# LONDON'S DELUE

The Lives and Homes of London's Most Interesting Inhabitants

Edited by HOWARD SPENCER



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## WESTMINSTER AND PIMLICO

the heart of national government since the 11th century. Here are the Houses of Parliament and the broad sweep of Whitehall where the business of state is carried out. Many of the office buildings date from the 19th century, but behind the arterial routes lie the 18th-century terraces of Smith Square and Queen Anne's Gate, which are dotted with blue plaques.

From the mid-1800s, a new commercial centre grew up between Parliament Square and Victoria Station. This quarter is characterised by tall blocks of mansion flats, department stores and modern offices, and by the Roman

Catholic Westminster Cathedral, built to designs by J. F. Bentley\* between 1895 and 1903.

Pimlico, to the west, was built up in the mid-Victorian era as a genteel suburb for professional men; it aspired to – but never quite matched – the social standing of neighbouring Belgravia. The area's stuccoed Italianate terraces and squares are now intermingled with post-war local authority housing and subsequent developments.



UMBERS 3–8 Whitehall Place is a government building, currently home to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. It stands on the site of a row of small houses built in about 1820 that became, in September 1829, the headquarters of the new Metropolitan Police force. The police's earliest nicknames - the 'blue army' and the 'raw lobster gang' - were soon replaced by 'Peelers' and 'bobbies': both derive from the force's founder, Sir Robert Peel\*, who lived at nearby 4 Whitehall Gardens. The back of 4 Whitehall Place was extended to form a police barracks.

opening onto Great Scotland Yard. This entrance, used by the public and the press, caused the whole building to be known popularly as Scotland Yard from the early 1840s. By 1888, the police headquarters had overflowed into several adiacent buildings and in November 1890 the police moved into the purpose-built New Scotland Yard on Victoria Embankment, now called the Norman Shaw Building after its eminent architect. The Met HQ has since moved in 1967 to Broadway. off Victoria Street, and then back to Victoria Embankment in 2016 - but the name 'Scotland Yard' has stuck.

# SIR HENRY MORTON STANLEY

(1841-1904) explorer and writer

6 (formerly 2) Richmond Terrace 2

TANLEY was born John Rowlands in Denbigh, north Wales, and spent much of his childhood in the workhouse. Emigrating to the United States in 1859, he was adopted by a cotton trader called Stanley, and became a journalist. Urged by the flamboyant proprietor of the New York Herald, Gordon Bennett, to 'find Livingstone'. Stanley set off for Africa, and, having tracked down the famous explorer in 1871, greeted him with the famous line 'Dr Livingstone. I presume?' and a bottle of cham-

pagne. Stanley went on to author the hugely popular How I Found Livingstone (1872) and Through the Dark Continent (1878), and played a major, and now very controversial, part in opening up the Congo. Stanley resettled in England in 1890 and married the painter Dorothy ('Dolly') Tennant (1855-1926); they lived with Dolly's formidable mother Gertrude at this house, then numbered 2 Richmond Terrace. It was handy for Parliament when he became a Liberal Unionist MP in 1895 and he continued to travel.

lecture and write. It was at Richmond Terrace - just after hearing the chimes of Big Ben - that Stanley died. The house forms part of a terrace built in 1822-5 to designs

by Henry Harrison; since reconstructive work in the 1980s only the facade remains, on which the plaque may be glimpsed from Whitehall through the security barrier.

#### SIR MANSFIFI D CUMMING

(1859-1923) first chief of the Secret Service

2 Whitehall Court 3

N eager experimenter with secret writing, disguises and gadgets, Cumming always signed himself - in green ink - as 'C': James Bond's boss 'M' is his fictional counterpart. Born Mansfield George Smith - he later changed his name he enlisted in the Navy at the age of 12. He got the 'tap on the shoulder' to run the newly established Secret Service Bureau in 1909; two years later this split into home and foreign sections - the precursors of MI5 and MI6. Cumming led the foreign section, which from 1911 to 1922 had its headquarters - and a flat for the chief - at numbers 53 and 54.

on the seventh floor of Whitehall Court - a vast Thames-side building resembling a Renaissance French chateau. The plaque is by the door to what is now the Royal Horseguards Hotel. Cumming's time there encompassed the First World War, so most of his work here related to intelligence-gathering in Germany. He lost a leg in a motor accident in 1914 that killed his son Alastair: afterwards Cumming used a scooter to propel him around the office. and would sometimes disconcert colleagues by jabbing a paper knife into his artificial limb to emphasise a point.

