

## CHRISTOPHER GIBBS POSTSCRIPT

Several obituaries of Christopher Gibbs focused mostly on his earlier life when he was a leader of the Swinging Set in London during the nineteen sixties and known as “The King of Chelsea”. However after the mid seventies he mellowed. He wrote the “History of the Gibbs Family” for Rachel Gibbs’ Pedigree of the Family published in 1980. He purchased Davington Priory in Kent in 1972 and sold the Priory to Bob Geldof in 1982. It was here that Bob Geldof launched Live Aid which Christopher keenly supported. After he inherited the Manor House in Clifton Hampden on the death of his mother in 1980, he moved his business from Chelsea to New Bond Street. He was an avid collector of Gibbs family memorabilia. These included several letters between Lord Nelson and Sir Vicary Gibbs. As an antique dealer Christopher was very insistent on the authenticity of provenance. In a book at the Albany - Notes on the Antiquities at Flaxley Abbey by Arthur W Crawley Boevey (1912), we discovered that the Flaxley Casket was left to William Gibbs by Sir Martin Crawley Boevey after his death in 1862. Hence it was not given as a wedding present to William and Matilda Blanche Gibbs. Christopher Gibbs moved his shop from New Bond Street to Pimlico in 2000 and then sold up in 2006 to go to live in Tangier keeping his apartment in the Albany and a cottage in Clifton Hamden.



Christopher Gibbs in his villa in Tangier

On his estate in Tangier he developed a passion for gardening. The first Lord Aldenham’s son Vicary Gibbs was Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society and a founder of the Chelsea Flower Show. He visited Tyntesfield and certainly had an influence on the gardens there. Christopher sent me several articles on this which I forwarded to Paul Evans. He also told me how much he enjoyed reading through “The Complete Peerage” of which we have a copy in the Organ Room. It was edited by Vicary Gibbs. He particularly liked the amusing anecdotes about the eccentricities of the British Aristocracy.

Christopher served for many years as the Church Warden of St Andrew’s Church in Tangier. He was very compassionate and welcoming to refugees who had fled across the Sahara. He was particularly supportive of bereaved Gibbs family members whom he visited when in England. Self

effacing, he was a kind and thoughtful man, exceedingly well informed. I received my last email from him 12 days before he died. Like me he had a twin sister, Elizabeth, whom I met when she came to my lecture “Splendid Sunsets” at the Royal Geographical Society. This was about Vicary Gibbs’ journey around the world from 1883 to 1885. The colourful sunsets followed the eruption of Krakatoa in 1883. Vicary brought home a large collection of plants from his journey.

Christopher had pancreatic cancer and sadly passed away in the morning of the 29th July, the day of his 80th birthday. He was laid to rest at St Andrew’s Church on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August at 12 noon. Mark Holbrook, a friend wrote, “I’ll always remember his playful humour, his thoughtfulness, his unassuming manners and his appreciation of the natural world. May he rest in peace.”



Christopher Gibbs with Danyla Kuper

Christopher had a long time partner, the actor and antiques dealer Peter Hinwood. He was a strong supporter of LGBT rights and a friend of the transgender pioneer April Ashley. He had nearly eight hundred friends on Facebook of whom I was one. He very much enjoyed socialising and parties and had numerous lady friends and admirers. He often wore a kaftan to parties.

Jasmine Guinness wrote, “Goodbye darling Christopher Gibbs, gone today on his birthday, on to his next adventure”.

Danyla Kuper wrote, “Yesterday I learned of the death of a very dear friend, a man with a big heart... a great penalty in my heart this is, but I have to tell myself that I was lucky to have known such an extraordinary person. Deep down I send my eternal friendship and I'm sure the higher Christopher you have to shine to continue being an authentic person! Million kisses in the stars.”

Kate von Schenk wrote’ “Dear Chrissie, Pray for me as I will for thee that we may merrily meet in Heaven. (Sir Thomas. More).”

Kate Bernard wrote, “Dear Christopher – such a prince among men with his generosity and big brain. He will be missed indeed.”

Rob Dixon wrote, “Such an interesting, informed and civilized friend.”

Nicholas Mander’s message was – “Very sad. A man of taste and wit and utterly civilized charm sans pareil. Requiescat.”

Esther Anderson’s message was – “Oh no, no, not Chrissie too!! What a shock...At least he was in a place he loved. Like his spiritual home...May his free spirit take flight in the Atlas and across the Sahara...Rest in peace.”

Gloria Dawn Cauble’s message was, “Good Bye to Christopher Gibbs who was laid to rest today in Tangier. You in your garden were on my mind today as I was in my garden working.”



Christopher’s Garden in Tangier.

David Hogg wrote, “So sad to hear of your passing. We have lost a great friend to so many! Your spirit lives on.”

Wade H Grimbley wrote “Beautiful man. God speed. A privilege to have known and spent time with you. Thank you for those wonderful moments dear Christopher.”

Joe Ambrose wrote, “R.I.P. the wonderful Christopher Gibbs. One of the nicest and most interesting expats living in Tangier and one of the strongest links to bohemian and Rolling Stones Tangier.”

Sarah Gibbs wrote, “A great man, and a wonderful relative....sadly died last Saturday.



Christopher with Moroccan friends.

Elizabeth Fleming, Christopher’s twin sister wrote, “Christopher was indeed a remarkable person in so many respects and greatly loved by so many especially his family whom he was devoted to. He loved his home in Tangier and the beautiful garden he created there, a slice of paradise, but it was the Moroccan people of Tangier that meant so much to him and the rhythm of life there, his Muslim friends were very important to him, his deep faith was all embracing.”

Christopher was a passionate European, having studied at the Sorbonne and the University of Poitiers. These were his thoughts on the Referendum of 2016.

June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016

What’s on my mind is how important it is that everyone votes REMAIN in the coming Referendum. We are Europeans. We cannot be a sole player. We need our good neighbours, to work with them towards a better world. To cut loose is reckless and foolish [even if appealing!]. Please dear friends, [just this once] be serious! Love from Remainiac Christopher Gibbs.

David J. Hogg.