



# Blue Plaques Scheme

## Policy

The Putney Society has produced a series of blue plaques commemorating the lives of eminent people who have had a significant connection to Putney.

The policy for selecting and mounting blue plaques is:

- Buildings marked with plaques must be visible from the public highway
- Although most plaques will be erected on the former residences of famous people, the erection of plaques on subsequent buildings on the site, such as blocks of flats is not excluded
- The person must have been dead for 5 years.

Nominated figures must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be considered eminent by a majority of members of their own profession or calling or the population in general
- Have made an important positive contribution to human welfare or happiness
- Have lived or worked in Putney for a significant period.
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Unless a case is deemed exceptional (i.e. the nominee contributed something exceptional during their stay in Putney, compared with the rest of their life) each figure may only be commemorated with one plaque in London ( i.e. not duplicating names already commemorated by Wandsworth Council, English Heritage).

Nominations are considered and selected by the Putney Society Executive.

Nominations for plaques should be sent to the Secretary: [secretary@putneysociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@putneysociety.org.uk)

This document will be updated from time to time and is available via The Putney Society website: [www.putneysociety.org.uk](http://www.putneysociety.org.uk).

# 1. Captain Lawrence Oates (1880-1912)



**Antarctic explorer**  
**Unveiled 17 March 2007**  
**307 Upper Richmond Road, SW15 6SS**

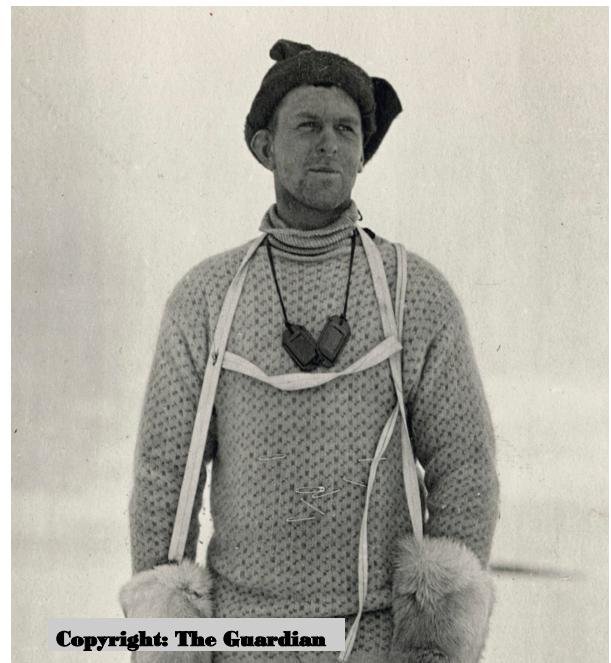
Pole. Lawrence Oates is most remembered for his sacrifice in leaving the security of the tent for certain death with the immortal lines "I am just going outside and may be some time". He knew that his frostbite was limiting the participants' chance of survival.

"It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman" were the words written by Scott.

Within two weeks Scott and the rest of the party would also be dead within 11 miles of the "One ton depot" which contained the supplies they desperately needed. The day of Oates' death 17 March, 1912 was also the day of his thirty second birthday. The sacrifice and example of Scott, Oates and the rest of the expedition were a tragic inspiration to the generation who went to the trenches two years later in 1914. When Oates lived in Putney it was still semi-rural with working farms. However with our commons, heaths, river and the churches he worshipped at as a boy there is much he would still recognize.

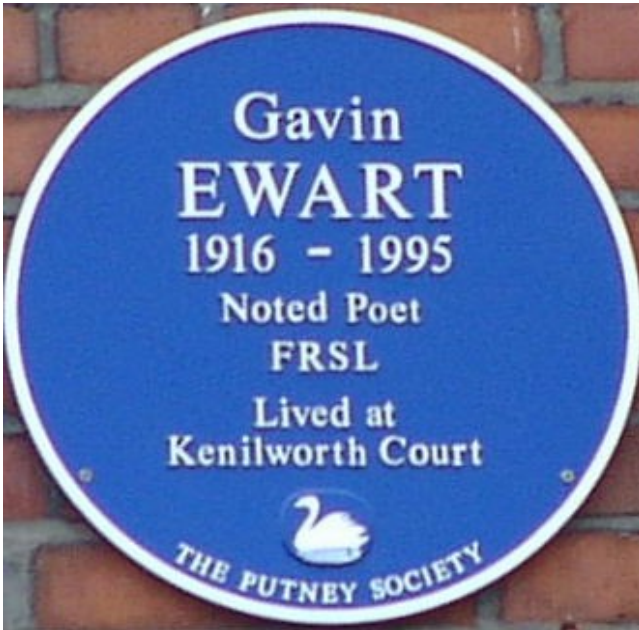
The plaque is at the site of the childhood home of Lawrence Oates, a key member of the team which reached the South Pole in 1912 under the leadership of Captain Robert Falcon Scott.