#### T. F. I AWRENCE

(1888-1935) 'Lawrence of Arabia'

14 Barton Street 4



) ARTON Street is a rare surviving example of early Georgian brown-brick terraced houses; it was developed by the actor Barton Booth in 1722. Two hundred years later, between March and August 1922. Thomas Edward Lawrence stayed at number 14, where he

worked on the final draft of Seven Pillars of Wisdom (1926). With this colourful - some were to say fanciful - tale of his adventures as a soldier and diplomat during the Arab revolt against Turkish rule (1916-18) Lawrence became a legend, inspiring the David Lean film of 1962.



ORN in Scotland, the son of a church minister, John Charles Walsham Reith was knighted on his appointment to the Director-Generalship in 1926, at which juncture the BBC became a public corporation. Reith had moved to Barton Street in June 1924 with his wife Muriel, and it was from his study here that he announced the beginning of the General Strike in 1926 - a 'very impressive performance', he noted in his diary, with a characteristic horror of false modesty. Tired

of the 'dirt and confinement' of London, however, the Reiths left Barton Street, the birthplace of their son Christopher, for Buckinghamshire in March 1930. On the original plaque, which was unveiled in 1994. Reith's second forename had been omitted and as he was in the words of his son, 'such a stickler for absolute correctness in every detail', it was decided to have a new plaque made with a simplified wording. It is sited on the side of the building facing Cowley Street.

#### SIR JOHN GIELGUD

(1904–2000) actor and director

16 Cowley Street 6

\//ITH Ralph Richardson\* and Laurence Olivier, Gielgud was one of a trio of theatrical knights who dominated the English stage for much of the 20th century. Onstage at the Old Vic. in the West End and later at the National Theatre, he took leading parts in plays by Shakespeare, Chekhov, Richard Brinslev Sheridan\* and – later – Alan Bennett and Peter Shaffer: his film credits include Oh! What a Lovely War (1969), Murder on the Orient Express (1974). Providence (1976) Arthur (1981) and Prospero's Books (1991). Born in South Kensington, Gielgud was of Prussian and Polish ancestry on his father's side, while his maternal

aunt was the actress Ellen Terry\*. He moved to this early Georgian townhouse in 1945 and stayed for 31 years, sharing the place with a menagerie of pets - six dogs, two owls and a cockatoo, at one point - and his cook, driver and general manservant Bernie Dodge. Gielgud was famously otherworldly, once conversationally asking the Prime Minister Clement Attlee\* where he was living, not being aware to whom he was speaking. The story of Gielgud's conviction for a homosexual offence, following police entrapment, is itself now the subject of a play - Nicholas de Jongh's Plague Over England (2009).

HE daughter of the philanthropist and politician William Rathbone, Eleanor Rathbone became the secretary of the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society in 1897. In 1909 she became the first woman elected to Liverpool City Council: ten vears later she succeeded Millicent Fawcett\* to the presidency of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and moved to London, where she lived at 50 Romney Street - around the corner from Tufton Street - with her lifelong friend and companion Elizabeth Macadam (1871-1948). a fellow social reformer. Bathbone was elected to Parliament for the

Combined English Universities as an Independent, and held the seat from 1929 until her death. Bombed out of Romney Street in 1940, Eleanor and Elizabeth moved to 5 Tufton Court - a flat on the ground floor of a recently built seven-storey block. Since the 1920s Rathbone had campaigned for a universal benefit payable to mothers, and the Family Allowances Act of 1945 owed much to her persistence. She also pressed for a more sympathetic policy towards refugees - especially Jewish refugees. In April 1945 Eleanor and Elizabeth moved to Highgate, where Rathbone died suddenly the following year.

