



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS OF BRENTHAM SOCIETY AND BRENTHAM HERITAGE SOCIETY

Thursday 16th October 2003, 7.30pm, Brentham Club

Residents in attendance: 47

BHS Members in attendance: 18

Committee Members present:

Brentham Society: Sue Elliott (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), George Barnes, Ian Brocklebank, Heather Moore

Brentham Heritage Society: Wendy Sender (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Sue Elliott, Alan Henderson, Heather Moore

The meeting was in two parts:

PART 1: MAIN BUSINESS

PART 2: BRENTHAM RESIDENTS' SURVEY - PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

PART 1: MAIN BUSINESS

1. Minutes of the 2002 AGM and Matters Arising:

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting – proposed by Anne Barnes, seconded by Barbara Murray.

Cable TV Boxes:

Sue Elliott reported that at the 2002 AGM, the subject of moving the green NTL cable cabinets along Pitshanger Lane or putting them underground had been raised and the Brentham Society had agreed to pursue three options: (1) involving Steve Pound MP, (2) complaining to the Local Authority Ombudsman and (3) getting legal advice. All these approaches had been tried but failed.

(1) Steve Pound had written to Noel Rutherford, Assistant Director at Ealing Planning Services, and had received a letter sympathising with our dissatisfaction, but explaining that, unfortunately, there was no requirement on NTL to install their cabinets underground.

(2) The BS had contacted Cllr Anthony Young in 1991 about involving the Local Authority Ombudsman, but he had replied that although he was happy to forward our complaint to the Ombudsman, it appeared to him that there were no grounds to do so. Planning permission was not required for the cable television installations, and so consultations with the Conservation Area Advisory Panel had not been required. There was therefore no question of maladministration.

(3) The BS had also approached Pro-Help for free legal advice via Rosanna Henderson, but they felt that it was not a community issue and therefore not within their remit.

2. Brentham Society Chair's Report (Sue Elliott)

Membership:

Sue reported that membership stood at 40% of Brentham households, down from 44% last year and 50% in previous years. Star roads were the top of Brentham Way (85%), Ludlow (72%) and Woodfield Ave (69%). More members were needed in Holyoake Walk, Pitshanger Lane and Woodfield Crescent. Sue expressed her thanks to Sean Cadogan (Membership Organiser), Debbi Cadogan and all the Membership collectors for their hard work in collecting subs, and especially to those residents who gave an additional contribution.

Newsletter & Communication:

Brentham News had continued to be superbly edited by Alan Henderson. Three editions had been published during the year, with the first colour edition in May (of Brentham in snow!). In future there will be one colour plus two black and white editions per annum, interspersed with 'News Updates'. Sue thanked George and Anne Barnes for maintaining the notice-boards around the estate.

Planning & Environment:

There had been a useful meeting with the two new Conservation Officers. The Brentham survey showed that residents were anxious to have more information on planning issues and on keeping their houses in good repair and it has been agreed that the BS will prepare an Area Appraisal with the help of Ian Brocklebank and Heather Moore, so that clear Planning Guidelines can be issued; this is a priority for the coming year.

The BS had commented on 48 planning applications this year and advised Ealing Council on some of the more contentious ones. Some issues arising are:

- (1) Hedges – these need watering and feeding (especially privet) and if necessary, replacing – if honey fungus is a problem, there are resistant species that can be planted instead.
NB: removal of a hedge, either at the front or back, requires Planning Permission, as they are integral to the look of Brentham.
- (2) Building work not carried out according to approved plans
- (3) Work carried out without Planning Permission

Before starting to build, residents should ask Heather Moore or Pat Baxendale (who is on the Estate's Conservation Panel) for advice. There is also information on the Brentham website (www.brentham.com) and in the publication *A Stitch in Time*, which can be downloaded from www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch_in_time.

