

## No.143 Talgarth Road

No.143 Talgarth Road is part of one of the most recognisable terraced rows in west London. Built in 1891, the terraced row was originally known as St Paul's Studios and designed for the 'bachelor artist'. No.143 Talgarth Road was formerly No.5 St Paul's Studio and has been the home of a number of artists and notable residents, including three well-known artists; William Logsdail, George Kruger Gray and Inglis Sheldon-Williams; playwright and author, Ernest G bler; and later became a 'Margaret Morris Movement' dance studio.

### Ideal design and light

The house is one of eight uniquely designed artists' studios with large round-headed windows, built with red brick and terracotta, decorative wrought iron and lead light windows. The studios were designed by Frederick Wheeler for James Fairless, a 'fine art publisher', who specialised in the production of prints of classic works of art. The studios were designed with large studio and living space, with the basement floor providing accommodation for a housekeeper and of course the large window allowing greater steady natural light for the artists. The studios were instantly popular with residents moving in immediately after completion.

### Jeannie and Ruby Levick

The first recorded resident of No.5 St Paul's Studio, in 1892, was Jeannie Levick. However, it is possible that the studio was in fact the home of her daughter, Ruby Levick, a sculptor studying at the National Art Training School (later the Royal College of Art) in South Kensington, between 1892 and 1897. Ruby Levick achieved great success, especially at a time when women artists were more unusual, and exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Fine Art Society, and was greatly admired by Queen Alexandria. (Jeannie Levick's son and Ruby's brother, George Levick was also the surgeon and zoologist on Scott's last exhibition to Antarctica in 1910.)

### Inglis Sheldon-Williams

By the turn of the 20th century, No.5 St Paul's Studios had become the home of artist, Inglis Sheldon-Williams. Sheldon-Williams was an illustrator and a forerunner of today's photo-journalist. He moved to Canada for sometime during the late 19th century, before returning to England in the late 1800s to study at the Slade School of Art. He worked as an artist in the field during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and during World War I, where he became an official Canadian war artist. Sheldon-Williams lived at St Paul's Studios between around 1901 and 1903 after which time he married and moved to Gloucestershire.

### William Logsdail

No.5 St Paul's Studios then became the home of prominent English artist, William Logsdail. Logsdail was a prolific artist who was already exhibiting at the Royal Academy at the age of 18 in 1877 and painted a number of recognisable scenes of London, including 'Bank and Royal Exchange' and 'St Martin-in-the-Fields', which was purchased by the Chantry Fund for the Tate Gallery. Queen Victoria purchased his work 'The Antwerp Fish Market' and King Umberto of Italy purchased his 'St Paul's and Ludgate Hill'. Logsdail lived in No.5 St Paul's Studio from 1903 until 1922, during which time he concentrated on his portrait painting, including Lord and Lady Halifax and Lord Curzon.

### George Kruger Gray

After the departure of William Logsdail, the studio became the home of another successful artist, George Kruger Gray, who was known for his designs and stained glass windows, but in particular his coin designs for British and Commonwealth nations. His coin designs appeared on many coins in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, as well as Britain, including the shilling, florin, half crown and six pence between 1927 and 1952. Kruger Gray also regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy and his works can be seen across the country, including Eltham Palace, Harrow School and many public buildings. George Kruger Gray served with the Artists Rifles during World War I, was created C.B.E. in 1938 and among his many official commissions he created the Great Seal of King George VI and the collar of the Order of the British Empire. Kruger Gray lived in St Paul's Studios from 1922 until 1938.

### Ernest G bler

For a short time during 1949 and 1950 the studio was rented by author and playwright, Ernest G bler, husband of the Irish author, Edna O'Brian and father of author, Carlo G bler. Ernest G bler wrote a number of books including 'The Voyage of the Mayflower', which sold five million copies and was made into a film with Spencer Tracy. His play, 'Call Me Daddy' was made into a Television drama and won him an Academy Award during the 1960s and his play 'Hoffman' was made into a film in 1970 with Peter Sellers and Sinead Cusack. In 2000, Carlo G bler published a book, 'Father and I: A Memoir' about his relationship with his troubled father.



### **Swinging 50s and 60s**

In the 1950s there was a great shift in the occupation of a number of the studios on Talgarth Road, with a number being converted into business space. No. 5 St Paul's Studios became a school of 'Margaret Morris Movement' run by Anne Cornock-Taylor. Margaret Morris Movement was a unique system of dance created by renowned dancer, Margaret Morris. Morris's system of movement was revolutionary in physical education and dance and she eventually was invited to become a founder member of the government's National Advisory Council for Physical Training and Recreation. The Margaret Morris Movement was taken up by many children and adults and eventually spread across to many countries including France, Canada and Japan.

### **Former glory and preservation**

During the 1960s, the numbers along Talgarth Road were reorganised and No.5 St Paul's Studios (which had also been known as No.51 Colet Gardens) was renamed No.143 Talgarth Road. It remained a dance school until the late 1980s, when it was bought by interior designer, Allan Day. Allan Day then set about renovating the studio back to its former glory and creating a living space that emulated the designs of the late 19th century, much like it would have been in 1891.

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