# STELLA, LADY READING

(1894–1971) founder of the Women's Voluntary Services 41 Tothill Street 8

This imposing early-20th-L century office building, Queen Anne's Chambers, was the HQ of the Women's Voluntary Services from its foundation in 1938 until 1966: the 'shop' was on the ground floor, and the offices up on the fourth. The organisation was ably led by the equally imposing Stella Reading, the widow (and one-time secretary) of the politician Rufus Isaacs\*, Marquess of Reading. From 'Totters', as the HQ was colloquially known, she issued a stream of injunctions to her million-strong green-uniformed army of women volunteers: 'Always have food for bombed out people that is easy to eat. The first thing people lose is their spectacles, and the second their teeth,' was one memorable wartime edict. The service assisted in many vital tasks. like looking after refugees and child evacuees, sewing and mending clothes, devising ration-book recipes and making endless cups of tea. As the (now unisex) Royal Voluntary Service, its work continues today.

# SIR EDWARD GREY, VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON

(1862–1933) Foreign Secretary

3 Queen Anne's Gate 9

UILT in 1776, this house was the London home of Edward Grey, who as Foreign Secretary from 1905 to 1916 in the Liberal governments of Henry Campbell-Bannerman\* and Herbert Asquith\* was largely responsible for negotiating the pre-First World War defence agreements between Britain, France and Russia. In February 1906, facing a crisis over Morocco. he suffered the tragic death of his wife Dorothy in a coaching accident. She had just secured the lease on 3 Queen Anne's Gate, where Grey was installed by early spring. I am left alone and have no wish to live.' he told a friend; when time permitted, he found solace in birdwatching. which he and Dorothy had once



'The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our life-time.'

Sir Edward Grey on the eve of the First World War

enjoyed together. He was the last person to use number 3 as a private residence. Having moved away from Queen Anne's Gate in 1913, Grev returned during the dramatic days leading up to the outbreak of war to lodge with his friend Viscount Haldane\*, who wrote of him 'sparing no effort to avoid the catastrophe'. Others were more sceptical: Ramsay MacDonald\*, the Labour leader, thought that Grey 'combined a most admirable intention with a tragic incapacity to drive his way to his own goal'. The name of Grey's Northumberland seat. Fallodon, is unfortunately misspelt on the plaque.

Queen Anne's Gate contains a total of seven plaques – one of the largest concentrations in London – many of them commemorating political figures. Until 1873 it was two separate streets: Queen Square was to the west and Park Street to the east; the former intersection is now marked by a statue of Queen Anne.

# **JAMES MILL** (1773–1836) JOHN STUART MILL\* (1806-73)

philosophers

40 Queen Anne's Gate 10

FATHER-AND-SON pairing, the Mills occupied this Grade I-listed early-18th-century house from 1814 to 1831. Scottishborn James Mill leased the house from Jeremy Bentham, a fellow member of the group of thinkers who became known as Philosophical Radicals. (The site of Bentham's house, just to the south, is marked with a green Westminster City Council plaque.) Mill senior completed his ten-volume history of India while living in Queen Anne's Gate, and – believing that schools promoted 'vulgar modes of thought and feeling' - set about home-educating his nine children

John Stuart Mill was tutored in Greek from the age of three, history from four, and in Latin and advanced mathematics from eight. By the age of 14 he had written a treatise on logic – in French.

here; but John Stuart Mill grew up, as he remembered, 'in the absence of love'. Mistakes were punished with no lunch, and while the gruelling curriculum did eventually propel him to becoming the leading political thinker of his age, he suffered an almost catastrophic mental breakdown at the age of 20.

## CHARLES TOWNLEY

(1737-1805) antiquary and collector

14 Queen Anne's Gate



ORN to a Catholic landowning family in Lancashire, Townley had this house - originally 7 Park Street - built by Michael Barratt from 1775 to the designs of Samuel Wyatt, for the express purpose of displaying the collection of mostly Roman statuary that he had acquired in Italy. He moved into the house in 1778 and his treasures. which also included terracottas. bronzes, coins, gems and drawings. were put on permanent display,

with servants under instruction to admit 'all individuals of respectability who desired to see them'. Some of the 700 or so annual visitors were given guided tours by Townley himself, whose Sunday dinner guests included Joseph Nollekens\*, Joshua Revnolds\* and Johann Zoffany\*. He continued to amass antiquities right up until his death, which occurred here in 1805. Much of Townlev's collection is now on show at the British Museum.