A photo audit of every house on the estate was planned for 2004. Ealing Council had earmarked Brentham for new lighting, but this had been deferred until 2005 at the earliest; the BS would continue to liaise with the Council to ensure appropriate lighting. Trees in front of Holyoake House had been pruned; a bench in memory of David Graves had been installed on Ludlow-Denison Green in June and the Committee was working on the reinstatement of a barrier for Ludlow/Denison Green.

Events and Activities:

A major effort was the Brentham Survey, delivered to all households in Spring. Thanks were due to Trevor Skelton for devising and analysing the survey. The Craft Fair stall in November was followed by the usual Carol singing in aid of two local charities and delivery of parcels to elderly residents in December. There was a Street Reps and Membership Collectors evening in January, and March saw the innovation of the Brain of Brentham quiz – thanks were due to Barry Murphy for organising this. The BS had provided support for May Day and the Strawberry Tea in June had been attended by Steve Pound, the Deputy Mayor and a number of local Councillors – with thanks to Barbara Murray for the use of her garden. The Open Garden Day, held on a very hot Sunday in July, made over £250 and two allotments had been included for the first time. August saw a successful Family Cycle, and a Barbecue evening at the Haven Arms to celebrate the opening of the upper room in which the founders of Brentham had first met.

Relations with local organisations:

Good and productive relationships had been developed at regular informal meetings with both the Brentham Club and the Pitshanger Community Association (PCA) during the year. The Committees of BS, BHS, Club, PCA and Pitshanger Allotment Society had met at the Club for discussion of matters of mutual interest over supper in September and a piece on the BS/BHS had appeared in the current PCA Newsletter. Plans for joint activities in 2004 include a possible May Ball at the Club.

Sue concluded by expressing her thanks to the Committee, especially Ian Brocklebank and Graham Fox, who were now standing down, and to everyone who helped by manning stalls, making cakes, supporting events, being a Street Rep or a Membership Collector, or in any one of a dozen other ways.

3. Brentham Heritage Society Chair's Report (Wendy Sender)

Wendy said that the Brentham Residents' Survey had shown that residents thought highly of the BHS, but knew very little about it. She summarised the work of the BHS as trying to spread the word of Brentham far and wide, beyond the borders of Brentham, whereas the Brentham Society concentrates on all that takes place within Brentham. Many had wondered whether the BHS should 'retire' gracefully once the Brentham book had been published, but three years on, its charitable status continued to open doors.

Publishing:

46 copies of the Brentham book had been sold (including one to a Japanese visitor); of the print run of 1750, 116 copies remain. An interesting spin-off of the book was that the new facsimile edition of Ebenezer Howard's seminal book *To-morrow: a peaceful path to real reform* describes Brentham as the *first* garden suburb, an accolade usually given to Hampstead. Heather Moore and Sue Elliott had put a tremendous amount of work into producing a resource pack for use in local primary schools; the packs were now being trialled.

Brentham website, www.brentham.org.uk:

The site had 893 visits last year – a 30% increase on the previous year. It had been expanded, with some new pages on planning matters, which it was hoped to develop in the coming year. An egrouop had been set up, offering an opportunity to send emails to group members about any and every Brentham-related topic. There had been some lively postings recently – about green parakeets, a dead circus elephant and problems with foxes. The egrouop was also a way of reuniting Brenthamites with residents or former residents. Residents interested in helping to develop the website were invited to contact Wendy or Peter Sender.

Brentham Archive:

The archive had developed from a collection of plans kept in a committee member's damp garage to an immaculately organised collection of architectural plans, drawings, photographs, slides, videos, Ealing Tenants' rent agreements, mortgage agreements and 'rule books', Brentham Players' programmes, ephemera etc. – thanks largely to the untiring efforts of archivist Alan Henderson. Last year the archive had received a number of old family photographs taken in the early days of Brentham. Over the past year Alan, with the help of Eleanor Cowie, had worked at producing an indexing system and most of the material was now in storage albums that meet archive conservation standards. Alan and Eleanor would welcome assistance in labelling transparencies and other items.

