



No.11 Chesterfield Hill - Mayfair

Built in 1900 replacing an early 18th century house, No.11 Chesterfield Hill has been the home of Charles Newton-Robinson, Olympic fencer, author and poet and John Hedley, a renowned surgeon. The house has also been the home of the fourth Baron Delamere who was closely linked with the Happy Valley murder made famous by the book and film 'White Mischief'.

John Street and the Berkeley Estate

Chesterfield Hill was originally known as John Street and was part of the Berkeley Estate first developed during the 1740s. However, the house that now stands so distinctly along Chesterfield Hill is a later house completed in 1900 as the date plaque on the exterior clearly shows.

Charles Edmund Newton-Robinson

The first resident to move into the newly built house in 1900 was Charles Edmund Newton-Robinson. Charles Newton-Robinson was an interesting character who has been described as an art collector, a poet, a writer, a sportsman and lastly a barrister. In fact in his obituary he was described as "remembered among his large circle of friends, not only for his most attractive personality, but also for his exceptionally wide range of knowledge and culture and for the many-sidedness of his activities."

A man of many talents – Poet, sportsman, art collector and land developer

Newton-Robinson published a number of books, including *Cruise of the Widgeon* (1876) which describes his journey of crossing the North Sea in a small sailing boat. His poetry collections include *Viol of Love* (1895) and *Ver Lyrae* (1896) and he also contributed articles to Encyclopaedia Britannica. As well as an author and poet, Charles Newton-Robinson was an avid swordsman and yachtsman. He founded the Epée Club of London and at the age of 50 was part of the Olympic fencing team at Athens in 1906.

Charles Edmund Newton-Robinson was also an avid art collector, in particular he formed several collections of Old Masters, but he also admired other arts including engraved gems and bronzes. Mr Newton-Robinson's interest in art may explain the unique decorative exterior of No.11 Chesterfield Hill. To contrast with these pursuits, Mr. Newton-Robinson was also interested in land development and was founder and Chairman of the Land Union. Along with this he, along with his father, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, were largely responsible for the development of the seaside resort, Lee-on-the-Solent during the 1880s. This included the development of the Marine Parade and the construction of the 750ft long Pier.

Newton Robinson at No.11 John Street

Charles Edmund Newton-Robinson moved into No.11 John Street in the spring of 1900. The 1901 census records Newton-Robinson in the house, aged 47 as 'barrister', with his wife Jane. Also in the house at this time were Jane's unmarried sisters, Mary and Rachel, both recorded as 'living on own means'. The Newton-Robinsons also had four live-in servants.

John Prescott Hedley - surgeon

Despite the apparent effort taken to create a beautiful arts and crafts inspired Mayfair townhouse, the Newton-Robinson's did not stay in their London home for long. By 1907 No.11 John Street had become the home of surgeon, John Prescott Hedley. John Hedley was a well-respected surgeon who was a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, as well as the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. In 1907, when John Hedley moved to John Street, he had gained the post of obstetric tutor and registrar at St Thomas's Hospital. He later went on to become Obstetric Physician and ran the department at St Thomas's from 1928 to 1936. He held a vast number of positions during his career but most prominently he became president of the Obstetrics Section of the Royal College of Medicine, member of the General Medical Council and Master of the Society of Apothecaries in 1944-5.

John Prescott Hedley remained at No.11 John Street until the years of World War I, but by the end of the war the house had become the home of Arthur and Esther Lacey. However, by 1927 No.11 John Street had become the home of Leslie and Muriel Gamage.

Sir Leslie Gamage and the Honourable Lady Gamage

Sir Leslie Gamage was the son of Albert Gamage who founded the now lost department store, Gamage's that formerly stood on the corner of Holborn Circus. During World War I Leslie Gamage became Captain and adjutant in the 24th London Regiment in France. He was wounded twice and awarded the Military Cross before being taken prisoner for the latter part of the war. However, Leslie Gamage is most remembered for his association with the General Electric Company. In 1919 he married Muriel, daughter of Lord Hurst, the founder of the General Electric Company. Leslie Gamage started his career at the G.E.C. in the same period and later rose to become joint managing director, vice chairman and finally became Chairman in 1957 until 1960. Along with his work with the G.E.C. Sir Leslie Gamage held a number of prominent roles in commerce and exports, including Master of the Glaziers Company, president of the Institute of Export and was appointed chief business advisor by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 1947.

Leslie and Muriel Gamage lived at No.11 John Street throughout the 1930s, only leaving their London home during the turbulent war years. It was at this time that John Street was renamed, officially becoming Chesterfield Hill in January 1940.

The Fourth Baron Delamere – Thomas Pitt Cholmondeley

After the war years No.11 Chesterfield Hill was the home of a number of residents until it was purchased by Thomas Pitt Cholmondeley, the fourth Baron Delamere in the early 1950s. The Baron Delameres were directly connected to Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister and owned a large estate covering almost 7000 acres in Vale Royal in Chester. However, the Delameres were far more closely linked with colonial Kenya. Thomas's father, Hugh, the third Baron Delamere was a very influential figure in Kenya and one of the first of the great white settlers. However, by the time Thomas Cholmondeley inherited the title of Baron Delamere, in 1931, life was a little different in colonial Kenya. Thomas was a key figure in the social life of rich Kenyan landowners, becoming known as 'the happy valley set' for their drinking, drugs and sexual dalliances. In fact, this high society life was immortalised in a book and film 'White Mischief' which tells the story of the notorious case of the murder of Joss Hay, 22nd Earl of Erroll.

'White Mischief'

The case involved the wife of Sir Henry 'Jock' Delves Broughton, Diana Caldwell, who was having an affair with Joss, Earl of Erroll. In 1941 Joss was murdered and Sir Henry Broughton was charged with the murder but was later acquitted. A year later Sir Henry returned to England, but died from a drug overdose in the Adelphi Hotel.

The aristocratic escapades continued when Broughton's wife, Diana Caldwell went on to marry (for the fourth time) Thomas, the fourth Baron Delamere becoming his third wife, in 1955. (Incidentally, the fourth Baron's two former marriages had ended in divorce on the grounds of adultery.)

The scandalous case of the murder of Joss, Earl of Erroll was turned into a book 'White Mischief' by James Fox in 1982, later becoming a film featuring Charles Dance, Greta Scacchi and Hugh Grant, who played the role of the third Baron Delamere.

Changes at No.11 Chesterfield Hill

The fourth Baron Delamere made changes to No.11 Chesterfield Hill, altering the large home into two separate flats in 1954. From this time the house was home to a number of different residents, including a Lady Fairweather in 1962-4. However, by the 1990s the house had once again become a complete family home as it is today.

Architectural highlights of late Victorian townhouse

No.11 Chesterfield Hill is conspicuous for its ornate plasterwork in bands between the first and second floors. The ground, first and second floors also feature late Victorian bay windows, further differentiating it from the plain sash windows of the neighbouring Georgian townhouses. The first floor also features a wrought iron balcony rail.