(1756-1835) pioneer of religious liberty

UNITARIAN, and a Whig MP from 1784, Smith was a leading light in securing religious dissenters their full civil rights, culminating in 1828 with the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which had effectively barred Nonconformists from Crown offices Between 1805 and 1832 he was Chairman of the Dissenting Deputies, and secured the passage of the Unitarian Toleration Act (1813). Active in the anti-slavery movement led by his friends William Wilberforce\* and Thomas Clarkson, Smith

was himself among the founders of the London Society for the Abolition of Slavery in Our Colonies in 1823. Having lived for many years in Clapham, Smith moved in 1794 to this house, then 6 Park Street, with his wife Frances (1758-1840) and large family; their grandchildren included Florence Nightingale\* and the women's rights campaigner Barbara Bodichon, Business reverses including a disastrous fire at a Millbank distillery - forced the sale of the house in 1819, along with much of his library and art collection.

# LORD FISHER, OM

(1841-1920) Admiral of the Fleet, First Sea Lord

16 Queen Anne's Gate 13

SECOND plaque at number 16 commemorates Admiral Fisher, who had his official residence as First Sea Lord here. between October 1904 and January 1910; he returned to this post, though not to this address, between October 1914 and May 1915. The son of an army captain, John Arbuthnot Fisher - popularly known as Jacky - was a strong, confident personality who entered the Navy at the age of 13 and worked his way up through the ranks. As First Sea Lord he embarked on a programme of modernisation and commissioned the building of fast, heavily armed bat-

tleships; the first and most famous of these, HMS Dreadnought, was launched in 1906, while the world's first battlecruiser. HMS Invincible. entered service the following year. Appropriately, Fisher – awarded the Order of Merit in 1905 - chose the motto 'Fear God and Dread Nought' on his elevation to the peerage in 1909. He had a bellicose reputation. suggesting pre-emptive strikes against the German and Japanese navies, and yet it was his routine to walk to the Admiralty in Whitehall via Westminster Abbev each day for morning prayer. It was there that he was given a public funeral.

(1784-1865) Prime Minister

T was once thought that Lord Palmerston, who was three times Foreign Secretary and twice Prime Minister, was born at Broadlands, the family estate in Hampshire. But when the LCC investigated they found a diary entry by his father, Henry Temple, the 2nd Viscount Palmerston, describing a journey to London, and soon afterwards - on 20 October 1784 - a joyful report: 'Lady P. brought to bed of a son at seven in the evening.' They therefore placed a blue wreathed plague on this house, formerly 4

Park Street, which forms part of a terrace built between 1775 and 1778. Palmerston's father was its first occupant, and stayed until 1791: he was in London to sit for a portrait by Joshua Reynolds\* when his second wife Mary, née Mee, went into labour. The younger Palmerston was baptised at St Margaret's, Westminster, on 23 November 1784. A magnificent ball was thrown at Winchester to celebrate his birth: four years later. he was described as 'quite stout, with a fine high colour'.

#### LORD HALDANE

(1856-1928) statesman, lawyer and philosopher

28 Queen Anne's Gate 15

ATING from 1704-5 and an important early survival, this house was the London home of Richard Burdon Haldane, later Viscount Haldane of Cloan, from 1907 until his death in 1928. Born and educated in Edinburgh, he served as Secretary of State for War from 1905 until 1912, during which time he founded the Imperial General Staff and the Territorial Army, and introduced the concept of a British expeditionary force. Haldane then served as Lord Chancellor until 1915, and briefly held the same office again in 1924, having switched allegiance from the Liberals to Labour.

Kaiser Wilhelm II lunched with Haldane in May 1911 and chaffed him about the small size of ...

'28 Queen Anne's Gate, which he called my Dolls' House'.