Links with other garden suburbs:

Over the past year, in conjunction with the BS, the BHS had arranged visits to several places of importance in the history of the garden suburb movement. In nearby Bedford Park, regarded as the 'prototype' garden suburb, we learnt about an innovative project to provide every house with its own individual logbook, recording detailed information about its history – a very impressive project, and one that Brentham might emulate one day.

In May a group visited Bournville, where the Bournville Village Trust showed us George Cadbury's green and pleasant housing for his workers. One of the guides was a tenant, who had spent his life working in the factory, who not only showed us round his house but also provided his own alternative commentary on our trip round the chocolate factory. The most recent visit was to the world's first two garden cities – Letchworth, now in its centenary year, and Welwyn Garden City, which followed nearly 20 years later. Both bore the unmistakable signature of Parker and Unwin, however in contrast to Brentham, both cities suffered from too many UPVC windows.

The BHS was involved in two other events in collaboration with the Brentham Society, both fixtures in Brentham's calendar – May Day and London Open House Weekend. Once again Clive Hicks took visitors on a guided walk round Brentham, while Jackie Moss made the arrangements for the day; both deserved our thanks.

Blue Plaques:

The BHS had attempted to have plaques erected on houses of two former residents, Frederick James Gould, educational reformer, philosopher and writer, and Fred Maddison, trade unionist and Lib-Lab MP. However, the bid was unsuccessful, because English Heritage was only able to erect plaques to a small proportion of the eligible candidates. Wendy hoped that in 2009, which marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fred Perry, we would stand a better chance of having a plaque erected on the house where Fred lived as a youngster.

Conservation and Planning:

Whereas routine planning applications were dealt with by the BS, the BHS had become involved in cases where its letterhead with the registered charity number would add weight. An application had been made to English Heritage to have two properties in Brentham listed: 11 Winscombe Crescent and Holyoake House. 11 Winscombe Crescent is perhaps the house in Brentham that has changed least over the past century. The owner, Mrs Ramsay Hughes, now 93, moved there in 1912, two years after it was built, when she was two years old. The house is an extraordinary survival: the original roughcast rendering remains unpainted, and the dark green paint used for the woodwork is the colour that was found all round Brentham originally. Inside, the house is living museum, with furnishing in the Arts and Crafts style. Holyoake House is one of the suburb's most distinctive buildings and a good

example of the cooperative principles that were at work when Brentham was first built. The 24 flats, built round a shared open space, were intended for single people, young and old, on low incomes. Other examples of collaboration with the BS included the restoration of the room in the Haven Arms where Brentham's founders first met, securing planning permission for pruning trees in front of Holyoake House and contacting Ealing Council about street lighting.

Wendy concluded by saying that none of the work carried out by the BHS over the past year would have been possible without the sterling support of committee members and residents and she would like to thank them all – it had been a great pleasure and a great privilege to work with them. The committee members especially had all worked together in a spirit she was sure Henry Vivian would have been proud of, and there had been plenty of laughs along the way. Now that she was stepping down as BHS chair, Wendy would miss everyone, but would remain in touch through her work on the website.

4. Treasurer's Report (Richard Costella)

(a) Brentham Society

The Society had made a small surplus during the year, although this was a little lower than in the previous year. Subscription income and donations were lower than in 2002, following a trend from the previous year. Sales of stationery and merchandise had improved as new stocks had been purchased and total receipts were bolstered by some new events.

The single largest item of expenditure was the purchase of new merchandise, which would be sold at events to provide income in the future. After the costs involved in specific events, the major ongoing expenditure was on the Newsletter (held down by generous support from Grimshaws estate agents) and a one-off cost this year on the survey.

Miscellaneous income came from sales of doors and benches, and a goodwill payment from the bank. Miscellaneous expenditure referred to items such as a bench repair and the David Graves memorial plaque.