Lawrence Oates lived in Putney from 1885-91, from the ages of 5 to 11 at 263 Upper Richmond Road. He was one of the first pupils to attend the Willington Prep School around the corner in Colinette Road. The school moved in 1990 to Wimbledon. Oates paid for himself to go on the Scott expedition. He was enlisted as a cavalry officer from the 6th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards and was the expert who would look after the ponies taken on the expedition, although they had been purchased by another member of the party who was inexperienced with horses. Captain Scott mistakenly thought they would be the key to a successful expedition to the South



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## 2. Gavin Ewart FRSL (1916-1995)



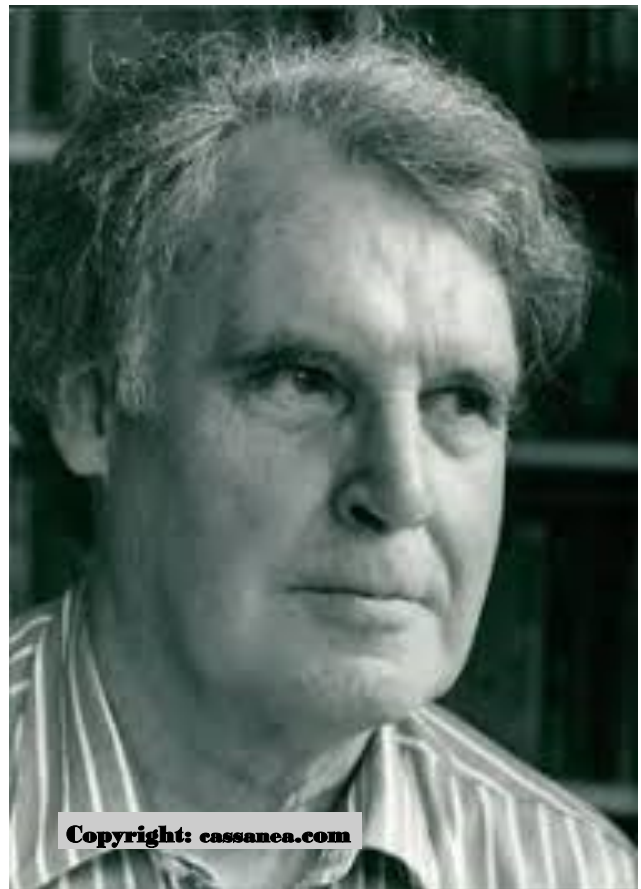
### Notable Poet

Unveiled 10 January 2009

Kenilworth Court, SW15 1EN

With *Pleasure of the Flesh* (1966) and *The Deceptive Grin of the Gravel Porters* (1968), Ewart's characteristic approach was set; he intermingled poems of serious autobiography, social satire and sexual humour. A strain of melancholy pervades his later poetry, in which he examines such topics as cruelty and death. He received The Cholmondeley Award for Poetry in 1971 and The Michael Brande Award for Light Verse in 1971 by the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters. He often composed poems about life in Putney where he lived with his wife Margo, daughter Jane and son Julian.

Ewart lived at Kenilworth Court from 1963 until his death in 1995. He was born in 1916. His poems first appeared in national magazines (the Listener and Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse* in 1933 when he was seventeen). His first book *Poems and Songs*, was published in 1939. A Fellow of the Royal Society for Literature, Ewart produced many more collections of poems and anthologies for children.