A man with a wide range of intellectual interests. Haldane helped to establish the London School of Economics in 1895, translated works by Schopenhauer\* and wrote a number of his own, including The Reign of Relativity (1921). Guests at the house included Lord Kitchener\*, Lord Curzon\*. Albert Einstein. Edmund Gosse\* and the Emperor (Kaiser) of Germany.

#### WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

(1840–1922) diplomat, poet and traveller

15 Buckingham Gate 16

HIS mid-18th-century terraced house opposite Wellington Barracks was the London home from about 1878 until 1887 of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who married Lord Byron's grandchild Anne King (1837-1917) - the daughter of Ada. Countess of Lovelace\* - and shared Byron's passions for verse, travel, radical politics and women. He and Anne spent much time travelling in Spain, Turkey, North Africa and the Middle East, and Blunt campaigned for causes such as Egyptian and Irish self-determination: he also published works including Sonnets and Songs by Proteus (1875) and Satan Absolved (1899). In 1872 Blunt inherited Crabbet Park in West Sussex, where - six years later At Crabbet, it was said, Blunt's weekend guests played tennis in the nude.

- he and Anne founded a famous stud breeding Arab stallions. Blunt's mistresses included the famous courtesan Catherine Walters ('Skittles') and Lady Gregory. An entry in his private diary for 1880 records his renting a flat opposite Victoria Station as a love nest: his wife eventually left him in 1906. Blunt's dark good looks and bids for political martyrdom led one contemporary to observe: 'The fellow knows he has a handsome head and he wants it to be seen on Temple Bar.'

#### LORD HORF-BFLISHA

(1893-1957) statesman

ORN in London, the son of a Jewish businessman, Leslie Hore-Belisha was elected Liberal MP for Plymouth Devonport in 1923, and held the seat - latterly as a National Liberal – until 1945. In 1937 Neville Chamberlain\* appointed him Secretary of State for War; he piloted important army reforms, but his relations with the top brass - notably Viscount Gort\* - were problematic, and he

16 Stafford Place 17

Leslie - later Lord - Hore-Belisha is best remembered for the Belisha beacon, the flashing orange crossing indicators brought in as a road safety innovation in 1934, while he was Minister of Transport. They had a significant impact on road safety, despite initial problems with vandalism.

resigned in 1940; he was raised to the peerage in 1954. Hore-Belisha bought this house in the summer of 1936 and lived here - after their marriage in 1944, with his wife Cynthia – until his death. He was only the third occupant of the early-19th-century terraced house. Edwin Lutyens\* remodelled the entrance hall for him and added panelling in the dining room: the politician 'Chips' Channon, writing in May 1938, described the décor as 'a horror ... Wedgwood plagues cover the walls ... old ones, small ones, good ones, bad ones'.

#### CARDINAL MANNING

(1808-92) Roman Catholic prelate

22 Carlisle Place (18)

| **ENRY** Edward Manning was ordained an Anglican deacon in 1832 and appointed Archdeacon of Chichester in 1840 - three years after the death of his young wife, Caroline. In 1851 he followed John Henry Newman\* in converting to Roman Catholicism, As Archbishop of Westminster from 1865. Man-

ning won regard for his social concerns, and was dubbed the 'Cardinal of the Poor'. The building which bears this unusual lead plague (on the Francis Street elevation) is a vast brick Italianate palazzo designed by H. A. Darbishire in about 1867, and acquired by Manning in 1872 as part of the

development plans for Westminster Cathedral (built 1895-1903). It had been built as the Guardsmen's Institute, but Manning found 'the austerity of its bareness' to his taste. He added a bedroom on the upper storey and worked in a large room on the first floor, surrounded by his books and papers on the floor and



Street. The building, then called Archbishop House, remained the residence of the archbishops of Westminster until 1901.

#### JOSEPH CONRAD

(1857–1924) novelist

17 Gillingham Street 19

ONRAD rented rooms in >this modest 1820s terraced house from early 1891 until his marriage in March 1896 to Jessie Emmeline George. Born in Ukraine as Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski. Conrad was exiled to a remote Russian province for his family's Polish nationalist beliefs before coming to Britain in 1878 to join the British mercantile marine. Conrad's first novel - Almayer's Folly, begun at his previous lodgings not far away

at 6 Bessborough Gardens (demolished) - was completed in his 'snug bachelor quarters' in Gillingham Street in 1894 and published the following year. His famous Heart of Darkness (1902) was based on his nightmarish experiences of a trip up the Congo river in 1890, which left him with a lifethreatening malarial fever, for which he was treated at the German Hospital in Dalston just before his arrival at Gillingham Street.