Richard reported that in general the finances of the Society were healthy, with total funds at the end of the year of just under £5,000, slightly up on the previous year.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

The BHS had had another quiet year. Sales of the Brentham book continued, including several copies sold abroad. The main costs had been directed at the maintenance of the archive and the schools pack. The net surplus for the year was just under £400, with reserves now standing at just under £18,000 – as previously mentioned, these have been earmarked for the photographic survey and a possible new edition of the book.

Thanks were due once again to Andy Akerman for auditing both sets of accounts.

5. Election of Committees 2003-4:

(a) Brentham Society

The following members were willing to stand again: Sue Elliott (Chair), George Barnes, Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Sean Cadogan, Heather Moore and Barry Murphy.

The following nomination for a new member had been received:

	<u>Proposed by:</u>	<u>Seconded by:</u>
Martin Mortimore	Sue Elliott	Richard Costella

Martin said that he had lived on the estate since 1976 and now lived in Fowlers Walk. He was interested in keeping the spirit of the estate going, and specifically in making a film of Brentham and continuing to interview long-established residents.

The election of the above committee members was proposed by Pat Baxendale, seconded by Barbara Murray, and the committee was elected unanimously.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

The following members were willing to stand again: Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Alan Henderson, Sue Elliott and Heather Moore. No nominations had been received.

The election of the above committee members was proposed by Paul Fodrio, seconded by Jonathan Pearce, and the committee was duly elected.

6. Garden Awards

Sue Elliott thanked Brian Vaughan for once again judging the Spring, Summer and Autumn Awards as well as the Rose Bowl. The awards were presented by Nita Davis, who also thanked Gill Silvester and Maureen Monaghan on Brian's behalf for their help with the judging.

<u>Award</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Runners-up</u>
Spring	50 Meadvale Road	46 Woodfield Crescent, 20 Meadvale Road, 113 Fowlers Walk
Summer	10 Ludlow Road	115 Fowlers Walk, 16 Woodfield Crescent, 7 North View
Autumn	28 Holyoake Walk	1 Neville Road, 21 Ludlow Road, 91 Fowlers Walk

The Rose Bowl was awarded to 2 Woodfield Avenue - unfortunately those responsible had moved, but it would be delivered to the current owners.

7. Members' Questions

Barbara Murray asked whether there had been any news on the extension to the Willowmead Close flats and was told that the application had been refused, but had gone back to appeal; a decision was expected on 18th November.

As a tennis player herself, Nita Davis supported the move to get a Blue Plaque for Fred Perry – our only Wimbledon champion; the current resident of the house would be pursuing the BHS to get it.

In answer to a question about Holyoake House, Sue Elliott replied that it was still owned by Bradford Property Trust at present, however the prospective new owner is AR&V Investments Ltd, a small family-owned firm with about 200 properties in West London.

Susan Stephenson was concerned about a recent report in the Gazette, implying that Brentham might lose its conservation area status. Sue Elliott reassured the meeting that this had been a case of misreporting of a Planning Forum at which two roads outside the estate were suggested, and discounted, as additions to Brentham Garden Suburb.

Maureen Monaghan asked whether the BS could intervene with the landlord on behalf of one of her neighbours who is a tenant. Sue Elliott answered that, while this was not part of the BS's remit, if the lady concerned would contact her, the BS would try to do what it could.

Maureen also raised the problem of what the BS could do about foxes, which were now present in such numbers that they were becoming a pest, fouling gardens and attempting to dig earths under houses. The Council's response had been unsatisfactory. Some members had invoked the help of the RSPCA to deal with sick animals, but otherwise the only suggestion was to keep writing to the Council. The National Fox Welfare Society may also provide advice (see the website www.nfws.org.uk). The subject would be covered in a future Newsletter.