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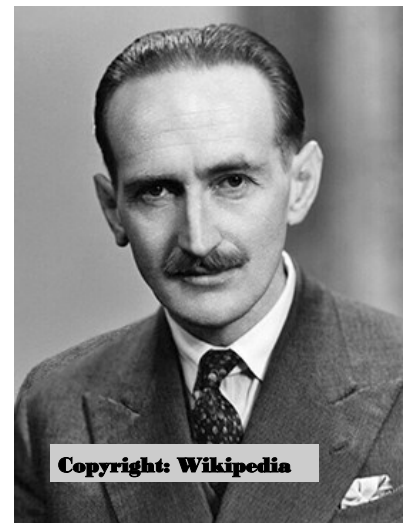
### 3. Hugh Jenkins, Baron Jenkins of Putney, PC (1908-2004)



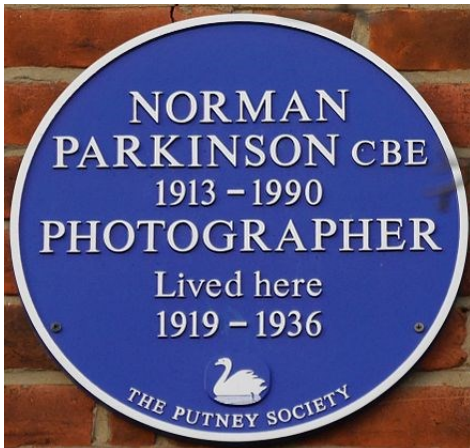
**Socialist Politician**  
**Unveiled 10 January 2009**  
**Kenilworth Court, SW15 1EN**

Theatres Advisory Trust. His connection with the world of theatre meant that he had many actor friends who often supported him in dramatic fashion during his Putney election campaigns. He served as MP for Putney until 1979 – campaigning against aircraft noise and the threat of the proposed London motorway box. He was knighted as Baron Jenkins of Putney in 1981. He was married to Marie Crosbie who died in 1989 and to Helena Pavlidis who died in 1994.

Hugh Jenkins won the seat for Putney in the dramatic 1964 General Election. He served in the Observer Corps of the RAF in the Second World War and chaired the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Twelve years and three elections after he became an MP he was appointed by Harold Wilson as Minister for the Arts and at once established himself as a controversial figure. He was determined to bring the arts closer to the people and to wrest control of arts patronage from the Establishment. He lifted the charges for museums and fought for the Public Lending Right, a democratically elected Arts Council and a new site for the British Library. He was also a leading official of Actors' Equity and Chairman of the



## 4. Norman Parkinson CBE (1913-1990)



**Fashion Photographer  
Unveiled 20 June 2009  
32 Landford Rd, SW15 1AG**

Norman Parkinson was born in Roehampton on 21 April 1913 and was evacuated to the country during the First World War. He spent the rest of his childhood living at 32 Landford Road, 'a cosy semi-detached in the purlieu of Putney half-drowning in my mother's roses' and between 1927 and 1931 was educated at Westminster School. He describes his journey, in top hat and tails, to Putney Bridge Underground Station with his brother picking 'our way through the (then) slum areas of the Lower Richmond Road, which our mother had warned us was inhabited by "guttersnipes"'. Running the early morning gauntlet of abuse and over-ripe vegetables was certainly character forming, necessitating frequent defensive thrusts with well rolled umbrellas (obligatory regulation) and quick evasive rearguard actions. In a career that spanned seven decades, Norman Parkinson dazzled the world with his sparkling inventiveness as a fashion photographer. Standing at 6 feet 5 inches tall, Parkinson was unable to remain unobtrusive behind the lens and instead created 'Parks', the mustachioed, ostentatiously elegant fashion photographer – as much a personality as those who sat for him, and frequently more flamboyant. By the end of his life (he died on location in 1990) he had become a household name, the recipient of a CBE, a photographer to the royal family, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, and the subject of a large scale retrospective at the National Portrait Gallery.