# SIR MICHAEL COSTA

(1808-84) conductor and orchestral reformer

59 Eccleston Square 20



APLES-BORN Michael (originally Michele) Costa came to England in 1829, and rose to become the most prominent British conductor of his generation. An early practitioner of authoritative conducting by baton (hitherto. orchestras had been led from a piano or by the first violin), he is credited with having greatly improved the standards of orchestral playing and discipline in England. Costa moved to 7 Eccleston Square

in 1846, 11 years later, crossing the square to number 59, where he remained for 26 years. By this time well established as a conductor at Covent Garden and elsewhere, his later years also saw him conducting at triennial festivals at the Crvstal Palace devoted to the music of Handel\* (whose work he was prone to 'improving' by adding extra brass, timpani and even cymbals). Costa was also a composer, but his works have not stood the test of time.

ENYATTA stayed at this address for a short spell in 1930 and then resided here again between 1933 and 1937 Born Kamau wa Ngengi in East Africa, the son of a Kikuyu farmer, he took the name Kenvatta - after the Kikuyu word for a type of beaded belt he wore - during his twenties. In 1928 he became General Secretary of the Kikuvu Central Association (KCA), a body that sought to represent the community's grievances. This was Kenvatta's role while he lived in Cambridge Street, when he also worked on the book Facing Mount Kenua (1938). Money was

very tight: he often owed rent to his landlady, Mrs Hocken, and sold the stamps from mail he received from Kenya in order to buy penny buns. In 1934 Kenyatta supplemented his income by working as an extra on Sanders of the River, which starred Paul Robeson\*. Kenvatta returned to Africa in 1946, where in 1953 he was unjustly convicted for involvement in the Mau Mau rebellion and imprisoned for almost nine years. When Kenva won self-government in 1963 he became Prime Minister. and President of the new independent Kenyan republic the following year. He died in office in 1978.

#### AUBREY BEARDSI FY

(1872-98) artist

114 Cambridge Street 22

) **EARDSLEY** lived in this house with his sister Mabel and mother Ellen between June 1893 and June 1895. Its lease was partly bought with the proceeds of Beardslev's precocious successes: his commissions from this time included the celebrated illustrations for Thomas Malory's Morte d'Arthur (1893-4) and Oscar Wilde's Salome (1894). The two connecting rooms on the first floor in Cambridge Street were used by Beardslev as a drawing roomcum-studio, where he worked by

candlelight, among exotic furnishings and behind heavy curtains. Visitors to the house included Max Beerbohm\*, Walter Sickert\* and Oscar Wilde\*. In 1894 Beardslev was employed by John Lane as art editor of The Yellow Book, but he was dismissed in the aftermath of Wilde's downfall: the resultant loss of income prompted his departure from Cambridge Street. By the close of 1896, he was recuperating on the south coast from the consumptive attacks that claimed his life two years later, at the age of just 25.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(1863 - 1902)Hindu philosopher

63 St George's Drive (formerly St George's Road) 23

ORN in Calcutta as Narendranath Datta, the monk (or swami) Vivekananda became a leading spokesman for modern Hinduism and an early proponent and apologist for the faith in the West. He embarked upon his first Western Mission in 1893 and later, on his lecture tour of 1895-6, stayed at several London addresses, including - from early May until mid-July 1896 – this house in St George's Drive, part of a stucco terrace built in about 1870. The house was let to him furnished by Mortimer Reginald Margesson and his wife Ladv

Isabel, who was interested in the

Swami's teachings. Vivekananda held regular classes in the first-floor double drawing room, while the hub of everyday life was the street-facing ground-floor parlour, and he slept in a windowless room immediately to the rear: other parts of the house were given over to his entourage, which included Swami Saradananda who was – like Vivekananda – a disciple of the leading proponent of the Hindu revival, Sri Ramakrishna, Back in India. Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission: still based in Calcutta (Kolkata), it seeks to propagate Ramakrishna's principles and translate them into social action.