8. Wendy Sender

Sue Elliott reminded the meeting that Wendy Sender, who had chaired the BHS since its inception, was standing down after five extremely busy years. Wendy had been no ordinary Chairman or Committee member. If it had not been for her persistence and vision, we would not have the exceptionally high quality centenary history that she had created literally from scratch and practically single-handed. And without Wendy, the BHS would not have its valuable charity registration. Mere thanks did not even begin to cover our debt to Wendy - we would miss the five emails a day, but would miss her and her energy much more. Sue presented Wendy with a bouquet and a card from the two committees.

9. AOB

Neighbourhood Watch: Paul Fodrio, the co-ordinator, was concerned at the decline in active interest in the scheme. He was prepared to carry on, but needed people to volunteer to be Street Co-ordinators for most streets; Co-ordinators only needed to meet two or three times a year. The old Neighbourhood Watch newsletter had been superseded by a page in *Brentham News*. He urged residents to act in concert, e.g. in reporting damage to cars to their Street Co-ordinator, where there was one. The whole scheme needed a relaunch and he would contact the Borough Organiser to get some more packs; a crime prevention exhibition might also be a good idea.

Payment of Subscriptions: In answer to a request from a resident, RC said that if there was sufficient demand, residents might be able to pay their subscriptions direct to the BS account; Rosanna Henderson explained that, when she had been Membership Secretary, some residents who used to pay by standing order did not amend their orders when the subscription rate changed, so the facility was withdrawn.

PART 2: BRENTHAM RESIDENTS' SURVEY - PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The Brentham survey was distributed with the February edition of the *Brentham News* to 680 households on the estate. After an introduction by Sue Elliott, Alan Henderson and Richard Costella presented a slideshow summary of the findings under the headings **Communication**, **Environment** and **Social** (as attached)*. Sue Elliott then invited those present to discuss what action the Committees should take on the findings.

Communication:

It was suggested that communication could be by email. Although this might be a useful form of delivery for the intermediate newsletters, it should be borne in mind that only 40% of responding households had email. To obtain email addresses that were correct and up-to-date, residents could be asked to email the Society.

Sue Elliott assured those present that the findings on residents' requirements for information on planning and conservation would be taken on board, while any requests for specific information would be welcomed. It was intended to produce Planning Guidelines early in 2004, and to issue regular guidance on specific aspects, such as windows.

Environment:

It had been suggested that the Brentham Society should take over common areas, e.g. Ludlow-Denison Green or the allotments. Sue explained that some allotments are owned, while others are rented from Bradford Property Trust (BPT). Taking common areas into community management would require a mandate from residents and a dedicated allotment management group; this would be investigated further. Pat Baxendale pointed out that if the BS does not bid for the common areas, the BPT could simply sell them on, which would cause more problems.

As regards traffic, e.g. traffic restrictions and traffic-calming measures, opinion was divided. Ian Brocklebank explained the principle of Home Zones, where traffic must give way to pedestrians. The BS Committee would need someone to take on traffic management as a discrete project. Susan Stephenson mentioned the continuing problems caused by visitors to watch cricket at the Club parking in Neville Road, especially on the corner with Meadvale Road. Sue said that this had been raised at the PCA AGM on the previous evening; a joint approach to the Club was needed.

Social:

Sue Elliott found it somewhat surprising that 'more social events' came relatively low on the list of respondents' priorities, but it was suggested that the popularity of events was best measured by how well they are attended, e.g. the Garden Day. Sue said that events that were not well supported would be dropped in future. Repeating the Art Exhibition was proposed, but the last exhibition, designed to raise money for the book, was very hard work to organise. Since then, Trevor Skelton had proposed setting up a Community Gallery in the shop previously occupied by Knock on Wood. It was suggested that events with flexible timing, like the Garden Day, might be better attended than those with a fixed start time. The Committee was looking at another suggestion from Trevor for an Antiques Fair. Other suggestions included arranging more talks and demonstrations about what residents can and cannot do with their homes.

*A report on the Survey also appears in *Brentham News*, No. 149, October 2003

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.