*From **Portraits in Fashion** (by Robin Muir). With thanks to Colin Webb (Publisher)*

## 5. Sir William Lancaster (1841-1929)



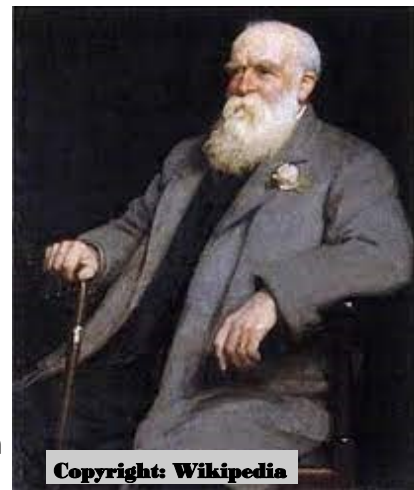
**Businessman and Philanthropist**  
**Unveiled 4 November 2009**  
**Putney School of Art, Oxford Road,**  
**SW15 2LQ**

mementoes to the head boys and girls of every school in the Borough. Other gifts included a mace for the Borough. This is known as the Putney mace because the shaft is made from one of the piers of old Putney Bridge dismantled in 1886. Lancaster also donated the land for Tooting library which opened in 1902 and land for other public enjoyment in the Borough as well as a ward in Putney Hospital. His generosity in providing a new Grammar School for King's Lynn in 1906 earned him his knighthood. In 1883 he joined with Baron Pollock and Sir Arthur Jeff to form a committee with the purpose of founding an art school. The beginnings of the school were in temporary rooms over the parish offices in Putney High Street lent by the Vestry of Putney. The London County Council refused to recognise the school until larger premises could be found, so in 1885, Sir William bought the freehold site and erected the art school at his own expense. It was opened in 1895.

Sir William was churchwarden of Putney from 1878-1908. He endowed the Church Hall in Putney Bridge Road in memory of his wife Sarah. In 1931 the inner oak doors of the south-west entrance to St Mary's were donated by the Lancaster family and erected to his memory. The doors to the west porch were also erected to his memory by public subscription. Lancaster lived at South Lynn, a large mansion on Putney Hill, now occupied by a block of flats called 'West Point'. He died there 28 February 1929. He was described by his grandson, Sir Osbert Lancaster as: "a kind authoritative, philanthropic, good-humoured and exemplary grandparent".

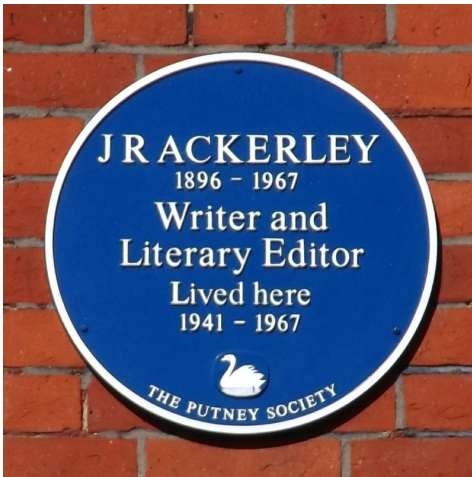
Lancaster was not born a rich man. His wealth, much of which he devoted to the public good, was gained as a result of his ability and capacity for the Victorian virtue of hard work. He was born in Norfolk to a poor grocer's family and educated at King Lynn's Grammar school. Lancaster joined the Prudential Assurance Company at the age of seventeen as a junior clerk, was rapidly promoted and became Deputy Chairman and retired in 1920. In 1868 he married Sarah Harriot who died in 1889 leaving 7 children.

Lancaster was elected to the new Wandsworth Borough Council in 1900 and missed becoming the first Mayor of Wandsworth by just a few votes. He was elected as the second Mayor, 1901-2, serving during the year of the Coronation of King Edward VII. It was at the Coronation that Lancaster began his philanthropy contributing 100 guineas to the celebrations and



Copyright: Wikipedia

## 6. J R Ackerley (1896-1967)



**Author and Editor**  
**Unveiled 8 June 2010**  
**Star and Garter Mansions, Lower**  
**Richmond Rd SW15 1JN**

autobiographical works, one novel and several poems are considered 'minor masterpieces' noted for the candour of their content and bold themes. The novel *My Dog Tulip* is a comic memoir called by Christopher Isherwood 'one of the greatest masterpieces of animal literature'. It gives a moving account of living with his difficult dog Queenie in the flat, and details encounters with Putney residents on his regular trips to bathe in his beloved Queensmere on Wimbledon Common. The book was made into a feature length animation film starring Christopher Plummer as Ackerley.

