the same, we could more than *double* our numbers overnight. Please consider boosting ONA membership by asking someone to **join today**. Joining information is overleaf. If you'd have questions or would like more copies of this newsletter to share, please email [onslowna@gmail.com](mailto:onslowna@gmail.com). Thank you!



photos: Lucy Ward & Isabella Ohan



*useful  
contacts*

To report building material or rubbish blocking the road or pavement:

STREETLINE 020 7361 3001

[www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/waste-and-street-environment](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/waste-and-street-environment)

To report noise and nuisance – late loud parties, out-of-hours construction work, etc:

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 020 7361 3002 email: [environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk)

[www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/noise-or-nuisance](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/noise-or-nuisance)

To report anti-social behaviour – aggressive begging, disorderly or disruptive conduct:

MET POLICE 101 or [www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk) and click on REPORT. Call 999 to report an emergency