#### **DOUGLAS MACMILLAN**

(1884–1969) founder of Macmillan Cancer Relief

15 Ranelagh Road 24



**ACMILLAN** moved from Somerset to London at the turn of the 20th century, and worked as a civil servant. A Strict Baptist convert, he started a monthly periodical, The Better Quest. In the issue for August 1911. Macmillan wrote about the death of his father from cancer, and the following year founded the Society for the Prevention and Relief of Cancer, Macmillan shared the mid-19th-century stuccoed terraced house in Ranelagh Road - built by Thomas Cubitt\* - with his wife

Margaret; she had initially been his landlady there. They were married in 1907 and ran the society from their home virtually unassisted until their move to Sidcup in 1924. The offices of the charity - which changed its name to the National Society for Cancer Relief that year - stayed in Ranelagh Road until 1936. Since the plaque went up, the charity has changed its name to Macmillan Cancer Support, but a key priority remains the training of specialist cancer nurses.

#### MAJOR WALTER CLOPTON WINGFIELD

(1833-1912) father of lawn tennis

33 St George's Square 25

HILE Wingfield did not invent the principles of lawn tennis, it was he who patented the game in 1874 by formalising rules and standardising and marketing a tennis set that included racquets, balls, posts and a net. Wingfield called these sets 'Sphairistike', derived from the Greek for ballgame, a name which never caught on; the sets were sold at five guineas a throw by Messrs French & Co. at nearby 46 Churton Street, Lawn tennis - the supplementary name given to it by Wingfield as an afterthought - quickly became a popular and sociable open-air pursuit for the middle classes. By 1877 the All

England Croquet Club at Wimbledon had added lawn tennis to its title, and many croquet lawns were turned into tennis courts. The game developed rapidly from Major Wingfield's original rules, which envisaged an hour-glass-shaped court and a higher net than modern players would recognise. Later in life, Wingfield tried, less successfully, to promote group bicycle riding in time to martial music, as described in his book Bicucle Gumkhana and Musical Rides (1897). He lived for the last ten years of his life in St George's Square, in part of a stuccoed terrace built in about 1850 by Thomas Cubitt\*.

#### HARRY MALLIN

(1892–1969) policeman and Olympic boxing champion in 1920 and 1924

Peel House 105 Regency Street 26

ESCRIBED as 'the copper that no-one could lick'. Mallin retired from amateur boxing undefeated in some 350 bouts, and was British amateur boxing champion at middleweight for five years running. He was the first - and until 1956 the only – boxer to win Olympic gold medals at consecutive games. At Antwerp in 1920, Mallin out-pointed the Canadian George Prud'homme to take the title. Four years later in Paris, his defence was

mired in controversy after his quarter-final opponent – local lad Roger Brousse - was disqualified for biting. Mallin eventually beat fellow Briton Jack Eliot on points. Born in Hoxton and raised in Hackney Wick, Mallin's early homes are gone. as is the Eton Manor club where he learned to box. Hence he is commemorated at Peel House, a former police section house where he occupied spartan bachelor quarters from 1923 until at least 1939.

N the Thames Embankment side of Millbank, nearly opposite the entrance to Tate Britain, is a large cylindrical granite block with a bronze plaque commemorating Millbank Prison. It is unique among London's official plaques in marking a fragment of a structure: the stone, which was moved from its original position, was formerly a bollard at the head of the river steps to Millbank Prison or Penitentiary. It was from Millbank Prison, between 1843 and 1867, that prisoners sentenced to transportation to penal colonies in Australia and elsewhere embarked on their journeys. Millbank Prison, completed in 1821

by the architect Robert Smirke\*, was the first national prison, and when built was the largest of its type in Europe. It was founded on the humane and rational principles of classification, employment and reason, and its design drew on the ideas of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham and the prison reformer John Howard\* After 1843 it was used as a military gaol and a general-purpose prison for both male and female convicts. It closed in November 1890.