Joe Randolph Ackerley was resident at 17 Star & Garter Mansions from 1941 until his death in 1967. References to Putney and the building feature heavily within his published work. Ackerley and Star & Garter mansions are mentioned in *Time Out London Walks Guide*. Ackerley was a writer and literary/arts editor (BBC's *The Listener*) who fostered the careers of a number of major writers such as Philip Larkin, W H Auden, Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood and Francis King. A long-time friend and literary associate of E M Forster, he was connected to 'everyone who was anyone' in English letters of the time, an intimate of Auden, and venerated by the post-Bloomsbury circle of gay writers. As a writer himself his output was small - but his three



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## 7. Edward Gibbon (1737-1770)



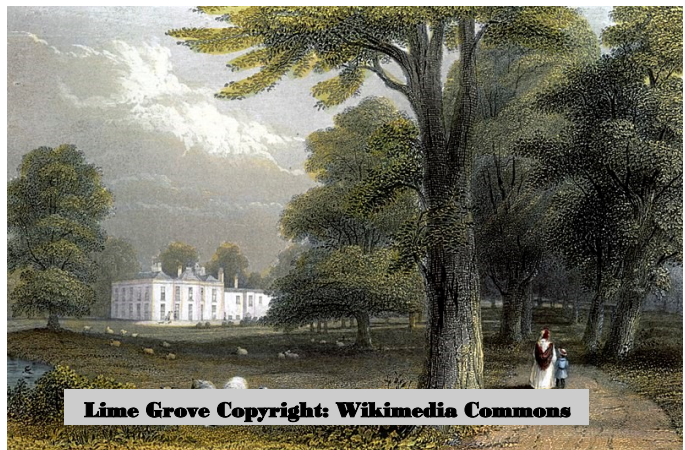
**Radical Historian**  
**Unveiled 1 June 2010 by Justine**  
**Greening MP**  
**139 Upper Richmond Road**  
**SW15 2TX**

Author of *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* which was published in six volumes between 1776-1789. Gibbon was born at Lime Grove in 1737 and spent part of his childhood there. Lime Grove was a large estate comprising a house with lake and gardens, situated on the land bordered by East Putney Station running along the Upper Richmond Road and up Putney Hill as far as Putney High School. The 1862 Stanford map shows an exit on to the Upper Richmond Road from the estate which may be where the stables were situated.

Gibbon was sent to Dr Woddeson's School, now Kingston Grammar School, when he was nine. Shortly after this his mother died and her role was significantly taken over by his aunt. He went to Magdalene College, Oxford at the age of 15 and spent 14 months there which he subsequently described as "the most idle and unprofitable time" of his life. During this time he read widely and converted to Roman

Catholicism. In the early 18th century this excluded him from many opportunities and consequently enraged his father who arranged for him to be sent to Lausanne in a successful attempt to re-convert him to Protestantism. He continued to read widely during his five years in Lausanne. He served briefly in the South Hampshire militia during the Seven Years War, which ended in 1762. The following year he visited Rome on the "Grand Tour".

On this visit he conceived the idea of writing the *Decline and Fall*. He continued to read widely and diligently over the next decade and gradually his master work came to fruition. It is now taken to be an attack on the vicissitude of empire and of organised religion. It has never been out of print. In many respects he was ahead of his time, being an abolitionist. He became an MP but spoke only once in the House. He died in 1770.



**Lime Grove Copyright: Wikimedia Commons**



## 8. Thomas Cromwell (c. 1485 – 28 July 1540)



**Lawyer, courtier and religious reformer  
Unveiled by Hilary Mantel  
26 October, 2013.  
Brewhouse Lane, SW15 2JX**

Supreme Head of the Church of England, giving him the authority to annul his own marriage. He later fell from power, after arranging the king's marriage to German princess, Anne of Cleves, whom Henry found unattractive and it turned into a disaster for Cromwell, ending in an annulment six months later. Cromwell was arraigned under a bill of attainder and executed for treason and heresy on Tower Hill on 28 July 1540.

Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, was an English lawyer and statesman who served as chief minister to King Henry VIII from 1534 to 1540. Born in Putney, then a village outside London, to a blacksmith said to be of violent disposition, he spent much of his childhood playing on Putney Heath. He was one of the strongest and most powerful proponents of the English reformation. He helped to engineer an annulment of the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon so that Henry could marry Anne Boleyn. Henry failed to obtain the Pope's approval for the annulment in 1534, so Parliament endorsed the king's claim to be



**Holbein the Younger: Wikipedia**

## 9. Carel Weight (1908-1997)

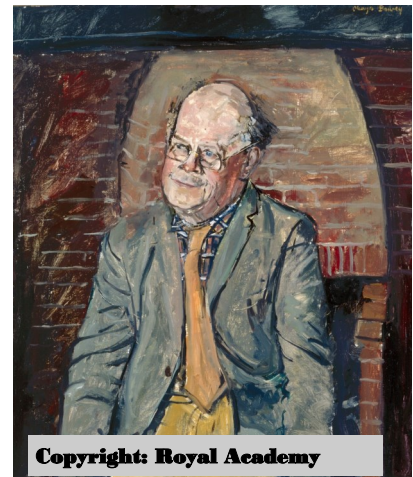


**Painter. War Artist. Teacher.**  
**Unveiled 22 May 2018 by Mick Rooney RA**  
**31 Keswick Road, Putney, SW15 2EW.**

1962, and elected to the Royal Academy in 1965. A number of his works are in the Royal Academy collections [see <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/carel-weight-ra>]. He was made a Companion of Honour in 1995. Early experience of poverty, suffering and then of the war years, resulted in fears and nightmares which often found expression in his paintings. His art was particularly influenced by Edvard Munch and Stanley Spencer. Suburbia, particularly south London, is a strong feature of his work: the streets, backs of houses, and rear gardens. He lived in Clapham but, after retiring from the RCA, would commute by bus to his Putney studio at the top of a large house in Putney at 31 Keswick Road. One of his paintings (in private hands) is of the entrance to East Putney Station. He had many friends in the art world, including painters Ruskin Spear, Edward Bawden, John Nash, Mary Fedden, Stanley Spencer and L.S. Lowry. He made a large bequest of over 140 works to the Royal Academy, including works by his artist friends and former students.

Carel Weight taught at the Royal College of Art (RCA) from 1947, becoming Professor of Painting in 1957, one of the most prestigious art teaching jobs in Britain. Here he taught students who were later to become famous, including Peter Blake, David Hockney, Allen Jones and R B Kitaj.

Born in London in 1908, in Paddington, his parents had him fostered at a rather impoverished household in Fulham during week days. He went to Hammersmith College of Art in 1926, and then to Goldsmiths College. Many of his early canvases were destroyed by a bomb during the Second World War. He served in the Royal Engineers during the War, but Kenneth Clark appointed him an official war artist (1945-46) first in Britain and later in Greece, Italy and Austria. Some of these war pictures are in the Government Art collection and the Imperial War Museum. He was awarded a CBE in



## 10. Milicent Bagot CBE (1907-2006)



**Senior Intelligence Officer  
Unveiled 15 October 2021 by  
Mrs Suzie Longstaff, Head  
Teacher of Putney High School  
25 Rusholme Road, SW15 3JX**

Milicent Bagot lived at Putney from 1913 to 1976. She was a British intelligence officer with MI5 who became one of the security service's principal experts on Soviet Communism.

Born in Battersea, Milicent moved to the house in Rusholme Road in 1907 aged 6. She attended Putney High School and then Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she read classics. After gaining her degree in 1927 she started work in the Metropolitan Police Special Branch, the section dealing with communist and foreign revolutionary movements. From there she entered the Ministry of Defence in 1931 and worked for MI5 where she spent the war years as a clerk in the Registry and the counter-subversion section, first at Wormwood Scrubs and then at Blenheim Palace. She was later seconded to MI6 to advise on countering international communism in the Middle East and the Balkans.

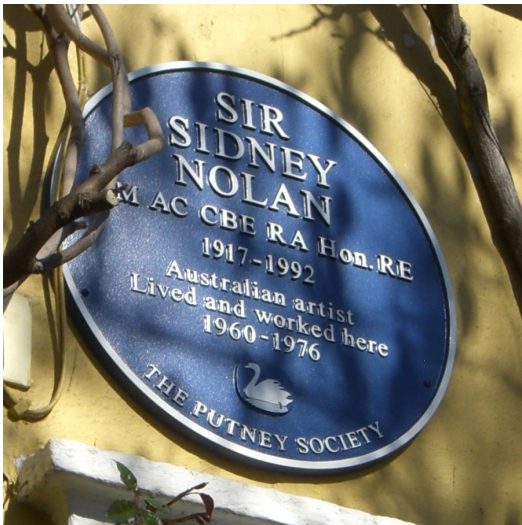
By 1949 she was recognised as a leading expert with an encyclopaedic knowledge of Soviet Communism. In the same year she was promoted to officer grade and awarded an MBE for her expertise, dedication and tenacity of purpose. She was promoted to Assistant Director in 1953, the first female intelligence officer in MI5 ever to gain this rank, and was awarded a CBE in 1967.

She is reputed to have been the first person to raise the alarm about Kim Philby, a MI6 officer but also Soviet KGB double agent - who fled to Moscow after his cover was blown. Much of her work in the security service will never be made public. However, it is thought that she was the model for the outspoken and eccentric character, Connie Sachs, the "Moscow watcher" in John le Carré's novels, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Smiley's People*.

She lived with her nanny in the house in Rusholme Road until 1976. She had obituaries in both *The Times* and *The Guardian* at her death in 2006. Ben Macintyre devoted a chapter to her in his book *Agent Sonya: Lover, Mother, Soldier, Spy*, and said she was "the sort of English woman who strikes fear into the heart of foreigners, children and bank managers, and tends to be described as 'formidable'".



## 11. Sir Sidney Nolan OM AC CBE RA Hon. RE (1917-1992)

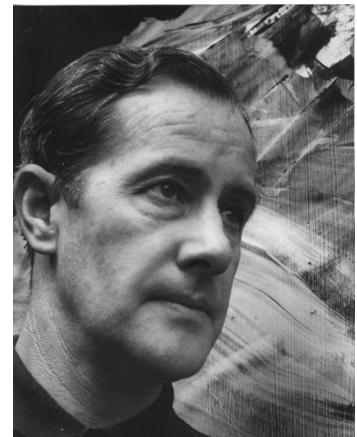


**Australian Artist and designer  
Unveiled by Lucy Trench, Chair of the  
Sidney Nolan Trust, 7 March 2022  
79 Deodar Road, SW15 2NU**

Sydney Nolan was born and educated in Melbourne. His early adulthood was turbulent, involving two unsuccessful marriages and desertion from the Australian Army. He is probably best remembered for his series of paintings of legends from Australian history, most famously the bushranger and outlaw, Ned Kelly. His stylised depiction of Kelly's armour has become an icon of Australian art. In 1951 Nolan moved to Europe, where he travelled extensively. During this period he illustrated books for Robert Lowell, studied engraving and lithography and painted themes derived from the Greek myths. He and his third wife, Cynthia, moved to Putney in 1957, living first at 61 Deodar Road, then settling at 79 Deodar Road in 1960. They remained there until 1976.

During his Putney years he travelled widely and produced works based on his tours in Africa, Antarctica and Asia (particularly China) as well as his

frequent visits to Australia. Of particular note were the two large works produced during these years: Paradise Garden made up of 900 panels inspired by a Benjamin Britten cantata and The Snake a montage of over 1,600 heads, blooms and animals which, when seen from a distance, reveals a serpent. Benjamin Britten was a great friend of the Nolans, and he planted a camellia in the garden at 79 Deodar Road which is still there. The Snake montage was partially inspired by stained glass panels in the windows of 79 Deodar Road (the house had previously been owned by two distinguished stained glass artists, Caroline Townshend and Joan Howson). Sidney Nolan has been described by his biographer, Simon Mundy, as a storyteller inspired by landscape and humanity who encapsulated complex schemes in abstract form. One of his best known works is the mural "The Eureka Stockade", a depiction of a revolt against British rule in 1854, located at the entrance to the Reserve Bank of Australia in Melbourne and somewhat ironically created whilst he lived in London. He was also a designer for opera and ballet and in 1961 produced striking designs for the Rite of Spring, choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan for Covent Garden which were still being used in 2013. In 1981, Nolan was appointed a Knight Bachelor for service to art and received the Order of Merit (OM) in 1983.



**Nolan in 1960**